

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St. Helens

LEA area: St. Helens

Unique reference number: 132188

Headteacher: Mr Keith Stanton

Reporting inspector: Mr A Calderbank  
7979

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 248929

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:	Brunswick Street Parr St. Helens
Postcode:	WA9 2JE
Telephone number:	01744 757727
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. T. Critchley
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7979	Mr. A. Calderbank	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. What should the school do to improve further?
9895	Mr. R. Williams	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11922	Mrs. J. Watkins	Team inspector	Foundation Stage History Geography	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31012	Mrs. A. Welch	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught?
2465	Mr. G. Yates	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school was opened in September 2000. It is an average sized primary school with 202 pupils in Years 1 to 6, 33 children in the reception class and 26 children part-time in the nursery. It serves an area consisting largely of rented accommodation. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Children's early achievements are well below those typical when they start in the nursery. An average number of pupils, 22 per cent, has special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural problems. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs, 1.6 per cent, is broadly average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Two pupils are designated as Traveller pupils but were absent during the week of the inspection. The school benefits from additional funding from being part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ).

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

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School is a caring school. It promotes clear values which are firmly based on its Catholic foundation. Since the school has been in existence, the headteacher has worked hard to build up a good team spirit amongst the staff. Through his leadership the school serves its pupils and parents well. Because teaching is good overall in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), pupils achieve well in these subjects and attain standards broadly in line with those found in most schools by the end of Year 6. Pupils are keen to learn and behaviour is good. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and as a result pupils make good progress.
- Children are given a good start in the nursery and reception class.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is of a good quality. Support assistants are well briefed and provide additional help effectively.
- Relationships are good between pupils and staff. Pupils behave well.
- The school takes good care of its pupils.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall.
- There are good links with parents, who have positive views of the school.

#### **What could be improved**

- The monitoring of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators.
- Assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT and the use made of assessment information in all subjects to plan future work.
- Pupils' skills in art and design, design and technology and geography in some classes in Years 3 to 6.
- Attendance

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

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

The school has not been inspected before.

### **STANDARDS**

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	Year 2000	Year 2001	Year 2002	Year 2002
English	N/A	C	C	A
Mathematics	N/A	B	A	A*
Science	N/A	C	B	A

Key	
<i>Well above average</i>	A
<i>Above average</i>	B
<i>Average</i>	C
<i>Below average</i>	D
<i>Well below average</i>	E

The findings of the inspection are that standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Attainment in these subjects is not as high as last year because the current Year 6 class contains more pupils with learning difficulties than in previous years. However, taking into account their prior attainment, all pupils achieve well. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, the school met its target for attainment in English and exceeded it in mathematics. In mathematics, pupils' attainment was in the top five per cent when compared to similar schools. Targets for 2003 are realistic and achievable. Standards in ICT are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils' attainment in art and design, design and technology and geography are below national expectations in some classes in Years 3 to 6. Standards in all other subjects inspected were found to be average. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout then school.

National test results at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Teacher assessments in science showed well below average attainment. Recently there has been significant improvement and standards in mathematics and science are now similar to those found in most schools. Standards in English are below average. In all three subjects, pupils are achieving well. Attainment in all other subjects is broadly average.

Children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception class) enter the nursery with well below average attainment and make good progress. However, most are unlikely to achieve the recommended goals for their age by the time they reach Year 1 and very few will exceed them.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They concentrate hard and try their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils play well together and work co-operatively during lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show courtesy and consideration for others and this contributes effectively to the good will that exists within the school community. They enjoy taking responsibility and having a say in the running of the school.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Despite the school's best efforts some parents still allow their children to take time off school during term time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school in English, mathematics, science and ICT and this results in good achievement by most pupils in these subjects. However, taking into account the quality of teaching in all other subjects, teaching is judged to be satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Particular strengths include good management of pupils and good use of classroom assistants and resources. However, in a number of lessons a relative weakness is the use of worksheets which do not allow pupils to develop fully their skills. Also, in some classes teachers only ask questions of pupils who put up their hands. There are some good examples of teachers providing appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in other subjects.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced well and as a result pupils are making good progress in these important areas. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. Basic skills are taught well in English and mental calculation is a strong feature of all mathematics lessons. Satisfactory links are made with other subjects such as science when pupils are involved in calculating and measuring. In science, facts are well taught but teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to understand information presented in graphical form. Support assistants provide valuable help and guidance to pupils. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support.

In the nursery and reception class, teachers and support staff work together very well. Lessons are well organised and children are provided with a good range of interesting activities. However, opportunities for outside learning activities in the reception class are limited.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum meets statutory requirements. However, the work pupils are asked to do in art and design, design and technology and geography in some classes in Years 3 to 6 is not sufficiently demanding. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and gives them full and equal access to all learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Good overall. Assemblies provide suitable opportunities for spiritual development. Pupils' social and moral development are strong features of the school. More needs to be done to provide pupils with an appreciation of life in a multicultural society.



<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
development.	
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good arrangements for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. The arrangements for assessing pupils' work are good overall in English, mathematics, science and ICT. However, not enough use is being made of the information to raise standards.

The school has good links with parents and the local community. The large majority of parents are very pleased with what the school provides and achieves. They receive good information about what their children are learning.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives a clear sense of purpose and direction to the school. He is supported well by the deputy headteacher. Curriculum co-ordinators are hard working but could do more to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil all their responsibilities. They have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Committees deal efficiently with school matters. Governors are aware of the need to be more involved in shaping the direction of the school and in the setting of targets.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has identified appropriate priorities for development. It is aware of the need to improve its systems for evaluating the quality of provision in order to improve teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Great care has been taken to ensure that sufficient funds are available to enable the school to run smoothly during a period when pupil numbers are in decline. Very good use is being made of additional funding from the EAZ project. The principles of best value are based on the Local Education Authority's guidelines and applied well.

There are sufficient teachers and a good number of support assistants. Accommodation is satisfactory but suffers from frequent attacks of vandalism. Resources are adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children are well cared for and happy.</li><li>• Behaviour is good.</li><li>• Children are expected to work hard.</li><li>• They would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li><li>• Teaching is good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The provision of homework.</li><li>• The range of activities provided outside lessons.</li><li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li><li>• The school's links with parents.</li></ul>

The inspection team supports most of the positive views of parents. With regard to what parents would like to see improved, the team considers that the quality of homework and the range of activities outside of lessons are similar to those found in most schools. The school does all it reasonably can to work with parents. Parents receive well-written reports about how their children are getting on.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children start in the nursery class with skills and knowledge well below average. They have particularly poor social, communication, language and literacy skills. Even though the children work hard and achieve well, most are likely to achieve below the levels expected in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Children who are recognised as having special educational needs are quickly identified and they are given extra help and as a result they too achieve well.
2. The results of the National Curriculum test and assessments taken at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were well below average in reading and mathematics and below in writing. When compared to similar schools, pupils' performance was below average in reading and mathematics but average in writing. Teachers' assessments showed that the percentage of pupils' reaching the expected standard (level 2) in speaking, listening and science were well below those found in most schools. Very few pupils were assessed as working at the higher level (level 3).
3. The school recognised that standards were not high enough and took appropriate action. As a result of receiving priority support for literacy from the local authority's advisory service, standards have risen. This was reflected in pupils' performance in the tests and assessments in 2002, which showed a significant improvement overall when compared with the previous year's results, which were low when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Results in writing rose in 2002 from 29 per cent at level 2B and above to 55 per cent at level 2B and above. Reading also increased from 46 per cent at level 2B and above to 56 per cent. In the same year, mathematics increased from 50 per cent to 59 per cent at level 2B and above.
4. Inspection evidence shows that though standards being achieved by the current group of Year 2 pupils are below average overall in English, they are continuing to improve especially in writing. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is broadly average, with most pupils working at the expected level for their age. Standards in science show signs of improvement. The number of pupils in the current Year 2 working at level 2 is similar to that found in most schools but a below average percentage of pupils are working at the higher level 3.
5. The results of the National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average in English, well above in mathematics and above average in science. When compared with pupils in similar schools, the 2002 test results were even more favourable; pupils' performance was well above average in all three subjects. In mathematics pupils' attainment was in the top five per cent. As a result of these impressive test results the school has been presented with a *School Achievement Award* from the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) for the second year in succession.
6. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Boys and girls demonstrated similar standards during the inspection.

