

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Keresley

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103726

Headteacher: Mrs Lynda Leigh

Reporting inspector: Mr Julian Sorsby
14042

Dates of inspection: 8 – 11 July 2002

Inspection number: 250278

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Penny Park Lane Keresley Coventry
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Kevin Caldwell
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14042	J. Sorsby	<i>Registered inspector</i>		Information about the school. The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9895	R. Williams	<i>Lay inspector</i>		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?
4720	G. Carter	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science. Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	
30457	D. Evans	<i>Team inspector</i>	English. Art and design. Equality of opportunity.	
30724	D. Hiscox	<i>Team inspector</i>	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. Design and technology. Information and communication technology.	
15971	M. Pye	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History; Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10053	J. Simms	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics. Music. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holy Family Catholic Primary School serves the district of Keresley, which is to the north of Coventry. It is a very large school with 407 pupils on roll, compared to the national average of 226. In addition, 48 children attend the Nursery part-time. Only 18 pupils are not of United Kingdom heritage, the largest group being from India. Five pupils speak English as an additional language, all fluently. The predominant native languages of these pupils are Tamil, Punjabi and Vietnamese. Twelve per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is about average, while 0.7 per cent have statements of special educational needs. This is below average. Some classes have considerably more pupils with special educational needs than others. Almost all such pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Two per cent of all pupils joined or left the school during the past year at a time other than the normal joining or leaving time, which is well below average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average for their age, although this has varied very considerably from year to year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with some excellent features, the strongest of which is the happiness all share. This is a very happy school. Staff are happy to be here and to see the pupils developing academically and personally. Pupils are happy to participate in all the school offers. They are very well loved and cared for – and they know it. Parents are exceptionally happy with the school, in all its aspects. The school demonstrates its strong Christian belief in its practice- united as a community in joy. All pupils achieve well as a consequence of good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Although standards in mathematics and science have been disappointing compared to similar schools in past years, they are improving. Current 11 year olds are achieving better and are on target to achieve well above average standards in English, above average standards in mathematics and average standards in science. Very good leadership and management have contributed significantly to the raising of standards. Although the school receives above average income for each pupil, it is providing good value for money because pupils make good progress, the quality of teaching, and leadership and management have improved, and the school is very successful in enriching pupils' lives.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- It provides a very happy, caring and warm Christian environment in which pupils feel highly valued as individuals, and in which they have very positive attitudes to school and are able to learn and develop well.
- It teaches pupils well, resulting in them learning and achieving well, particularly in English, mathematics and music.
- It promotes pupils' excellent behaviour, relationships, attitudes toward one another and moral development, and provides very well for their spiritual, social and cultural development.
- It includes every pupil, providing well for those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, enabling them to make good progress.
- The management of the school by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team and subject and phase managers is very good.
- The school enjoys an exceptionally strong working relationship with parents.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- There are no significant weaknesses requiring the school's immediate attention.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1998, since when there has been good improvement. The quality of provision and facilities for children in the Nursery and Reception has improved significantly. There has been a general improvement in the quality of teaching throughout the school, most marked in English, this having resulted in much improved standards. Assessment procedures have improved, as has the use of assessment data particularly in science. There has also been significant improvement in standards in geography and music. The inconsistent use of reading records, criticised at the time of the last inspection, is now very good. Many of these improvements are a result of considerable improvement in the quality of leadership and management.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the national tests in 2001 for pupils aged seven, standards in reading were well above average compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools. Standards in writing were above average compared to all schools and well above average compared to similar schools. In mathematics, standards were above average compared to all schools and to similar schools. Current pupils join the school with standards that are average for their age, although the Year 6 pupils in 2002 (whose results are awaited) joined with standards below those expected for their age. Inspection evidence shows that present standards in English among seven year olds are above average, and those in mathematics and science are average. Recent test results demonstrate that the 2002 Year 6 cohort's standards were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. They achieved very well. Their standards in all other subjects of the curriculum were in line with expectations for their age, except music where standards throughout the school are above average, and design technology where standards for 11 year olds are slightly below average. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and higher attaining pupils make good progress throughout the school. The school exceeded its targets for the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics in 2001. The school is likely to achieve its targets in 2002, which are in keeping with the standards seen during the inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are very good. They are eager to participate in all that the school offers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, and their behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. There have been no exclusions for several years.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils develop into mature young people very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Despite their eagerness to participate in school, and strong parental support of the school, some pupils are taken on holidays during term time, disrupting their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, 75 per cent of teaching was good or better and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Three excellent lessons were seen. The quality of teaching in English and literacy, and in mathematics and numeracy, is overwhelmingly good, with over 90 per cent of English lessons and almost 70 per cent of mathematics lessons being good or better. With the exception of the use of available information about what pupils know, understand and can do to influence teachers' planning in Years 1 to 6, all aspects of teaching and learning are good or better. The quality of provision for higher-attaining pupils, those with

special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is good. All aspects of learning are good or better in Years 1 to 6 with the exception of pupils' own understanding of their knowledge, which is satisfactory. In the Nursery and Reception classes teaching and learning are very good.

The school is skilled at ensuring that all pupils are enabled to learn, regardless of their gender, ethnic origin or levels of ability.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Extra-curricular activities and the outside community make a significant contribution to the richness of the curriculum, which provides appropriately for the teaching of all subjects. Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is particularly good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are being well met through the work of teachers and support staff, very ably led by the co-ordinator for special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development and prepares pupils well for life in our diverse society. All these aspects of the school's work contribute significantly to pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and valued as individuals - and they know it. Teachers know their pupils very well, and provide very well for their educational and personal needs.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school is exceptionally highly valued by parents, who play a very major role in school life and in their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team provide very strong and effective leadership and management, constantly striving to support individual pupils and to promote their academic success in the context of the school's strong Christian ethos. The school has sufficient appropriate staffing, accommodation and learning resources to be able to teach effectively the subjects of the curriculum.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Exceptionally well informed about the school, governors play an invaluable role in supporting it and contributing to setting its overall direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school uses all available data well to set its priorities and plan its course towards their achievement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. All available resources are used very well to support the school in moving towards the achievement of its priorities for its pupils. The school pays good attention to achieving best value in all its work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectations of pupils.• The leadership and management.• Pupils' behaviour.• The quality of teaching.• The closeness with which the school works with parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no matters about which a significant number of parents expressed concerns.

Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001, the most recent for which comparisons are available with other schools, seven year old pupils' standards were well above the national average in reading and above the national average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, they were well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. Eleven-year-old pupils achieved standards that were above the national average in English and were average in mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, standards were above average in English and average in mathematics, but below average in science.

2. Generally, when children join the Nursery, their level of attainment in speaking and listening, personal and social development, and knowledge and understanding of the world is as expected for their age. This is also true of their physical, creative and mathematical development. However, a very important feature of the school is that this is not always the case, and some groups of children have joined the school with standards below those expected for their age. For example, the group who joined the Nursery in 1998, and who are now seven years old and awaiting the results of their National Curriculum tests, were of below average ability overall when they joined the Nursery. This was a consequence of the much higher than normal proportion of them (39 per cent) who have special educational needs (SEN). As a result, the standards of their work observed during the inspection were significantly lower than those of the group who sat the national tests last year, and it may be anticipated that their test results will reflect this situation. Inspection evidence shows their standards in reading to be above average, as opposed to well above average last year; their standards in writing are above average. This demonstrates the very good achievement by this group of pupils while in the Nursery and Reception classes, and their continued good achievement in Years 1 and 2. This is a consequence of the very good teaching they experience in the Nursery and Reception classes, and the good teaching in Years 1 and 2. Children for whom English is an additional language (EAL), and those who have SEN, achieve similarly to all other children.

3. By the end of Year 6, inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils who are now 11 have standards in English that are well above those expected for their age. Given the standards they achieved in national tests when they were seven, they have achieved very well in Years 3 to 6. In particular, a high proportion is very able in reading and writing, and this may be reflected in the test results for which they are waiting. Pupils good and often very good achievement in English is a result of teachers' good understanding and implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, and the manner in which pupils' literacy skills are reinforced by most teachers through the teaching of other subjects of the curriculum.

4. Inspection evidence demonstrates that attainment for most seven year olds is average in mathematics. By the age of 11, pupils are achieving standards that are above average. Because pupils who are currently seven entered Year 1 with below average standards, they are achieving well. This is because of the good teaching of mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Pupils who are presently 11 year old were more able when they entered Year 1, as demonstrated by their test results when they were seven. They have achieved satisfactorily overall in Years 3 to 6, maintaining their previous standards. However, the rate of achievement has been inconsistent in different year groups. This is because many of them had their learning disrupted several times during this period by changes in teachers, due to

their teachers either leaving the school or having extended periods of sick leave. With the considerable difficulties experienced in recruiting teachers in Coventry, this was effectively beyond the control of the school.

5. In science, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001 demonstrated that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards for their age was very high. In comparison with national averages, the standards reached by 11 year olds in 2001 were average, and below average when compared to similar schools. Current pupils in Years 2 and 6 are achieving average standards for their age. There are several contributory factors to this significant variation in standards. Firstly, great emphasis has been given by the school to raising standards in English and mathematics, but science has not received the same concentration of effort. The current school development plan places a high priority on raising standards in science. Secondly, the same factors described above in relation to mathematics have affected standards in science for 11 year olds. Finally, and very significantly, several high attaining pupils have left the school since they entered Year 3. Overall, pupils now seven years old and those who are 11 have achieved satisfactorily in science.

6. Overall, pupils reach average standards in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils learn appropriate skills in the ICT suite, and are being given sufficient opportunities to practise their skills in their classroom work in other subjects. The raising of standards in ICT has begun with the improvement of facilities and the conclusion of staff training.

7. In art and design, geography, history and physical education, the standards being achieved by pupils by the ages of seven and 11 are in line with expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement. Although teaching is good, and often very good, in these subjects, achievement is satisfactory because of the high priority placed on achievement in English and mathematics during the past two years. Pupils with SEN, and those for whom EAL, make satisfactory progress in these subjects.

8. In music, the standards being achieved by pupils by the ages of seven and eleven are above those expected for their age. This represents good achievement, and is a result of good teaching and of the role music plays in the life of the school. Pupils with SEN, and those for whom EAL, make equally good progress compared with all other pupils.

9. In design and technology, although standards at age seven are in line with expectations, those at age 11 are slightly below the standard expected for this age. This is a consequence of lack of opportunity earlier in pupils' school life, for example, to use a range of materials. However, the school has introduced effective plans to counter this problem.

10. The standards reached by pupils with EAL are the same as those of other pupils. This is a reflection of the fluency with which these pupils speak English, and their ability to use the language to good effect.

11. The school has good strategies for raising the achievements of lower attaining pupils. Pupils with SEN are appropriately identified at an early stage, in the Nursery or before joining the school. Teachers and classroom assistants provide pupils with good support that enables them to make at least sound, and often good, progress during lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They concentrate well in lessons and make positive contributions by joining in discussions enthusiastically, showing pride in their achievements. For example, in an assembly, Nursery children presented the story of 'The Rainbow Fish' with great style, concentration and maturity for their years. The other pupils loved their presentation, and appreciated the story's message about the need to share with each other in life. This example typifies the way the school consistently fosters good attitudes.

13. Large numbers of pupils take full advantage of the wide variety of activities provided by the school. Their participation contributes well to their development as individuals. Pupils are enthusiastic to help in school, for example, in the playground, holding open doors, setting out assemblies and tidying in the classroom. Usually they do so without being asked. Year 5 pupils proudly take turns as 'Playground Friends', and wear their distinctive red caps to show their status and availability to help any others who might be sad and lonely, or to intervene in disputes. However the good initiative shown by pupils throughout the school is not always reflected in their ability to take initiative with regard to their learning.

14. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was described as very good. Pupils are polite and thoughtful in their dealings with each other. The school has very high expectations of their behaviour and the children know this and respond willingly. There is very good emphasis by the school on caring, ensuring that pupils understand the impact their actions have on others. On the very rare occasions when there is bullying, it is dealt with promptly and effectively, in conjunction with parents. Pupils show respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. Pupils from different backgrounds and ethnic origins play happily and harmoniously together.

15. Relationships at school are excellent. There is mutual respect throughout the school. For example, pupils of all ages greet each other with either a 'good morning' or 'good afternoon' as a matter of course as they meet and move around the school. They offer help whenever they feel it is needed. This is quite exceptional behaviour, and shows how successfully the school encourages personal development.

16. Attendance is satisfactory. There is no unauthorised absence. However, although the level of authorised absence is below the national average, it has increased over the past four years due to more absences during term time for family holidays.

17. Pupils with SEN are well integrated into the community. Usually, they pursue their studies enthusiastically. Pupils work well with their teaching assistants, as well as in a whole class setting.

18. Pupils' very good attitudes, excellent behaviour and very good personal development contribute significantly to their progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good overall and there has been some improvement since the last inspection. A quarter of lessons observed were very good or excellent. In Years 3 to 6, almost one in every four lessons observed was very good or better, and 70 per cent of lessons observed were at least good. One excellent lesson was observed. In Years 1 and 2, almost 80 per cent of lessons were good or better, but only 5 per cent were very good and no excellent teaching was seen. Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes was particularly good, with all lessons being good or better and over 80 per cent being very good or better. Two excellent lessons were observed. The quality of teaching overall is a strength of the school.

20. In the Nursery and Reception classes, all aspects of teaching are very strong. In Years 1 to 6, particular strengths of teaching are teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, their teaching of literacy and numeracy skills, the effectiveness of their planning between classes to ensure all pupils receive the same curriculum and their high expectations of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are well supported by teachers, support staff and volunteers. Teachers manage pupils well, developing a calm and productive atmosphere in classrooms. Good use is made of homework to reinforce pupils' learning. One less strong feature, although remaining satisfactory, is the use made by some teachers in some subjects of assessment data. This occasionally has the effect of higher-attaining pupils not being appropriately challenged, although this is much improved since the last inspection.

21. Teaching observed in the Nursery and Reception classes was very good. Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and the importance of play and first hand experiences. This has a positive effect in supporting children's progress and provides a firm foundation for learning in Year 1 and beyond. A further significant strength was the emphasis placed on developing children's language and communications skills, often through self-directed learning.

22. The teaching of English and literacy was good throughout the school, and often very good. Particular strengths were teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, and the imaginative lessons they prepared for pupils. Teachers plan together in year groups, ensuring that there is consistency between the lessons taught to different classes. This ensures that all pupils have the same opportunities to achieve well.

23. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy is also good. Lessons are well structured and usually proceed at a brisk pace. Very good relationships in lessons lead to a good working atmosphere being developed and pupils eagerly making progress. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and impart it well.

24. The teaching of science throughout the school is satisfactory. Teachers manage their pupils well, and lessons are calm and productive. Lesson plans are generally good and very good use is made of available resources, such as the allotment. However, on some occasions, too little opportunity is provided for pupils to think deeply about what they see and offer explanations. Whilst provision for higher attaining pupils has improved overall, in science there remain some lessons where they are insufficiently challenged.

25. In art and design the quality of teaching across the school is good. Teaching is greatly enhanced by the involvement of visitors, such as visiting artists, who have worked with pupils. However, whilst pupils create some three-dimensional art, this is limited in range by a very limited availability of resources for this work.

26. In design and technology, teaching is good. As a result, standards have risen, although those in Year 6 remain slightly below average. This is because of the quality of teaching in previous years, the problems having now been overcome. There are also too few resources for older pupils, although this too is in the process of being addressed.

27. In geography, teaching is satisfactory. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and pupils behave well and concentrate on their work. However, in geography there is too great an emphasis on topic work and insufficient emphasis on learning general skills, such as the use of documents as evidence.

28. Too little evidence is available to judge the teaching of history.

29. Teaching and learning in information and communication technology (ICT) is good. Teachers are growing in confidence and subject expertise. They use learning resources well to explain and demonstrate new techniques. Lessons are a good mix of whole class teaching and practical pupil work. Teachers ensure that all pupils are engaged well in activities. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used satisfactorily in the teaching of other subjects of the curriculum in the ICT suite and in classrooms.

30. Music plays a central role in the life of the school, well supported by good teaching. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are competent when, for example, using and explaining technical terms. They instil a love of music in children at a very young age, and this is maintained throughout the school. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on pupils hearing, understanding and appreciating music from a wide range of cultures.

31. The quality of teaching of physical education is good. Teachers plan their lessons well, and competently adapt their plans if circumstances in a particular lesson warrant this. Pupils are managed well and little time is wasted. Pupils participate enthusiastically.

32. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) receive appropriate support in lessons from the learning support assistants. Assistants have a good knowledge of the focus of the lessons, and take an active part in helping pupils by encouraging and giving appropriate help.

33. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is invariably good. This applies to both pupils who are withdrawn from mainstream classes and those who are taught as part of a normal class. Pupils with SEN make good progress with their learning in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers usually brief special teaching assistants and other adults skilfully, and as a result, the very effective support makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.

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

34. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects its mission statement. A strong Christian ethos, which is lived by all members of the school community, underpins the curriculum and benefits pupils' learning. Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. The strategy for teaching literacy has been fully implemented with good effect. In history lessons pupils benefit from having opportunities to write in various forms, whilst in geography key words are highlighted for pupils. The numeracy strategy is satisfactory and developing. The senior management team has established an effective system of monitoring with subject co-ordinators as well as governors being fully involved. The use of

assessment data and the annual curriculum review by subject co-ordinators links directly with the school's development planning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is studied as a separate subject and through the teaching and learning of a range of other subjects. For example, in history the pupils produce word-processed topic work.