7. The 2003 National Curriculum test results are not expected to be as good as those in 2002. This is because there are more pupils in the current Year 6 class with special educational needs and this will adversely affect the school's results when they are being compared with those found in most schools and with those of similar schools.
8. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 6, standards in speaking are below those expected nationally. Attainment in writing is broadly average and pupils write for different purposes. However, though the standard of presentation and the quality of pupils' handwriting is satisfactory overall, there are inconsistencies throughout the school.
9. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is average in Year 6. They can use different strategies to carry out mathematical calculations and higher attainers understand the relationship between percentages, decimals and fractions. They put this knowledge to good use when working out problems related to every day situations.
10. Pupils in Year 6 are split into two groups according to their prior attainment in English and mathematics and this is proving to be successful in ensuring that they make the progress they should.
11. Standards in science are broadly average in Year 6. Pupils cover a good range of topics and learn how to carry out investigations successfully. A strength throughout the school is pupils' understanding of what makes a test fair. A weakness is their ability to interpret information presented in the form of graphs.
12. In ICT, standards are similar to those found in most schools in Years 2 and 6 and they are improving. Pupils make good progress and most teachers provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects.
13. Pupils' skills in art and design, design and technology and geography are not being developed satisfactorily in some classes in Years 3 to 6 and standards in Year 6 are not as good as those found in most schools. In Years 1 and 2, standards in those subjects are broadly average. In all other subjects inspected, pupils' attainments were in line with those found in most schools. Religious education is to be the subject of a separate inspection by diocesan inspectors.
14. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, in part because the targets set out in their individual educational plans are clear and achievable. Another reason for their achieving well is that they receive good support and guidance from trained learning assistants. Every small step is celebrated, which raises pupils' self-esteem and spurs them on to the next target. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from working with others of a similar ability during literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils throughout the school who learn more slowly and need extra help benefit from the successful implementation of the Additional Literacy Support Strategy (ALS). Reading and writing skills are reinforced and extended during short but intensive sessions with support assistants.
15. The school ensures that higher attainers are challenged but has not yet identified any gifted or talented pupils.

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

16. Pupils show good, positive, attitudes to the school. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn and are willing to talk about their favourite subjects and activities. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers, tackle new learning with enthusiasm, and try hard to reach the standards expected of them. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils worked hard at adding together three-digit numbers, and as a result, they could explain why they had chosen to work it out mentally or by column.
17. Despite enjoying school and being keen to learn, there are still too many pupils whose parents do not ensure that they attend school regularly. Although there has been an improvement on last year's attendance rate, levels of attendance still remain below the national average and are, therefore, unsatisfactory. The school actively discourages parents from taking children out of school during term time for either holidays or casual days off. In spite of this, there are too many absences of this nature and unauthorised absence is high. Punctuality has improved owing to the school's system for first-day absence inquiry, and this has meant a significant decrease in disturbance to teaching at the start of the school day.
18. Pupils' behaviour is good, and there have been no exclusions from school. There is a marked improvement in behaviour by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, thanks to the consistent way teachers manage them effectively, and how much pupils enjoy school and want to please their teachers. They all know the school rules and the consequences of poor behaviour. Most pupils do as they are told without question, listen to others' points of view and are polite to visitors. There is no evidence of racial tension, sexism or bullying, and it is a strength of the school that it is run as a civilised Christian community which sets standards for pupils to follow in later life.
19. Pupils' personal development and the relationships which exist between pupils, and pupils and staff, are good. From their first days in the nursery, children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by choosing the activities they wish to complete. Pupils understand how their actions affect others, not just in school, but in the wider world, and they give generously to both local and national charities, including CAFOD (Catholic Aid for Overseas Development).
20. The school is successful in building up pupils' self esteem and sense of community responsibility so that by the time they reach Years 5 and 6, they are *Buddies* in the infant playground, prefects and house captains. The democratically run school council sets high standards of social responsibility, with two elected members from each class and their own chairman, secretary and treasurer. They discuss initiatives and important matters to do with the running of the school community, and in this way learn how to deal with issues in society and their consequences.
21. The school puts great effort into ensuring that all pupils have access to every activity and opportunity it provides for them, both internally and with outside professional help through the local education authority and EAZ personnel.
22. Pupils who have special educational needs show similar attitudes to other pupils. They are keen to learn and want to do well. The small number of pupils who have special educational needs linked to difficulties with behaviour and paying attention are helped by classroom assistants who often sit near them during whole-class activities. They remind them not to call out and help them to take part in discussions.

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

23. In the relatively short period of time since the school opened, teachers have worked hard to establish a team approach that is successful in raising standards. All lessons observed were satisfactory or better, 63 per cent were good or better and 18 per cent very good. The good or better teaching was predominantly in English, mathematics, science and ICT and accounts for pupils' good achievement in these subjects. However, taking into account the quality of teaching in all other subjects, teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6. In all classes, teachers take great care to involve all pupils in every activity.
24. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the Foundation Stage and children get off to a fine start. Teachers ensure that the curriculum is suitable for young children and that activities are of a practical nature. This helps children to find things out for themselves and increases their level of independence. A strength of the teaching is the way that teachers and support staff constantly talk with children. They speak clearly and explain tasks carefully, which in turn helps children to clarify their own thinking and to ask questions about the work in hand. Recent improvements to planning have ensured that activities are more specifically targeted to the needs of individual children. Despite the best efforts of the school, valuable opportunities for outdoor play are missed because there is no permanent and suitably equipped area.
25. Teachers put the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to good use in lessons. The teaching of reading and writing is effective throughout the school. Teachers' good subject knowledge comes to the fore and, for example, they are confident in helping pupils to recognise the differences and similarities between persuasive argument and balanced argument. However, there are inconsistencies in the teaching of handwriting and in some classes the presentation of pupils' work needs improving. In addition, opportunities for developing and consolidating writing are not always taken up in subjects such as science, history and geography. A strength of the teaching in mathematics is the way that teachers use their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm to plan interesting activities. Mental work features prominently in lessons. Pupils in Year 5, for example, enjoyed costing furniture for a garden. As a result of the strong emphasis on developing numeracy skills in Years 1 and 2, it is likely that most pupils in Year 2 will reach the expected level in national tests this year.
26. The teaching of science is good. Teachers plan lessons well so that there is a good balance between instruction, practical work, observation and discussion. When teachers allow pupils to write up their observations in some detail it has a positive effect on the quality of work produced. However, in some classes, pupils are simply required to complete worksheets, thereby missing opportunities to develop their writing skills alongside their scientific skills. A common weakness, recognised by the school, is that teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on developing pupils' ability to interpret information presented in the form of graphs.
27. Successful in-service training in ICT has helped to raise the expertise and confidence of teachers with the result that the quality of teaching is good overall. A particular strength is the way teachers use the interactive whiteboards to introduce new skills in a planned sequence, one step at a time. Once mastered, these skills are put to good use in other subjects in most classes.

28. Teaching in history, music and physical education is satisfactory overall and this enables pupils to reach standards in these subjects that are typical nationally. It was not possible to make a judgement about teaching in design and technology. However, discussions with teachers and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that skills are not being developed systematically, especially in Years 3 to 6. Moreover, in some classes, design and technology is given a low priority. As a result, progress overall is unsatisfactory and pupils are not reaching national expectations at the end of Year 6. There is a similar picture in the teaching of art and design. Although some good teaching was observed in Year 4, and pupils in Year 5 reaped the benefit of very good teaching by a visiting specialist in the techniques of Batik, standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 are below those typical for pupils of that age.
29. Teaching in geography is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. No geography lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6 during the inspection. However, scrutiny of teachers' planning, pupils' written work and classroom displays indicates that there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn at first hand or to use their mathematical skills in the course of geographical investigation. For example, there is little evidence to show that pupils' mapping skills are being developed systematically as they move up the school. The work in Year 6 in particular lacks quantity and depth and as a result, pupils do not reach national expectations in geography.
30. Teachers use a wide enough range of methods in their teaching. All teachers make the learning objectives clear at the start of lessons and review what pupils have learned at the end. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning. Teachers often use questioning well and go on to develop pupils' answers to reinforce a teaching point. However, in some classes, teachers ask questions of only pupils who put up their hands.
31. Most teachers make satisfactory use of homework to help pupils to learn. From the Foundation Stage, pupils are expected to read at home and as they get older they are generally given more frequent and difficult homework, particularly in English.
32. Planning is good in most subjects especially in English, mathematics, science and ICT. It is often detailed and clearly describes what pupils are to learn. The best planning gives details of key questions and lists the points to be made and activities for groups of pupils of differing attainment. Good examples are the plans for guided reading sessions which teachers also use to record pupils' responses during the activity.
33. A particular strength of the teaching is the way that teachers and support staff manage pupils. Their success is built on the good relationships that all staff have with pupils. Adults treat pupils kindly and with respect and they respond by trying to please their teachers. Praise is given when appropriate and pupils take pride in receiving house points for their efforts. Another strength is the way that teachers make good use of a wide variety of teaching resources in some lessons. For example, the use of letter fans in Years 1 and 2 speeded up the pace of learning in literacy. In Year 6, the teacher used banner sentences to help maintain pupils' interest as they determined the connective with the most impact. Teachers capture pupils' interest by using the inter-active whiteboards. Lessons generally move at a brisk pace and no time is lost getting down to work. In a physical education lesson in Year 6, pupils quickly organised who did what in each group because their teacher had been very precise about what each activity involved.
34. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. There are some references in teachers' planning to specific pupils and the support they will receive and this is supplemented by additional sheets so it is very clear how their needs will be met.

Support staff make a valuable contribution to the good progress pupils make. They are briefed before a lesson and make teachers aware of any outstanding issues. Without their strong guidance, pupils with special educational needs would not make such good progress.

35. The quality of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. Teachers monitor pupils' work in the class, giving guidance and advice as needed. They mark pupils' work in an encouraging way. However, with the exception of Year 6, pupils are not generally informed about what they need to do next to improve their work. Teachers have made a start on using the information gained from their assessments of what pupils know and can do to set individual targets for them but this is in the very early stages of development.

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

36. The curriculum planned for pupils meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Most subjects receive a satisfactory allocation of time. However, the time allocated to art and design, design and technology and music in some classes is below that found in most other schools. Religious education follows a scheme approved by the local Archdiocese. A common and consistent system for teachers' planning is in place. Pupils with special needs are well provided for and suitable arrangements exist for the small number of Traveller children. Provision for personal, social and health education is sound. The range of activities outside lessons is satisfactory and includes clubs for sport, music, gardening and ICT.
37. The Foundation Stage curriculum is fully in place and provides well for children in all the areas of learning and in preparing them for transition to the National Curriculum, although opportunities for outside learning activities in the reception class are limited by the lack of a permanent appropriately equipped area. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented well and are successfully supplemented by additional programmes for those pupils who require extra help in both subjects. As a consequence, most pupils achieve well in the acquisition of basic skills. The school's provision for ICT includes a new, well-equipped computer suite, which is used effectively to develop pupils' skills. Several classrooms benefit from interactive whiteboards, which are used appropriately to provide additional learning opportunities. The school makes satisfactory use of the most recent national guidelines in most areas of the curriculum and supplements them with other materials in some subjects such as science and geography.
38. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory and the school is working towards a *Healthy School Accreditation*. Outside agencies are regularly involved in raising awareness across the whole school about aspects of health education on a day set aside for this purpose. For example, a topic for the previous term was drugs education. The moral aspect of sex education is addressed through the religious education programme.
39. Visits, visitors and special events enrich the learning opportunities for pupils. For example, children in the reception class and their parents visit the science museum. A visitor to Year 2 helped them understand how days at the seaside have changed over the last fifty years and a former *Pit Brow Lassie* is due to visit Year 4 to give them insight into local working conditions of the last century. The local library and industrial museum are used effectively as additional learning resources. The school recently held a successful *Book Week* to promote literary awareness. From time to time pupils take



part in musical and other performances before invited audiences. Appropriate links with the Church are well established and parishioners helped to organise the library. Satisfactory contacts with other local educational establishments include links with the local secondary school, which pupils visit prior to admission. The school welcomes a range of students for a variety of purposes, which include work experience and a range of professional training. A member of the teaching staff has had responsibility for training teachers from other schools in the use of ICT. The school is part of an EAZ and has recently received a School Achievement Award for the second year in succession. There are appropriate links with the wider community, such as the provision of professional coaching by local rugby and football teams and pupils act as *cheer leaders* at local matches. The school is involved in the *Sports England* project. Good links exist with families of pre-school children through the *mum and toddlers* group and the *pre-school play* group.

40. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall.
41. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Christian teaching firmly underpins the life of the school and this is the strength of the provision. Acts of worship, prayer times during the school day and Masses make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Classrooms have an area set aside for quiet reflection. There are occasional examples in lessons where pupils are asked to empathise with the circumstances of others, for example, with literary or historical characters. A group of pupils in Year 5 marvelled at the wonder of technology and children in the nursery were enthralled by the snails they found in the garden. Nevertheless, more could be done to ensure that such good practice is shared more widely and in more subjects so that pupils experience more frequently the excitement of discovery in science and mathematics and the emotion and delight of poetry, art and music.
42. Provision for moral education is good, often closely linked to the provision for social development. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and this is constantly reinforced through a system of rewards and sanctions. They respond well to having their achievements recognised publicly in the *Well Done Assembly* held every week. Assemblies often have a moral theme. During the inspection it was *Forgiveness*. In lessons such as history, older pupils consider the causes and consequences and moral aspects of industrial and educational reform during the Victorian period. In geography, they address environmental issues such as pollution.
43. Provision for social development is good. Many children enter the nursery with poor social skills. The school provides good opportunities for them to develop socially, so that by the time they leave Year 6, the vast majority have learned how to relate to others, take responsibility for their own actions and have experienced looking after younger children. There is a general expectation by adults that pupils will work co-operatively during lessons in pairs or sometimes in groups if necessary. Older pupils help to look after younger ones in the playground and act as reading partners as part of the *Buddy System*. There are good opportunities to show care and concern for others through fund raising activities for charities such as *CAFOD* and the *Sir Malcolm Sargent Cancer Appeal*. Pupils of all ages undertake useful jobs to assist in the smooth running of the school and the school delegates greater responsibility to the older pupils who act as house captains and prefects. The School Council is an elected body of pupils of all ages which concerns itself with important aspects of school life such as litter collection, raising money for the gardening club and discussions about the types of competitions to be included on sports day. The recent appointment of a learning mentor is proving beneficial in helping to raise the self-esteem of some pupils. Extra-curricular clubs provide sound opportunities to meet socially and include a *Breakfast Club*.

44. Provision for cultural education is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own culture through literature, history and music. There are appropriate opportunities for them to learn a musical instrument, sing in the choir and perform before an audience or congregation. However, learning opportunities for pupils to encounter other cultures are more limited. Although pupils in Year 5 explore the music of famous European composers as part of their programme of study, overall the traditions of other cultures are under-represented in music, art and literature. More could be done to involve visits and visitors from different cultures to share experiences with the pupils so that they gain more insight into the ethnic and cultural diversity which exists in British society today.

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

45. The school is a safe and secure environment for pupils and looks after its pupils well. Suitable health and safety measures are in place and are followed closely. There is good supervision of pupils and the day-to-day working practices of all staff in caring for pupils are exemplary. Arrangements for child protection are good. The deputy headteacher is the designated teacher for the school, and she has had recent training with other agencies for this vital role. Other staff have also received training and are familiar with the procedures for child protection. The school is working towards the *Healthy Schools Award*, and pupils have a varied lunchtime menu. Pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2 benefit from free fruit, and healthy eating is further encouraged through the personal social and health education programme. There are clear guidelines for helping pupils who are new to the school to settle in and feel welcome. Fire and electrical safety are a priority and regular risk assessments are carried out and recorded properly. First aid and medical provision are good.
46. Teachers and support staff are as concerned about pupils' personal development as they are about their academic progress. They know their pupils and their families extremely well and do all they can to help pupils and parents get the most from what the school has to offer. For example, the *Breakfast Club* offers a range of activities before school, in addition to the other extra-curricular clubs, and family learning activities are provided for parents and pupils together. The school monitors and supports pupils' personal development effectively.
47. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and are already having a positive affect on attendance. The headteacher and staff are united in their efforts to improve attendance and it is carefully monitored on a daily basis. There is very good liaison with the educational welfare department and the attendance officer, provided through the EAZ initiative. The class awards for best attendance at the weekly *Well Done* assembly and the 100 per cent attendance certificates for individual pupils are having an excellent effect on pupils' attendance at the school.
48. Behaviour and procedures to discourage bullying are also well monitored. The school encourages good behaviour by taking a positive approach and a reward system which is consistently applied by all the school staff. The main sanction for unsatisfactory behaviour is to keep a pupil in school at break time or lunchtime or both. Examination of the school's detention records reveals a distinct improvement in pupils' behaviour as they mature at the school. This is evidence of the good effect the school's high expectations for good behaviour has on its pupils.
49. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. Assessments of pupils' achievements in English mathematics, science and ICT are good. Progress is checked carefully through a variety of school and national tests.

However, there is insufficient use of the analysis of test results to plan work, set targets for pupils to achieve and to guide curricular planning; this is unsatisfactory. In addition, there is no whole-school approach to the assessment and recording of pupils' achievements in some subjects such as art and design, design and technology and geography. The school is aware of the need to ensure that this weakness is rectified if standards are to improve in these subjects.

50. There is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and they are well supported and carefully monitored both academically and personally. The recently appointed learning mentor plays a very important role in supporting pupils' educational and pastoral needs, which supplements the good work of teachers and teaching assistants. The learning mentor also follows up unexplained absences of pupils during each morning and this has already led to an improvement in both attendance and punctuality this year.