35. The school is very aware of the requirements of pupils with SEN, and the provision overall is good. Teachers write pupils' individual education plans (IEPs), which are detailed and accurately reflect the needs of the pupils. Such plans enable teachers to design activities that meet the pupil's individual needs and abilities. Support staff are used to good effect in lessons. A similar picture is seen in the support given for pupils for whom EAL. Pupils who have a particular talent, or who are high attainers, are identified and provided with additional support and appropriately challenging activities in lessons.

36. Overall the school provides good equality of opportunity for all pupils to study the curriculum. However, in one Year 3 lesson the same pupils are withdrawn for literacy support at the same time every week, thereby missing out on their music entitlement. The overwhelming feeling, however, is that the school is highly aware of its responsibility to include all pupils in all aspects of the life of the school.

37. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good overall. The school offers a wide range of sports opportunities as well as dancing. The introduction of the Tranquil Lunchtime Club at lunchtimes provides pupils with a very good opportunity to talk about their concerns, and play in a quiet and supportive environment. Parents expressed their pleasure concerning the curriculum and the range and number of extra-curricular activities.

38. Links with the community are good and developing. The local environment is used well when pupils conduct surveys about traffic in the area or visit the allotment. There are very strong links with the church and the school receives support from a large number of parents who help with after-school activities. Visits to local museums and the use of visitors coming into school to discuss various issues such as their wartime memories, also enrich the experiences of the pupils. There is a particularly strong link with the local secondary school. This involves frequent visits by staff and pupils as well as, for example, gifted and talented pupils from the primary school visiting the secondary school for sports coaching. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from a comprehensive introductory programme that helps prepare them for their move to the senior school. There is also a particularly strong link with the local partnership centre, and the school makes good use of links with two Beacon schools, as well as in-service training courses on offer in the locality.

39. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is overall very good. It is a great strength of the school that such provision is all pervasive in the teaching and learning that takes place. Assemblies are very effective in presenting pupils with opportunities to consider and reflect upon various life issues. In circle time the pupils are given opportunities to discuss a range of topics, such as the anxieties that can accompany the move to a new class or school. Various topics are covered through certain subject areas. Religious education offers varied opportunities to discuss moral and social issues, while healthy lifestyles are highlighted in science lessons. The school has produced a detailed policy for both inclusion and drug education that are about to go before the governing body. Similarly, the sex education policy has been developed following consultation with the parents, staff and governors. It reflects a balance between the physical and moral issues surrounding the subject. The school has begun to introduce aspects of citizenship, with Year 6 pupils involved with the local magistrates in discussing

the issues that arise from a mock criminal case of theft. The school council also offers pupils the chance to become involved in making civic decisions. However, the school has yet to develop a scheme of work for personal, social and health education that identifies when and where exactly the various aspects are taught.

40. Provision for moral development is very good and reflects the strong ethos of the school that emphasises mutual respect. Values and morals are seen as important aspects of development. Praise and reward are used to encourage and motivate. Pupils discuss and agree clear behaviour guidelines, and consequently know what is expected of them. All staff in the school consistently ensure high standards of behaviour in class and around the school, consequently no exclusions have occurred. Observations confirm that the quality of relationships is exceptionally good, thereby reinforcing pupils' respect for themselves and others. They help each other willingly, and from an early age are prepared to listen to others. The school cultivates a positive climate, actively encouraging pupils to explore their feelings and to consider the implications of their actions and choices.

41. Provision for social and cultural development is very good. Pupils have a good range of responsibilities in lessons and around the school. They act as playground friends and corridor monitors, and the school council gives them the chance to participate in decision-making. The school provides opportunities for pupils to become involved with the secondary school, and regular visits to such places as a local museum take place. Pupils learn about their own and others' cultures through their subjects as well as in assemblies and special topic work. They experience a range of artists' work that includes Lowry and Matisse as well as the work of African artists. In geography, pupils learn about life in an Indian village, and in history they examine life and culture of Britain across the ages, as well as that of the Aztecs. The recent introduction of a cross-curricular multi-cultural week has been effective in teaching pupils about life in other countries. Some pupils experienced the dress and music of an African and Caribbean country, and others, an Italian meal.

42. There is good equality of access for boys and girls, pupils with SEN, those for whom EAL, gifted and talented pupils and those who are higher attainers. This is facilitated by the good use of appropriate teaching methods and by the good monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development. The withdrawal of pupils from one Year 3 lesson each week, which effected their music entitlement, has now been rectified, and all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils in each class and ensures that they are appropriately taught. The school is successful in meeting its stated aim of creating an inclusive ethos, with equal opportunities, racial equality, harmony and mutual support.

43. The curriculum and the school's provision for pupils with SEN, those for whom EAL, gifted and talented pupils and those who are higher attainers have improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. This is an exceptionally caring school in which pupils are highly valued and respected as individuals. The fact that they know this contributes well to their personal development and academic success.

45. The school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good; there has been a significant improvement since the last inspection. There is now a child protection policy, specific to the school, and health and safety risk assessments are carried out regularly. The school takes its responsibility for health and safety matters,

including fire safety and first aid, very seriously, and procedures and systems are well established and effective. All the school's staff are well trained in child protection matters.

46. Personal development is well monitored by teachers. Each pupil has a record of achievement, which incorporates academic, personal and behavioural development. All staff are involved in this process and contribute appropriately.

47. Pupils' are exceptionally well supported personally whilst at school. As well as total staff involvement in their personal support and guidance, the school provides additional support through the Rainbow Programme facility and the Tranquil Lunchtime Club. Both provide significant support to children, as required, and pupils greatly value the school's sensitivity in providing this help. The Tranquil Lunchtime Club is particularly caring. Pupils either request, or are invited to attend at lunchtime. They qualify if they are having difficulty facing up to stresses and strains of the playground, or feel a little insecure themselves. They are then able to take part in enjoyable activities in a 'safe' environment, helped and supervised by two members of staff.

48. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory overall. However, there is no enquiry made on the first day a child is absent if nothing has been heard; parents notify, rather than seek permission from the school for holidays in term time, and parents' explanations for pupils' absences are not questioned. Pupils are awarded certificates for full attendance, but there is no overall attendance target for the school.

49. As at the time of the last inspection, procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The positive behaviour policy is reviewed regularly. It works very well by including all the staff in its implementation. The lunchtime supervisors' involvement is crucial, and they administer the 'Lunchtime Booklet' system whereby white slips are issued to pupils who have offended, expressing disappointment with their behaviour, and specifying the reason. If several slips are issued to the same pupil, the headteacher and parents become involved. This is a very effective system, greatly respected by pupils. The headteacher's incident book records those very few instances where bullying or violence occurs. All the pupils are very aware of the school's views on poor behaviour, and there are very few serious breaches of the code of conduct. The school's systems for monitoring are very good.

50. The school has good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. In addition to the statutory assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils are regularly assessed in English, mathematics and science. Assessments include optional national tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 in English and mathematics, termly tests based on units of work covered in science, writing and reading assessments and nationally set tests in mathematics and reading.

51. The information gained from these varied assessments are well used. For example the results of the mathematics and English assessments are carefully analysed to identify areas of strength and weakness in order to amend future teaching plans. They are also used to identify pupils who may need specific support in order to help them achieve their full potential. Additional classes in mathematics for small groups of pupils (booster classes) have been organised on the basis of such information. In English, much attention has been given during the last year to the improvement of pupils' writing. This has involved the analysis of pupils' writing tests, and subsequently providing appropriate support to every pupil. In this way, good use has been made of data in monitoring progress and attainment.

52. The progress of pupils with SEN is also well assessed. The school has clearly written targets for all pupils requiring IEPs. Most teachers use targets well to match work to the needs of these pupils and targets are carefully reviewed during well-organised review procedures. For pupils with statements of educational need, outside agencies and parents are well involved in the process. Help given to pupils is usually timely and appropriate. The school responds to requirements, as outlined in pupils' statements of SEN, and fully implements the new Code of Practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents are exceptionally supportive of the school. Their views are even more positive than at the time of the last inspection, when they felt it was a very good school.

54. The school supplies parents with very good information about their children's progress. It has worked hard to improve the quality of information for parents since the last inspection. Courses are held each year to help parents understand the education system and assist their children's learning. For example, the 'Parenting Skills' and 'Keeping up with Children' courses are highly valued by those parents who attend.

55. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning both in school and at home. There is good support for the 'Reading Partnership' scheme, and, after training, parents help in school each week hearing pupils read. Many others help in school in a wide variety of ways, such as by running after-school activities. This further enhances the very positive adult role model provided by staff and contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.

56. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is excellent. Parents raise substantial funds to improve the environment and obtain equipment. The school works continually to involve parents in its life, aided by the very strong parish and church network, which underpins and supports the school community. There are numerous examples of the way the school values its parents. For example, they are regularly asked for their views, such as on behaviour, extra-curricular activities, sex education, and how they feel about the Nursery. Parents share in the many celebrations held at school, including religious services.

57. Parents of pupils with SEN are regularly informed of their progress, and are fully involved in the review process. The school has recently reintroduced termly reviews for all pupils with IEPs in order to give greater involvement in the target setting process.

58. Parental support for the school and involvement in their children's learning contributes significantly to the progress children make.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good, and have improved very considerably since the last inspection. At that time, seven of the eight items identified for immediate action by the school related to leadership and management. All have been very successfully dealt with.

60. The headteacher provides very good, sensitive leadership. She believes in the school's mission and ensures that the atmosphere she creates gets the very best from all around her, be they pupils, staff or parents. She believes in her colleagues and they, in turn, work as a strong and committed team to ensure that every pupil develops well,

academically and personally. This school is a truly harmonious community, where respect and love for one another are the norm. The headteacher's style of leadership is the catalyst that makes this possible.

61. The headteacher is also a very competent manager. She works very well with her equally competent deputy and all her senior colleagues. Using the exceptionally well-written school development plan, which itself is the product of the widest possible consultation, she delegates appropriate tasks, always linking responsibility with the authority to carry out the role. Whilst all the necessary formality is attached to the work of the senior management team, it is evident that each member enjoys her work. The team is very efficient in its work, and consequently, the school runs very smoothly. Even when faced with serious problems, such as the staffing problems encountered last year, the team works well together and solves issues.

62. There is great clarity in the roles and responsibilities of all concerned, and all, including middle management, perform them well. The only slight limitation is the time available for subject co-ordinators to observe their colleagues teaching their specialist subject. Nevertheless, sufficient monitoring takes place for the senior managers to be aware of the strengths and areas for development of class teachers, and appropriate support is provided. As a consequence, the quality of teaching has improved throughout the school.

63. The school examines a broad range of available data in evaluating its own performance, and is aware of its strengths and areas for development. The school development plan and budget are securely based on detailed knowledge of how the school is performing. However, in a few areas and subjects, for example science, the information derived from the analysis of data is not used as effectively as it could be to influence planning and raise standards, particularly of higher attaining pupils. This was a key issue at the time of the last inspection, and evidence demonstrates that there has been much improvement since then. However, more work remains to be done.

64. The school is very clear about its educational priorities, and the senior management set an appropriate educational direction, well supported through its financial planning. Funds carried forward to future years are appropriately earmarked for future developments. The school development plan and budget contribute very well to setting the direction. Additional funds received by the school for specific purposes, such as to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are always used to best effect. The school works hard and ensures that it derives the best value possible in all it does. Financial management is very good, ably supported by the governors' finance committee.