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

51. Parents' views of the school are positive. Most agree their children enjoy school and are expected to work hard. They feel children are taught well and they are free to raise queries at any time with teachers. The school has the confidence of its parents.
52. A few parents felt they required more information on their children's progress and that there was either too much or too little homework. A smaller number thought that extra-curricular activities should be better. Inspection findings on these issues raised by parents before the inspection ascertained that there is no cause for concern. On the contrary, the school gives a good amount of very useful information to parents about all aspects of school life and their children's education, and annual reports on pupils' progress are good. They tell parents how pupils have performed during the year, in plain language, and highlight areas for improvement and their targets for the following year. Very good quality information is given to parents of pre-school children in booklet form, and parents find this and the pre-school visits of great benefit. The school does provide an interesting range of activities and clubs, and these are still being added to through the recently formed *Breakfast Club*. Homework is set at an appropriate level and parents are expected to become involved in children's learning. For example, unless parents sign their child's reading diary, the child cannot exchange a book.
53. The school works very hard to involve parents in the life of the school. They are welcomed into school for assemblies, Masses and other events and performances, and many parents attend on these occasions. Open evenings to discuss progress or new initiatives are usually well attended, and care is taken to ensure that parents who do not attend are updated. The *Family Learning Project* is managed well and a variety of interesting parenting courses are undertaken. There is a good response from parents for these courses and they benefit significantly from them. For example, courses have been run on the development of early reading and numeracy skills. In addition, science taster workshops have been held and parents accompany their children on visits to the local community library. As a result, parents are making a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning, both at school and at home.
54. Parents are supportive and generous when it comes to raising money for the school and helping when required. For example, one group recently spent a day erecting a shed in the grounds to hold play equipment, while another re-organised the main library. Parents support school events enthusiastically and some help staff in the classroom, particularly during pupils' early years.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The school meets its aims successfully and there is a prevailing Christian ethos. The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has worked hard with staff to build up a good team spirit and give the new school a sense of direction. This has not always been easy and some tough decisions have been made, especially with regard to staffing levels. He has been successful in ensuring that all pupils, no matter what their background, are fully integrated and cared for well. The deputy headteacher provides good support. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The two administrative staff work very hard and ensure that procedures are followed and visitors made welcome.
56. Subject co-ordinators carry out their defined duties conscientiously. However, in no subject is there a whole-school approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning. There is no co-ordinator for art and design and design and technology. As a result, variation in pupils' achievements are not being picked up and dealt with. In ICT, for example, the co-ordinator has put in place a good system for recording pupils' progress but in one class consistent use is not made of this system. Because the senior management team has not put in place a regular monitoring system this issue of an agreed school policy not being followed has not been addressed.
57. The governing body meets all legal requirements and has in place all the requisite committees. Governors have a satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses but have not been sufficiently involved in strategic management issues. They are very much aware of this and, in fact, last year governors judged their involvement in the formation of the school development plan as being inadequate. They also rightly considered that some of their committees, such as those for staffing and finance, did not have sufficient input. As a result, the governing body is now far more questioning and acts appropriately as a *critical friend*.
58. Performance management systems have been fully implemented and the governors have approved a racial equality policy for the school. In practice, the policy merely affirms what is a very important aspect of school life.
59. The school has a well-written school development plan that has suitably defined targets for improvement. It is firmly focused on raising standards but the actual criteria for success are not entirely clearly defined. The school takes appropriate action to meet its targets. For example, last year it met its target for attainment in English and exceeded it in mathematics. The targets set for this year are realistic and achievable.
60. Financial planning and management are satisfactory. The school is currently holding well over 5 per cent of its budget in reserve. However, the number of pupils is due to fall over the next few years. The school is very aware of this issue and the need to meet all its financial obligations with regard to this matter. It has put in place a strategic plan to ensure that the reducing budget does not leave the school with a financial deficit. The school conscientiously follows clear financial procedures. The most recent audit report found systems to be satisfactory and the recommendations are being acted upon. There are appropriate systems in place for the ordering of goods and services and the headteacher and governors show a good understanding of the need to obtain value for money. The school benefits greatly from additional funding from the EAZ initiative and uses this money to good effect. Visiting specialist teachers and improved resources for ICT have both been very successful in helping the school to raise standards.

61. The management of special needs is good. The co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, carries out all her duties conscientiously and maintains effective contacts with staff, parents and outside agencies. The school uses funding for these pupils wisely, particularly in terms of the employment and training of learning assistants. This contributes to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.
62. The school has a satisfactory number of teachers to meet the needs of the pupils and to teach the National Curriculum. Teachers are suitably qualified for their roles, and there is a good balance of experience and expertise. Teachers are ably supported by a good number of well-trained classroom assistants, who have clear responsibilities and provide carefully focused help in lessons. The quality of administration and caretaking is also good and this ensures that the school runs smoothly. A staff handbook provides new teachers with valuable information about routines and procedures, and there is additional help from teachers acting as mentors, when needed. Induction procedures for new staff are adequate. Arrangements for the professional development of staff work well and are closely linked to the needs of the school. There are written job descriptions for every post at the school. Performance management appraisals are being carried out effectively.
63. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and is suitable for the effective teaching of the curriculum. There is ample classroom and assembly space for the number of pupils, which is forecast to fall in the future. There is a good sized and well-equipped computer suite, which is used well, and the two libraries are appropriately located. The grounds are of a good size, but the playgrounds are bare of play structures and seating and have not been developed. The outdoor provision for reception pupils is unsatisfactory, because it is insufficiently accessible for continuous provision.
64. The school has sufficient learning resources to teach the curriculum. For mathematics and ICT, resources are good and they are used effectively. For English, science and music, resources are satisfactory in quantity and usage. For design and technology, while there is an adequate supply of tools, there has been no recent inventory taken of materials available to teachers so it is very difficult to make an accurate judgement about the adequacy of resources overall. Art and design resources are stored in separate parts of the building for ease of accessibility. Some large apparatus for use in physical education is not always easy to get at. There is a general shortage of artefacts to teach history and some of the atlases for use in geography are out of date. Good use is made of visits and visitors to provide pupils with first-hand experiences in some subjects.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should:

**1. Ensure that teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated in all subjects by:**

- providing training for members of staff to develop the skills necessary for them to undertake the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning;
- establishing a manageable programme for co-ordinators to carry out their duties and make sure that agreed policies, such as marking, handwriting and the presentation of work, are being carried out consistently by all staff;
- ensuring that subject co-ordinators report regularly to senior managers on the outcomes of their evaluations and that the information gathered is used to improve standards in subjects.

(See paragraphs 25, 56, 84, 88, 96, 102, 120 and 133 in the main report)

**2. Establish whole-school assessment procedures to ascertain what pupils know, understand and can do in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT and in all subjects ensure that the information gathered is used to improve standards.**

(See paragraphs 35, 49, 89, 96, 102, 127 and 133 in the main report)

**3. Improve standards in art and design, design and technology and geography in Years 3 to 6 by ;**

- providing teachers with clear guidance on what is to be taught in each subject in each year group;
- reviewing the time allocated to art and design and design and technology in Years 3 to 6.

(See paragraphs 13, 28, 29, 36 and 103 - 114 in the main report)

**4. Reinforce the strategies in place to raise pupils' levels of attendance.**

(See paragraph 17 in the main report)

### **In addition the school should also**

- Develop the outside play area for children in the reception class.  
(See paragraphs 24, 63 and 66 in the main report)
- Review the use of worksheets throughout the school.  
(See paragraphs 26, 87, 91, 100 and 119 in the main report)
- Encourage teachers to involve as many pupils as possible in class discussions by not just asking pupils with their hands up to answer questions.  
(See paragraphs 30, 80 and 95 in the main report)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

## Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		10	25	20			
Percentage		18	45	36			

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 one percentage point.

## 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)	13	235
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	108

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	54

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

## Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.9
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	12	17	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	22	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (61)	79 (54)	86(79)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90(91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	9
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	22	25	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76(64)	86(79)	76(89)
	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	19	16	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	18	19
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	29	32	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83(78)	91(83)	97(85)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	14
	Girls	13	14	15
	Total	23	26	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66(73)	74(80)	83(80)
	National	73(72)	74(74)	82(82)

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



## Ethnic background of pupils

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

## Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
234	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.2:1
Average class size	24.5

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	227

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26:1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	49
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	635,045
Total expenditure	602,292
Expenditure per pupil	2308
Balance brought forward from previous year	88,728
Balance carried forward to next year	121,481

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	278
Number of questionnaires returned	83

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	31	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	63	30	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	29	2	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	29	13	2	4
The teaching is good.	70	23	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	35	12	6	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	17	6	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	22	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	43	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	23	4	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	29	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	39	10	2	6

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

## **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**

66. The quality of provision in the nursery and reception is good overall. The school has been awarded the local authority's *Kitemark*. However, opportunities for outside learning activities in the reception class are limited by the lack of a permanent appropriately equipped area.
67. Most children enter the nursery with skills which are well below those typical for their age, particularly in linguistic and social development. By the end of the reception year, a few high attainers achieve all the learning goals for the age group but rarely exceed them. Difficulties in the use of language prevent most from achieving all the expected goals despite having made good progress. Almost all children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. These judgements are supported by evidence taken from assessments taken throughout the Foundation Stage. One of the factors, that contributes significantly to the good progress made by the children, including the small number of reception age in the Year 1 classes, is the good quality of teaching.

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

68. Great emphasis is placed on this area of learning and the expectations of all the adults are consistently high. Children's individual needs are sensitively catered for and those with special needs are well supported. Teaching is of good quality. In the nursery, the children show satisfactory skills of independence in selecting equipment to play with and in managing personal matters such as in putting on overalls for water play and washing their hands prior to baking. Most manage to concentrate on activities until they are completed to their satisfaction. Only occasionally does the attention of a few boys wander, for example, during story time. Most children are aware of the need to share the attention of adults with others. In reception, most children are attentive and eager to learn. They are able to respond to the questions of adults in both large and small groups and can stay focused on tasks without direct supervision. In all the lessons observed standards of behaviour were good and children responded well to the needs of others. For example, both classes proceeded to the hall very quietly, with minimum intervention from the teacher, so as not to disturb the rest of the school. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are introduced to aspects of their own faith but there are only limited opportunities to encounter other cultures and beliefs.

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

69. By the end of the reception year, the majority of children achieve well in communication, language and literacy. The main factor which prevents many from achieving the goals in this area is their limited vocabulary. This shows in a lack of confidence when it comes to talking to those not known to them, and in below average use of language to organise, sequence and clarify their thinking and to ask questions about why things happen and why things work.
70. Good opportunities for new experiences are provided both indoors and outdoors in the nursery. For example, children searched in the bushes, found some snails, and brought them indoors to observe their features through magnifiers. This resulted in

lively discussion about their observations when they were introduced to the term *tentacles*. There are sound opportunities to share books at various points in the school day, both in the book corner and when listening to stories on the listening centre and at story time. Children learn to recognise words in print by selecting their name card on arrival at nursery. Several write recognisable letters when *making marks* during their play. These experiences are further developed in the reception class. Higher attaining children are beginning to write words independently and attempt a sentence. There is strong emphasis on associating the visual symbol of letters with their sounds and on learning to form the letters correctly. Higher attaining children are able to read the early books of the school's reading scheme. Average and lower attainers recognise familiar words and enjoy an increasing range of books. The quality of teaching is good. Opportunities to develop language are encouraged in many activities. Teachers speak clearly and explain tasks carefully.

### **Mathematical development.**

71. Children, in both nursery and reception, including those with special needs, achieve well. Nevertheless, attainment levels in mathematics, by the end of reception, are below those expected by the age group because many children have difficulty in using mathematical language. For example, when asked questions such as *Which is the bigger circle?* most can demonstrate their knowledge but do so by pointing rather than by expressing themselves verbally.
72. Many opportunities are created for children to count, sort and match objects as part of their play throughout the foundation stage. The learning of number rhymes reinforces their knowledge. Every day objects are used to introduce the idea of addition and subtraction. For example in reception, children counted the number of toy animals in two groups as a means of finding the total. They make comparisons of *more* and *less* and most handle numbers to 10 correctly. The quality of teaching is good. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the use of the correct terminology during the course of direct teaching.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world.**

73. Throughout the Foundation Stage, there are good opportunities for children to investigate objects and materials and the teaching is of good quality. In the nursery, the environment for learning is much enhanced by the provision of a well-equipped outdoor area. For example, during the inspection, alterations were made to the planned activities to take advantage of a windy day. Children were able to fly butterflies, which they had made, and to observe the colours of the windmill which changed according to the speed of the wind. In the reception class every effort is made to utilise the resources available. However, the arrangements for outdoor play activities are unsatisfactory mainly because the outdoor area is not permanently available. This makes it impossible to plan continuously for children's learning and, in consequence, valuable opportunities are missed. Within the reception classroom good imaginative role-play resulted from a recent visit from the nurse. The children themselves designated an additional *accident unit* in addition to *the hospital* created by the teacher. Children in both nursery and reception develop satisfactory skills in ICT. In reception, their learning is enhanced by the use of an interactive whiteboard, set at a height for them to use when working as part of the class or a group.

### **Physical development.**

74. The nursery outdoor area includes equipment for regular access to activities such as climbing, jumping and balancing and the ramp is a popular area for play. An ample supply of wheeled toys for pushing and pulling and sufficient small apparatus such as hoops and balls are available to both classes. Children in both the nursery and reception enjoy additional sessions in the hall and respond well to the imaginative choice of music, which the teachers use as a stimulus for movement. The quality of teaching seen in these sessions was very good. Throughout the Foundation Stage activities in the classroom develop children's manipulative skills successfully in the safe use of a wide range of tools and equipment. There is good emphasis on the promotion of healthy living, for example, in the provision of fruit to eat at snack time. Most children achieve well and are in line to achieve the goals in this area of learning.

### **Creative development.**

75. The school has identified creative development as an area for improvement. Current provision and the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but musical aspects are much stronger than the creative exploration of media and materials. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to join in songs, explore the sounds made by a range of instruments, including improvised percussion, and to move imaginatively to music. Opportunities exist for children to paint and draw, make constructions and collages, and produce pictures using ICT. Nevertheless there is scope for children to develop further in the expression of imaginative language and ideas through creative work.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the Foundation Stage and there are some very good features. Support staff provide good help and are valued members of the team. Both teachers have a very good knowledge of how young children learn. They plan activities carefully based on observations, which are used successfully to assess attainment. Recent amendments to the medium-term plans in reception are resulting in activities, which are more specifically targeted to the needs of individual children. Both teachers make good use of the resources available and the nursery nurses, care assistant and parent helpers are well briefed. Homework in the reception class is useful and relevant, which together with a range of other initiatives are successful in involving parents in their children's learning.
77. The two Foundation Stage teachers share the co-ordinator's role effectively. Together they have produced informative booklets for parents, including one for the playgroup, which most children attend prior to entry and is run by the nursery teacher. There is an appropriate action plan for improvement. Resources are plentiful and of satisfactory quality overall apart from the outdoor provision for the reception class.

### **ENGLISH**

78. Standards are below what would normally be expected for pupils at the end of Year 2. However, this represents good achievement for these pupils since most of them joined the school with very poorly developed language and communication skills. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average and the school is likely to achieve its target for attainment in English in the 2003 national tests. The target is lower than the one set for 2002 but it is realistic because it takes account of the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Although these pupils achieve as well as they can, a

significant number do not reach the expected level for their age because of their particular learning difficulties.

79. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils are learning and achieving well. Another contributory factor to this good level of achievement is the hard work of the subject co-ordinator to find ways of improving standards. This has led to a review of the curriculum and planning with a view to raising pupils' attainment. For example, gaps in pupils' attainment in writing in Years 1 and 2 are being filled by acting on the good advice and support of the LEA. As a result, standards in writing by the end of Year 2 rose significantly in the 2002 national tests. Another success is the improvement to the plenary session at the end of lessons. This is now longer and more focused and provides teachers with good opportunities to check what pupils have learnt during lessons.
80. Speaking and listening skills are developed well through effective teaching and the good learning opportunities provided by teachers. Children enter the nursery with well below average speaking and listening skills, and although at the end of Year 6, skills are still below those expected, most pupils are fairly confident when it comes to joining in discussions and giving their opinions about the books they have read. Teachers encourage pupils to answer questions and talk about their work. For example, pupils in Year 4 read their nursery rhyme epitaphs to the class and gave each other good ideas about how they could improve their work. Pupils listen politely to their teachers. However, a significant number of pupils are passive listeners and are reluctant to answer questions. They are not drawn into the activities by their teachers and consequently do not make any contribution to whole class tasks at the beginning and end of literacy lessons. Some teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to engage in discussions in pairs or in groups.
81. A strong feature of teaching throughout the school is the way in which teachers guide pupils' reading, working with small groups of pupils. These develop pupils' reading and comprehension skills as well as broadening their vocabulary. Questions from teachers such as '*What do you think....?*' encourage pupils to discuss and justify their views. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are good at teaching pupils a range of strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words. They are taught to look for clues in the pictures and to build up words by sounding them out so that they are always able to have a go at difficult ones. Pupils in Year 1 were helped to guess the hidden rhyming words in their story because their teacher had covered each one with card in the shape of the word. Pupils of all abilities say that they enjoy reading although some are shy when talking about their preferences in books. By the end of Year 6, pupils speak about their favourite books and authors and compare J. K. Rowlings' books with those of Roald Dahl.
82. In all classes, teachers expect pupils to read every day, at home and at school and this has a good effect on pupils' interest and achievements in reading. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make good use of reading diaries to keep a check on pupils' reading and as a means of communicating with parents. A weakness in the teaching of reading is that pupils have too few opportunities to use reference books for independent research. Although the library is used regularly for pupils to choose fiction books, it is not used often enough to enhance either pupils' library or research skills.

83. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given a satisfactory range of experiences to develop their writing including stories, informal letters and instructions. While the lower-attaining pupils make free use of *and then* to keep their stories going, higher attaining pupils can use adverbs such as *screamed loudly* and exclamation marks for effect. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher captured the pupils' interest very effectively by using examples of limericks and riddles. This helped them to recognise the different characteristics of both and led to higher attaining pupils writing their own riddles with some success. Another strong feature of the lesson was the way in which the teacher broadened the pupils' vocabulary as she explained phrases such as *of momentary delight*. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher helped pupils to develop their skills in writing a balanced argument. A strong emphasis was placed on the importance of the connective to give the opposite point of view. As a result, pupils used connectives such as *however*, *alternatively* and *on the other hand* to link their paragraphs. Another good feature of the teaching in Year 6 is the way that the work of famous writers, such as Shakespeare, Charles Dickens and Charles Kingsley are used as stimuli for pupils' own writing. For example, *Cider with Rosie* by Laurie Lee has been used as an example of an autobiography.
84. Overall, the standard of presentation of pupils' work is satisfactory. However, standards of handwriting and the presentation of work are inconsistent throughout the school. For example, some pupils in Years 3 to 6 still do not always join their letters and change from pencil to pen and vice versa.
85. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have good levels of knowledge and understanding in the subject and teach the basic skills well. Effective planning means that work is appropriately matched to pupils' levels of ability. Relationships within classrooms are good and teachers manage pupils well so that no time is lost maintaining good behaviour. Homework supports learning effectively with pupils taking home written work, spellings and reading. Teachers conscientiously mark pupils' work in a supportive manner. However, with one exception, they generally do not point to where pupils need to improve to make further gains in their learning. This means that although pupils look forward to receiving praise and rewards, such as house points for their efforts, they have no clear picture about what they need to do next. The assessment and tracking system is beginning to help teachers to check the progress that pupils make and a start has been made on using assessment information to set individual targets for pupils to focus on in their work.
86. As well as successfully implementing the National Literacy Strategy, the school has also implemented the recommended additional strategies that are available to help those pupils who learn more slowly and need extra help in lessons. Good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs. Strong teaching, together with competent guidance from trained assistants, helps these pupils to make the same good progress as other pupils, albeit from a different starting point.
87. Pupils make satisfactory use of their literacy skills in other subjects particularly in science, history and religious education. There are good opportunities to learn skills of word processing in the computer suite. However, opportunities are missed when excessive emphasis is placed on using worksheets where pupils have to write only one word or a short sentence. ICT is used well, especially to word process pupils' work.

88. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear identification of priorities for development and a strong will to ensure that action is taken to meet the school's targets for improvement. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in order to identify where teachers need further training. There are plans afoot to change the library to a computerised system with the aim of improving pupils' access to books. Although resources are satisfactory overall, the range and quality of reading books are good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

89. In the last two years, standards of attainment in mathematics in Year 6 have been above and well above the national average by the time pupils leave. Pupils of all attainment levels have achieved very well. The main reasons for the high standards are the consistently good teaching that is highly focused on ensuring that pupils' develop the necessary numeracy skills and are given time to use them and the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. When compared to the results in similar schools in 2002, results were in the top five per cent in the country. There are no significant differences between the results of boys and girls. Inspection evidence shows that standards are not as high this year because of the higher number of pupils in the age group with special educational needs related to learning difficulties. In the current Year 6, standards are broadly average but only a small number of pupils are working at a higher level. However, taking into account pupils' prior attainment, this represents good achievement overall.
90. In the short time the school has been open the results of national tests for pupils in Year 2 have been below average. The school recognised this as an issue and has taken effective steps to rectify the situation. These have brought about a gradual improvement in standards and teaching is now better focussed on developing pupils' numeracy skills. As a result, it is likely that most pupils will attain the expected level in the subject this year, with a significant number achieving at a higher level.
91. Samples of pupils' work show that throughout the school they undertake an appropriate variety of work in mathematics and tackle a range of problems during the year. However, in some classes there is too much emphasis on the use of worksheets or workbooks. Sometimes pupils do not have enough opportunity to set out the work for themselves. Classroom support assistants provide teachers with very good support and make a valuable contribution to the pupils' progress. The setting of pupils into ability groups for mathematics lessons in Year 6 is also having a significant impact on standards.
92. In Years 1 and 2, all teachers attempt to improve pupils' understanding of mathematical language and their mental agility. Some pupils find number work difficult and they receive good individual support. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 showed good skills in carrying out addition in a number of ways. Very good teaching in Year 2 ensured that pupils could interpret correctly a Venn diagram. The teacher captured their interest by using the inter-active whiteboard to good effect.
93. In one Year 5 class, pupils have very good opportunities to use their numeracy skills by taking part in the *Garden Challenge*. They have to work out problems related to finding the area, and calculating the cost of garden furniture. Many pupils in Year 3 have difficulty with problem solving and the mental recall of basic number facts. However, standards are improving because of the emphasis teachers place on developing these aspects. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6 have a sound grasp of multiplication facts and recognise the value of digits in numbers such as 25 and 390. Sometimes they do not



listen well enough to the questions being asked and despite having satisfactory knowledge give the wrong answer. For example, in one lesson the teacher asked a pupil *what fraction of 12 is 9?* The pupil gave the answer *75 per cent*, but when asked to think again came up correctly with  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Older pupils know that the three angles in a triangle add up to 180 degrees and can find the perimeter of simple shapes. In all classes, pupils learn that there are different strategies that can be used to carry out mathematical calculations. The more able pupils in Year 6 understand the relationship between percentages, decimals and fractions. For example, when asked to work out what you would pay for a laptop priced at £890 but reduced by 10% in a sale, higher attainers knew what to do. Discussions held with pupils indicate that most have a satisfactory repertoire of mathematical vocabulary and can use it appropriately.

94. The overall quality of teaching of mathematics is good. In most classes, teachers' personal enthusiasm for the subject and their high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour harness the pupils' energies so that they make good progress. As a result, the majority of pupils enjoy mathematics and have a good attitude to their work. They behave well, listen attentively and show interest in the tasks they are given. In all year groups pupils are managed effectively and teachers make good use of praise and encouragement, which helps to create a purposeful atmosphere for learning. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science, when recording the results of an investigation or the use of time lines in history.
95. Throughout the school, teachers use their knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and their pupils' prior attainment to plan interesting and relevant activities. Lessons have clear learning intentions, which are explained to pupils so that they know what they have to do. For example, in Years 1 and 2, teachers use the interactive whiteboard very well to display information to help pupils understand what they are expected to learn and to reinforce their learning experiences. Teachers work closely as a team with support staff who are deployed well and make a considerable contribution to successful learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Where teaching is satisfactory overall, not enough emphasis is placed on ensuring that all pupils are involved in answering questions. There is a tendency in some classes to ask only pupils who put up their hands. A teacher from the EAZ initiative has worked successfully with the more able pupils to improve their problem solving skills. The use of ICT in the subject is effective in most classes and pupils are becoming increasingly confident in its application. For example, in using data handling or producing graphs.
96. The co-ordinator has had some opportunities to observe the quality of teaching and learning in other classes but not in any sustained way. She has a very good knowledge of the subject and good systems are in place to assess pupils' progress. However, the information gathered is not fully used to set targets for further improvement. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully satisfies statutory requirements. The school is well placed to improve standards further.

## SCIENCE

97. Pupils' attainment in science is broadly similar to that found in most schools by the end of Years 2 and 6. An average number of pupils are working at the nationally expected standard (level 2 and level 4) but the number of pupils attaining the higher levels (level 3 and level 5) is below average. Since the school opened, standards have been improving steadily in Years 3 to 6 and in 2002 the school's results were well above the national average and the average for similar schools. However, in the current Year 6,

there is an above average number of pupils with special educational needs. This factor is likely to have a detrimental effect on the 2003 test results.