65. The school's aims and values are exceptionally well reflected in every aspect of the school's work, resulting in the development of mature young pupils ready for the next stage of their education. This also extends to the work of the governors, who play a very active role in the life of the school. They are hardworking and committed, and many visit regularly to help in classrooms and work with pupils. Governors are exceptionally well informed and knowledgeable about the school, and play a major role in setting its direction. They ensure, together with the headteacher, that all statutory requirements are met. Governors and all staff place equal priority on the personal development of pupils and their enjoyment of school, as they do on academic success, contributing to the productive and happy atmosphere that is present throughout the school.

66. Following last year's difficulties, the school has been effective at recruiting and retaining an appropriate number of teachers and support staff. Improvements made since the previous inspection have resulted in a better match between the school's needs and

teachers' experience, expertise and training. Teachers make an effective contribution to improvements because they have a clearly specified role in this process. This has resulted in an increasing involvement in checking pupils' learning against whole school expectations, and builds on the school's robust methods to develop teachers' professional skills and knowledge. This now meets national requirements to appraise teachers' work. The good blend of experienced and new staffing provides good support for pupils' learning. Education support staff, several of whom are long standing members of staff, make a significant contribution to the school by ensuring that pupils with additional learning difficulties are fully involved in class activities. Additionally, there is good use of support assistants for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Administrative staff are very efficient and provide very good support to all the staff.

67. The overall provision for pupils with SEN is well managed by the co-ordinator of special educational needs (SENCO), who in turn is well supported by her teaching colleagues and support assistants. Liaison and co-operation between the co-ordinator, class teachers and classroom assistants is good. There is effective organisation and implementation of the school's procedures to identify, support and monitor pupils with special educational needs. The number and experience of teaching and support staff for pupils with special educational needs is good. The support provided is generally well balanced between in-class support and withdrawal in appropriately small groups. The accommodation used for withdrawn pupils and the resources for these pupils, including computer software, are satisfactory.

68. The accommodation is spacious and well cared for. The school has two halls, which allow two classes to have physical education simultaneously, and also accommodate additional activity clubs at lunchtime. Other areas are used for group work, information and communication technology (ICT) and storage. Most classrooms are of good size and more than adequate for the number of pupils. The new entrance building is a substantial improvement and will enhance the welcome area and provide better office facilities. Outdoor areas for both the Nursery and Reception classes have been thoughtfully designed to improve provision considerably. The fenced areas, small wooden buildings and on-going developments boost the quality of outdoor facilities. The headteacher, governors and staff have worked hard to ensure that members of the school community are involved in these development decisions, and ensure that all areas support learning well.

69. Resources in the Nursery and Reception classes, and for the teaching of English, have improved since the last inspection and are very good. They are satisfactory in all other subjects except design and technology, where they are unsatisfactory. The deficiencies in the provision for this subject for pupils aged eight to eleven have contributed to the lower standards attained at age 11. The school is aware of this problem and has plans to remedy this resource issue. Recent ICT resource developments have enabled the school to meet the increased demands of the National Curriculum. The school has a very good collection of books, which are well organised and regularly updated. Good quality specialist resources are provided for pupils for whom EAL or those who have SEN. Displays of children's work celebrate their successes and make the learning environment bright and attractive, particularly in the Nursery.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. The school has made, and continues to make, good progress. There are no significant issues requiring attention.

- The school should consider the following minor issues for inclusion in the action plan.
 - * Continue the current programme of introducing procedures for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education, and using the information gained to help teachers plan appropriately to meet the needs of individual pupils.
(Paragraphs 20, 63, 125, 135, 144 and 166)
 - * In design and technology, improve the range and quality of available resources, as planned.
(Paragraphs 26 and 69)
 - * Ensure that the high quality of marking employed in some classes, which carefully advises pupils how to improve their work, becomes normal practice in all classes.
(Paragraphs 104, 113, 135 and 142)
 - * Develop a scheme of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE) that identifies when and where exactly the various aspects are taught.
(Paragraph 39)
 - * Establish procedures to enquire why a child is absent on the first day of absence.
(Paragraph 48)
 - * Provide more time for subject co-ordinators to observe colleagues teaching their specialist subjects.
(Paragraph 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	12	29	15	0	0	0
Percentage	5	20	50	25	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

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)	23	407
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	51

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	92

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	35	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	23
	Girls	35	35	35
	Total	58	57	58
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (84)	98 (81)	100 (95)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	23
	Girls	34	33	35
	Total	56	55	58
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	97 (84)	95 (88)	100 (97)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
	2001	30	30	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	25	23	28
	Girls	24	23	26
	Total	49	46	54
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	82 (93)	77 (90)	90 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	25	26	28
	Girls	24	26	27
	Total	49	52	55
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	82 (88)	87 (86)	92 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	7
Indian	8
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	331
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, 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)	17.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.1
Average class size	29

Education support staff:

YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	187

Qualified teachers and support staff:

Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	-
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	928,791.00
Total expenditure	936,011.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,152.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	42,938.00
Balance carried forward to next year	35,718.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

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

453
370

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	37	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	35	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	49	7	1	2
The teaching is good.	64	33	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	40	6	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	27	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	29	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	34	2	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	68	30	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	33	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	37	11	1	2

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

71. The very good quality of provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes has been further developed since the last inspection and the excellent leadership has been maintained. Improvements to the outdoor environment have substantially extended children's exploratory and investigative experiences and provide more opportunities for them to play imaginatively. The wide range of very well planned activities ensures that children achieve very well.

72. Children's attainment when they join the Nursery is generally in line with that expected for their age. There are an increasing number of children with additional or different learning needs for whom provision is very good. Attainment on joining varies significantly from year to year.

73. All children make very good progress, and when they move into Year 1, most are reading and writing and understanding numbers independently, at a standard above that expected for their age. Some children do better and are working at the early levels of the National Curriculum. This is confirmed by the assessment of their attainment on entry into Year 1.

74. Children are taught by a teacher, a nursery nurse and two part-time classroom assistants. At the time of the inspection, 19 children attended in the morning and 20 in the afternoon, varying in age from three years to over four years. The two Reception classes are staffed by two teachers and two education assistants. Children also benefit from the very positive support of several parent volunteers who contribute to their understanding of the importance of learning.