98. The good attitudes and behaviour of pupils contributes positively to the good progress they make. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils have satisfactory scientific knowledge and skills. In Year 1, they learn that there are many different ways of making sounds as they explore a variety of instruments. The teacher provided the pupils with *word guides* to help with their written work. This was effective and helped the pace of the lesson because the pupils did not have to keep asking the teacher for words. By the end of Year 2, they understand that squashing, bending, twisting or stretching can change the shape of materials. They can classify materials according to whether they are natural or man-made and can describe a fair test they have undertaken to find out the coldest place in the classroom. Skills of observation and description are being developed well. However, most pupils have difficulty expressing themselves clearly even though they have satisfactory levels of understanding. For example, one child used the phrase *different solid stuffs* instead of *different surfaces*.
99. Pupils in Year 6 cover a good range of science topics and learn sound scientific skills of enquiry. When their prior attainment is taken into account, pupils are achieving well. In Year 3, the pupils learn about healthy eating and the need for a balanced diet. They use correct scientific terminology such as *protein, carbohydrates, vitamins* and *minerals*. Such topics make a good contribution to pupils' moral development. Pupils in Year 4 investigate the effects of friction to discover *which shoe is best on a slippery floor*. An interesting fair test was undertaken by pupils in Year 5 to find out the best sound insulator. They predicted that bubble wrap would work best and were surprised when they discovered that material made out of cotton was the most effective. Pupils in Year 6, identify variables (things they could change) such as temperature, bread type and location when planning an experiment to find out the factors that make bread go mouldy the quickest.
100. From examining pupils' work and discussing it with them, it is clear that that pupils are taught to record the planning of an investigation well, using formats such as *we will need these things, we will do this, we will measure and we will keep these things the same*. This form of recording helps lower attainers record their knowledge despite some difficulties with writing. However, in some classes worksheets are over-used and this does not help pupils develop their writing skills. When pupils are allowed to write at length it has a positive effect upon the quality of the work produced. For example, one pupil in Year 1 wrote *we tried to grow some plants by using some with water and some without water. We looked every day at them and still they had not grown until one day a little shoot came up*. However, in general improvements in writing skills are not sufficiently planned for. The pupils' work indicates satisfactory development of mathematical skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 had to work out the mean average of two children's pulse rates. Insufficient use is being made of ICT in science to communicate data or to research for information.
101. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in Years 1 to 6. Teachers plan lessons that interest pupils and arouse their curiosity. In most classes the needs of all pupils are well met including those who find science difficult. In a successful Year 2 lesson about electricity, the pupils responded particularly well to the good balance between instruction, practical work, observation and discussion. As a result, pupils made good progress in learning the importance positioning batteries correctly in order to make a torch work. Pupils in one of the Year 6 classes made good progress in interpreting graphical information. Some pupils were finding it difficult but by encouraging them to discuss their ideas with a partner and to *think about the story of*

*the graph*, the teacher ensured that most were able to complete the task successfully. The co-ordinator is aware that this aspect of science (the interpretation of information presented in the form of a graph) is a weakness. In most classes the quality of teaching has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and enjoyment in the subject. A common strength is the good relationship between adults and pupils. Classroom assistants are well briefed so that they are able to support individuals and groups well.

102. The management of the subject is good overall but the co-ordinator does not monitor the quality of teaching and learning in order to find out what is being taught successfully and what needs improving. The school has introduced some good ways of finding out what pupils know, can do and understand in science. However, it does not yet make sufficient use of the information to improve standards and to target individuals and groups. Resources are satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103. No lessons were observed in design and technology. However, evidence gained from an analysis of pupils' work, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions held with staff enable judgements to be made. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the development of their art and design and design and technology skills in Years 1 and 2 and achieve standards broadly similar to those found in most schools by the end of Year 2. Standards in both subjects in Year 6 are below those expected.
104. In art and design in Years 1 and 2, pupils use a satisfactory range of media such as pencil, crayon and paint and gain a sound understanding of shape, pattern and texture. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed producing their own paintings in the style of Van Gogh after looking at the way he used different colours in his painting. They were very impressed with his bedroom and called out *Oh* in pleasure when it was shown to them. The teacher capitalised on their response and her descriptions had them looking forward to their tasks. Pupils in Year 2 made good progress making sculptures of people out of playdoh and clay. They were able to successfully add facial features to their models.
105. In Year 6, standards are below those found in most schools, though some good work was observed in other classes during the week of the inspection. For example, pupils in Year 4 discussed some of Picasso's portraits. Good questioning by the teacher elicited some interesting observations. One pupil commented, *they're weird* whilst another observed *she looks a bit deformed*. The teacher thoroughly revised the details of the task before allowing the pupils to start. As a result, they were clear what was expected and produced their own good portraits in the style of Picasso. In another Year 5 class, some good Batik work was produced by the pupils. This very good lesson was taken by a visiting specialist teacher. When the class were in process of designing their work, she encouraged the pupils to *think big*. *Think blocks* and to *have a go*. *If you don't like it, try again on the other side of the paper*. The quality of the work produced by the pupils was as good as you will see in any school and showed what the pupils could produce when given the opportunity. However, the paintings on display depicting the *Rats of Nimh* produced by one Year 6 class do not show good skill development and are uninspiring. There is only limited evidence of pupils drawing directly from observation and experiencing working with textiles and in sculpture.
106. In design and technology by the end of Year 2, pupils have experienced planning and making a suitable range of products. Evidence from work previously finished shows that the design process has been satisfactorily carried out. For example, pupils in Year 2 have successfully made a variety of wheeled vehicles and some glove puppets. In

Year 1, the pupils have designed and made fridge magnets and pop-up Christmas cards.

107. In Years 3 to 6, design and technology skills are not being developed systematically as pupils move through the school. However, there are some examples of satisfactory work. For example, pupils in one of the Year 5 classes made good progress when they were challenged to design and make a bridge over half a metre long which could hold a weight of 50 grams. There is little evidence of pupils making use of control technology for working models.
108. As no design and technology teaching was seen during the week of the inspection, it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. In art and design the quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 to 5. No teaching was observed in Year 6. In most classes, teaching usually appropriately extends pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The quality of teachers' planning is satisfactory. Some teachers have good subject expertise and use it well to challenge pupils' thinking and to extend their understanding of the work of some famous artists. This makes the lessons interesting for the pupils who enjoy the activities they undertake in art and design. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT in the subject. For example, pupils in Year 2 used the pencil and brush tools to draw skeletons in different position such as when flying a kite. However, teachers do not consistently encourage pupils' to evaluate their own and others' work and say what they think and feel about it.
109. In some classes, teachers give art and design and design and technology a low priority and this significantly affects the progress pupils make and reduces the impact of the subject on their development. There are two significant reasons for the variations in standards throughout Year 3 and 6 in both subjects. First, there is no co-ordinator for either subject and as a result there is no monitoring of teaching and learning in order to identify what works well and what needs improving. Second, there are no consistently applied procedures for assessing and recording the development of pupils' skills. Consequently, the activities the teachers plan do not always build sufficiently on pupils' past achievements and the skills they have developed. Resources are adequate.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Standards in geography attained by most pupils are in line with the expectations by the end of Year 2 but below expectations by the end of Year 6. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. This represents satisfactory achievement by the younger pupils, including those with special needs, but the work done by pupils in Year 6 is not as good as you would find in most schools.
111. Pupils in Year 1 have experienced making a journey around the school as part of a *listening* walk and most know their own address. By the end of Year 2, they can identify the constituent parts of the United Kingdom and label a map accordingly. They make lists of physical and human features found at the seaside, and use their writing skills to write a letter home from an imaginary visit. They are introduced to island life by listening to stories about *Katie Morag* and the island of *Struay*.
112. Pupils in Year 3 learn what a village is and apply this knowledge to villages in different locations, such as in a mountain region or on the edge of the Sahara Desert. In Year 4 they write about the differences between the weather on the West Indian Island of St. Lucia and their own town of St. Helens. They can identify the particular features of a coastal region, for example, *cliffs* and *beaches*. Pupils in Year 5 consider environmental questions such as the dangers of water pollution. However, the work

undertaken by pupils in Year 6 on river systems does not go into sufficient depth. Most of the work is covered through worksheets and there is little evidence of pupils learning from firsthand experiences.

113. No geography lessons were observed during the inspection so no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching or pupils' attitudes to learning. However, scrutiny of pupils' work books, displays of work and teachers' planning indicate that there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn at first-hand and for them to apply mathematical skills in the course of geographical investigation. An example of ICT being used successfully for geographical observation was noted in Year 4. There is little evidence to show that mapping skills are being developed systematically throughout the school.
114. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning to ensure compliance with the school's scheme of work, which combines the most recent national guidance with other published material. However, she does not evaluate the quality of teaching or learning. There are appropriate links with other outside agencies such as *The Groundwork Trust* and the local library. Resources are satisfactory overall, although some of the atlases currently in use are out of date. The Internet is used appropriately to access further materials. There is no agreed whole-school system to assess and record pupils' individual progress.