75. The close teamwork between the Nursery and Reception staff is very effective in ensuring that all children experience a wide range of carefully directed and child-chosen activities across the six areas of learning detailed below. Teachers continually place great emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development in their speaking, listening, language development and mathematical development. Ingeniously planned sessions in writing, link several activities and areas of learning. As a result, children achieve rapidly. In the Reception classes, children are often grouped according to their development for short teacher-led sessions in literacy and numeracy. These activities are planned to challenge children and extend their thinking, accelerating their achievement. This is a key teaching strength in the Reception classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. By the end of their Reception Year, most children have exceeded expectations for their age in this area. They make very good progress, developing personal confidence and a positive view of themselves because of the very good teaching and the consistently effective provision. Children greatly benefit in the Nursery from the teacher's very high expectations. This is followed on very well in the Reception classes by the expectation that children will manage their own needs and often help others. As a result, children settle into routines early and confidently recognise the pattern of the day, so that learning activities beckon their attention. At the end of their Reception Year, most children are confident and keen learners.

77. Children are keen to come to the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults encourage children to offer their thoughts, to express their feelings about activities and to talk about their own needs. The importance that staff place on these opportunities ensures a continual cycle of listening, speaking in turn and sharing of learning experiences. These daily activities are threaded through many areas of learning and are skilfully led with very good teaching and skilled intervention by adults. Children's attention is engaged from the earliest time in the Nursery, often by lively and animated talk using different puppets, well devised to persuade even the quietest child to respond with delight. Short focused teaching sessions in the Reception classes challenge children equally well, often absorbing children for as long as 20 minutes at a time. As a result, children's learning habits are well established when they move into Year 1.

78. Children achieve particularly well because teachers and staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. An example of this was seen in an assembly presented by Nursery children in front of all Reception and Year 1 children. Children with special educational needs (SEN) learn equally well to all other children.

Communication, language and literature

79. The quality of teaching and provision is very good in both the Nursery and Reception classes, with some excellent teaching in the Nursery. Adults plan to develop children's knowledge of books, letters and writing with incrementally challenging activities across the two years. Rich language activities successfully engage children in imaginative experiences, often teacher-guided in the Nursery. Informed and skilful teaching in the Reception classes builds very well on children's emerging mark-making of letters and words. Additionally, effective information and communication technology (ICT) experiences rapidly lift children's achievement and as a result, by the end of their Reception Year, many children use on-screen word banks and the keyboard to compose sentences. Some children write extended sentences joined by 'then'. Early use of the 'full stop' icon provides a read aloud version of their own sentence and brings squeals of delight along with success. These broad experiences ensure that almost half of the children exceed the expectations for their age in their reading, writing and letter knowledge. A good proportion write texts of up to six sentences long.

80. In the Nursery, the teacher's explanations to children of what they are doing and why guide children's thinking and promotes talking about the activities. Children with additional learning needs make very substantial progress, because the outstanding quality of provision stimulates excitement and involvement. In an example seen, 'Postman Pat' visited the Nursery, bringing flight tickets and labels for role-play activities. Children with additional language difficulties were particularly motivated to speak as a result.

81. Children in Reception classes communicate well with each other as they co-operate and share activities. For example at 'The Beach Shop', children queue up to buy seaside needs and are served and questioned by others in shopkeeper roles. Early use of fiction and non-fiction books feeds children's curiosity and builds into early book publishing as children illustrate and write about mini-beasts found outside. This early research and purposeful learning draws on and consolidates children's substantial word and sentence writing skills.

Mathematical development

82. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress in Nursery and Reception years in their mathematical development. All reach the standards expected by the time they join Year 1 and just under half exceed these standards. A good proportion can count in tens to one hundred, add numbers to ten and subtract one from numbers up to ten.

83. Children in the Nursery recite number rhymes and play early number games that are interlinked with other areas of learning. In one example of excellent teaching, Nursery children sold or bought ice cream cones, expressed their views about their flavours and created a large floor graph reflecting their preferences. Their growing knowledge of mathematical ideas and words develops an early positive attitude towards mathematics.

84. By the end of their Nursery Year, most children are gradually gaining an understanding of the value of numbers to five and beyond and an understanding of shapes and size. Children in the Reception classes achieve very well because they are encouraged to think, see and use mathematical sequences and patterns. As a result, they begin to recognise and complete number patterns, recording simply and appropriately. Three out of ten children sequence tens to one hundred independently.

85. Teachers encourage children to take part in a range of self-selected indoor and outdoor activities that provide opportunities for them to fill, pour and sort objects. In short led sessions a high level of challenge is set for higher attaining pupils by posing questions such as 'Who can tell me a multiple of ten?' or 'Can you tell me a story about 7?' These high expectations help to prepare children for their National Curriculum studies. Children with special educational needs (SEN) learn equally well to all other children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. By the time children reach the end of the Reception Year, most reach the standards expected for their age, and some exceed these standards. Children make good progress from the time they join the Nursery, when a significant number have very limited knowledge. The good teaching, practical activities and well-planned topics help children to make sense of the world around them.

87. Children in the Nursery are encouraged to reflect on well-posed questions, and very good use is made of learning resources. For example, children watched attentively the effects produced by different tools when whisking a milkshake. Subtle use of an egg-timer by the teacher gave children a very early opportunity to consider 'fair testing', preparing them for science studies later in the school. Excellent use of puppets drew children into activities and encouraged communication. Both Nursery and Reception children develop an understanding of the past through listening to stories and looking at historic photographs of seaside places linked to their topic. Further experiences are provided across the classes as children handle a globe of the world and relate holiday places and postcards sent by their classmates.

88. Nursery children enjoy handling the computer mouse and are often engrossed for some time by the small robot that they can control remotely. Children in the Reception classes become skilled in clicking icons to draw on the computer screen. A good proportion of children cope well with early word processing skills, composing sentences by inserting chosen words and writing interesting sentences about the 'Seaside Bear'. Their use of the computer suite provides a very positive experience and a good foundation for future studies.