## **HISTORY**

115. Standards in history are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. This judgement is based on observations of a limited number of lessons, scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, observation of displays and conversations with pupils.
116. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special needs, achieve appropriately. They have sound understanding of how toys have changed over the last hundred years. Pupils know that aspects of everyday life, such as hospital provision and activities at the seaside, are different today in comparison with fifty years ago. They are introduced to famous people in history such as Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling.
117. Satisfactory progress is made in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Year 3 know that art and sports were important factors in the life of the Ancient Greeks. They are introduced to legends such as the Story of King Minos. Pupils in Year 4 understand how the Vikings became good sailors, know where they came from and where they traded and settled. Pupils in Year 5 are introduced to aspects of Tudor architecture and have learnt that their houses had timber frames and decorative chimneys. Pupils in Year 6 consider some of the causes and consequences of legislation which affected the working lives of Victorian children. The subject contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development by providing them with opportunities to empathise with people in the past and to look at the way our lives have changed. Pupils learn about different cultures, for example, when studying Greek style pottery.
118. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and there are some good features. These include good use of resources in some classes by teachers who have good subject knowledge. For example, in a very good lesson Year 4 pupils, having benefited from a prior visit to a local industrial museum, were very eager to recall their knowledge and to apply it to interpreting maps and photocopies of original census documents. This very good teaching resulted in very good attitudes to learning by the pupils. A teacher in

Year 6 successfully used history as a basis for developing pupils' ICT skills as they prepared a *power point* presentation by using material they had previously researched for themselves.

119. There are a few good examples of pupils being asked to put themselves in the shoes of others, such as by writing from the point of view of member of a Tudor family, or through the use of literature. For example, the story of *The Water Babies* was used to encourage pupils to empathise with Tom's school fellows when he first appeared as a pupil himself. Timelines are used effectively in some classes to promote a sense of chronology and their use contributes positively to pupils' numeracy skills. Nevertheless, evidence in pupils' books shows frequent use of worksheets requiring a single word response, which limits the possibilities of more extended answers. Presentation of written work is sometimes untidy and spellings sometimes go uncorrected. In consequence, pupils' attitudes are less positive when teachers pay less attention to these important details and the contribution to the development of literacy skills is not as effective as it could be.
120. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She monitors teachers' planning and examines samples of pupils' work. However, she has had no opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching. There are no agreed systems in place for assessing and recording pupils' attainment as they progress through the school. Resources are adequate overall but the school lacks a comprehensive range of artefacts.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. Pupils in most classes achieve well in ICT and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are similar to those found in most schools. In some classes, pupils achieve above average standards. Throughout the school, pupils behave responsibly and are not afraid to experiment and try new functions. They work well in pairs, share ideas, advise each other and discuss alternatives. For example, pupils in Year 5 decided amongst themselves how long they wanted traffic lights to stay on as part of a simulation exercise to develop skills in control technology.
122. There are a number of reasons for the school's success in ensuring that the quality of learning is of a good quality. The subject co-ordinator has a very good subject knowledge and has ensured that all teachers have been given the necessary skills, resources are of a very good quality and most members of staff provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to use their skills in other subjects. In addition, funding from the EAZ project has been used well to support the subject. In Year 6 there is not as much use of ICT as in other age groups. Pupils have the necessary skills but little opportunity to use them. There are, however, some isolated good examples. In one Year 6 class, pupils used word processing well to develop their persuasive writing skills in literacy.
123. Pupils in Year 1 have satisfactory word processing skills and most can manipulate a mouse accurately. Many can print out work unaided. Pupils know how to label and classify and can produce pictures of good quality with straight and curved lines. Pupils in Year 2 use appropriate tools to create work of good quality, for example, their own Easter cards. They have improved their mathematical knowledge by using the *Snap Shot number programme*.
124. By the end of Year 6, there is little gathered evidence of what pupils can do but discussions held with pupils show they have appropriate knowledge and skills. They type direct to screen and are able to load, save work, print and choose from a menu. Good attention is given to presenting work well in most classes. Pupils in Year 6 have

produced good word processed accounts of a play performed by a visiting group related to work in history about Victorian toys. There are some good examples of ICT being used well in one Year 5 class. In this class, pupils are confident in using an object based graphics package competently and can use Power Point presentations. Pupils in Year 4 can transfer floor turtle instructions to screen and can create rotating patterns.

125. The quality of teaching is good overall and standards are improving. Successful in-service training has raised the expertise and confidence of teachers. Pupils in most classes make good progress. This is due to two factors. First, the pupils work in pairs using up-to-date equipment and get much individual attention. Second, the teachers introduce new programs and skills in a step-by-step manner, taking the pupils through a planned sequence until they have successfully achieved the lesson objectives. Good use is made of the inter-active whiteboards.
126. In some classes good use is made of ICT in most subjects. For example, in mathematics spreadsheets are used well. In geography pupils in Year 3 create their own gardens. Pupils access safe sites on the internet to improve their knowledge of various topics. However, sometimes opportunities are missed. For example, there is little or no use of ICT when pupils are withdrawn for additional help.
127. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Assessment procedures have been reviewed and a system is now in use to record pupils' progress in relation to National Curriculum requirements. However, the information is not yet being used effectively to find out what is working well and what needs to be done to improve standards. There is also a fluctuation in the use of the assessment files, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.

## **MUSIC**

128. Standards are typical for pupils' ages by the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. This is due to the expertise of the subject co-ordinator, who uses the little time allocated to music as well as possible to teach music across the junior classes. Time spent on music in Years 3 to 6 is much less than that spent in other schools. As a result, the co-ordinator often works with two classes at a time for one short lesson each week.

129. Pupils' singing is satisfactory. A weekly lesson aiming to improve pupils' singing and to learn new hymns is taken with both infants and juniors together. This is marked by pupils' energetic enjoyment of music. Their singing is mostly tuneful but too loud at times. The co-ordinator's tuneful singing and expert use of the piano helps pupils to grasp new songs fairly quickly. Difficulties arise in meeting pupils' individual needs within such a large group because of the age range involved. This, of necessity, limits the range of hymns and songs that are appropriate for both four and eleven year olds. Singing is followed up in class lessons, but again the large numbers involved in doubled classes and the time restrictions means that once the song has been taught, there is little time left to practise and improve pupils' performance.
130. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they are given to compose their own tunes. Pupils in Year 5 co-operated well as they worked in groups to compose a simple melody with accompaniments using percussion instruments. The teacher used her expertise well by humming the melodies, which helped pupils to improve their accompanying parts. However, her expertise was spread very thinly between eight groups of pupils. All groups had some time to practise to improve their composition which they enjoyed performing. There was insufficient time, however, for them to evaluate each other's performance, an important aspect of the music curriculum.
131. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Teachers follow a published scheme and this supports those teachers whose own musical knowledge is insecure. Pupils in Year 2 understand that they have to be good listeners. They listened attentively to several extracts of music to identify those played by musicians using stringed instruments with the result that most pupils correctly identified five out of the six examples. Pupils know the names of several stringed instruments including violin, guitar, cello and harp. They were enthralled when some of their classmates had a go at drawing the bow across the strings of the violin their teacher had brought into class. This gave them a better understanding of how the instrument works.
132. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Although the co-ordinator has considerable musical expertise, the size of the groups and the limited amount of time results in lessons that are planned to cover too much in one go. As a result, they tend to be fragmented with no time for a plenary at the end to draw it together and help the teacher to assess what pupils have learned.
133. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She has implemented a scheme of work that covers all areas of the subject and has increased the number and range of resources. Under her guidance the choir flourishes and she runs guitar and recorder groups to extend pupils' interest in music. All pupils in Year 3 learn to play the recorder. The introduction of ICT software has enabled pupils in Years 3 to 6 to compose their own tunes using musical notation. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to monitor teaching in Years 1 and 2 and to extend the assessment procedures already in place in some age groups to the rest of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. During the inspection lessons were seen only in dance, games and athletics. Swimming and water safety activities are provided. All pupils including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in swimming are similar to those found in most schools. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.



135. Pupils in Year 1 show good control and fluency as they respond to a piece of music. They pretend enthusiastically to be sound waves and the visiting teacher gives very good directions and identifies areas for improvement as the pupils move to the music. Throughout the school, pupils are becoming increasingly more adept in ball skills and are developing a sound understanding of the strategies associated with *attack* and *defence* games. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrate satisfactory skills as they respond to music from the Tudor period. They dance a *farandole* and a *braule*, planning their own steps in groups of 4 and 6. In a games lesson, pupils in Year 6 controlled and passed ball accurately to one another. The teacher allowing them to measure the length of their throws, provided good opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills. However, throughout the school there are hardly any opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own progress or that of others.
136. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are clear about the learning objectives to be achieved. A good scheme of work ensures that skills are being developed as pupils move through the school. Close attention is given to warming up and cooling down before and after activities. These activities are usually carefully managed and provide a good starting point for lessons. Games lessons contain well-structured activities and pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to repeat and practice their skills in order to improve them. However, at times these opportunities are over directed. All teachers have good control over behaviour and as a result pupils respond enthusiastically during lessons and have a strong desire to do well. Teachers take care to ensure safe working practices.
137. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has written the policy and has monitored lessons in some classes. She is a primary link teacher and ensures that the school takes a full part in the *Sports England initiative*. Resources and equipment are satisfactory overall. There is a satisfactory range of after school sporting activities, which includes football and rugby. Good use has been made of additional funding from the EAZ initiative to provide a range of activities. These range from dance workshops to trips to a Premier Football League ground.