89. Children celebrate cultural events other than their own, such as the Chinese New Year. Children for whom English is an additional language (EAL) share books in their own language. Because of the good support provided by support assistants, they and children with SEN learn equally well to all other children.

Physical development

90. The school has invested much energy and resources in developing outdoor provision for the Nursery and Reception classes. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, and provides an additional range of activities that nurture children's physical development well. Good use of these opportunities through good planning and teaching ensures that children make good progress overall in building their physical skills.

91. Nursery children develop and refine their skills in handling a range of different tools. They dig in a garden patch, ramble through an imaginary environment, scramble up and down the slope and use trikes and trolleys to carry and pull materials. There is a range of outdoor and indoor activities that extend children's skills.

92. Reception age children show good progress in controlling their movements and are beginning to understand why their heart beats faster after running and jumping. They can say why safety is important and what they need to do to be safe when working together in physical education lessons, such as 'We use our eyes and ears' Children achieve well. They understand the effect of distance as they throw a bean bag in a hoop, because the teacher asks, 'How could we make it harder?' Both boys and girls concentrate to improve their throwing skills. As a result, they look at the beanbag and towards the hoop as they throw, and know that they have improved and can explain how. Effective organisation clearly assures that children's skills are well matched to activities. When cutting out card patterns, one child asked for more to take home because he enjoyed the activity so much.

93. By the time they begin Year 1, all children, including those with SEN and those for whom EAL, have reached standards of physical development expected for their age.

Creative development

94. The quality of provision and teaching is very good. Adults plan a good range of experiences, placing emphasis on those which the children select themselves. Emphasis is placed on imaginary play, and on encouraging children to build their own ideas. These opportunities are enriched by the use of high quality resources that complement the ingenious use of everyday objects. In the Nursery, where outdoors wind chimes, spiral hangings and ordinary everyday objects cast mirror reflections on the surrounding surfaces, children are absorbed when watching the reflected light spots, and listening to the sounds. These incidental experiences are built on by adults' questions designed to instigate imaginative and thoughtful responses through painting, collage and music-making.

95. Over time, very good teaching ensures that children refine their skills in painting, drawing and crayoning. They make patterns and combine materials to create 'sea sides' in the sand. Nursery children readily shift into imaginary roles as airline passengers in response to the teacher acting as an 'air stewardess' in role-play. As a result, children are able to re-enact experiences, stories and dialogue they have heard in other settings. This strength is built on in the Reception classes and is evident in children's outdoor play where they use small figures, a waterway, sand-trays and sun-canopies to build creative scenes, and link them with known narratives.

96. By the time they begin Year 1, all children, including those with SEN and those for whom EAL, have reached standards of creative development expected for their age.

ENGLISH

97. Results from the 2001 national tests, based on average points scores, show that standards at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average in reading, and above average in writing. Results in English at the end of Year 6 were above the national average. The most recent, unconfirmed results for 2002 indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 are not as high as they were in the 2001 national tests. This is largely due to a much higher proportion of pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register in the current Year 2, 39 per cent. Some groups of pupils come into the school with language skills that are below those expected for their age. For example, the group who joined the Nursery in 1998, and are now awaiting the results of their National Curriculum tests, were of below average ability overall. Inspection evidence, however, reveals that their standards in reading are above average, as opposed to well above average last year; in writing, they have remained above average. This shows that this group of pupils has achieved well in Years 1 and 2.

98. By the end of Year 6, inspection findings show that pupils who are now 11 have standards in English that are well above those expected for their age. These pupils have achieved very well in Years 3 to 6. A high proportion of them are very able in reading and writing, and this may be reflected in the 2002 national test results. Pupils achieve well, and often very well, in English, and this is good improvement from the time of the last inspection when pupils' achievement through Years 1 to 6 was described as mainly satisfactory.

99. A number of factors have contributed to this improvement. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and have implemented it well. Pupils' literacy skills are also reinforced well by teachers in other subjects of the curriculum. Higher-attaining pupils are given appropriately challenging work in English, especially in their written work. Pupils with SEN achieve well as a result of the very effective teaching and the support that they receive. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), class teachers and classroom assistants work well together to provide effective, well-planned and sensitive support in class and, where appropriate, through individual teaching. Assessment procedures are developing very well to identify those in need of additional support. Initiatives such as the Early Literacy Strategy and booster classes are used effectively to help pupils achieve more rapidly.

100. Standards in listening and speaking are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils talk with assurance in a range of situations, and their responses show that they listen carefully. One reason for this is that teachers provide a good number of opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills through paired or group activities, role play and drama, and through more formal opportunities in assemblies. Another reason is the evident value that teachers place on pupils' responses, which encourages them to contribute in lessons. By the end of Year 2, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and increasingly to each other, responding well to questions and instructions. They ask pertinent questions and make thoughtful contributions to class discussions. By the end of Year 6 they share ideas and experiences clearly, for example when annotating poems. Teachers successfully extend pupils' vocabulary through their emphasis on understanding and using technical terms and challenging vocabulary correctly. Several high-attaining pupils in Year 3, for example, worked hard with dictionaries and thesauri in one vibrant note-taking lesson.

101. Standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 2, and well above average by the end of Year 6. This is partly because pupils are now so enthusiastic about books, and the school has worked hard to foster this positive attitude through various initiatives. There are well-developed guided and home-reading schemes, a very successful reading partnership, a reading club and a stimulating 'Books and Beyond' project, which was launched specifically to encourage pupils to read for pleasure. Pupils in Year 6 are adept at identifying crucial features of the text, and use evidence to support their opinions. Most pupils have acquired good skills for checking unfamiliar words, they talk quite animatedly about books they have read and enjoyed and the majority of pupils read quite widely outside of school. The well-stocked library is improving rapidly as a repository of fiction and non-fiction texts. Good teaching throughout the school ensures that pupils are introduced to many forms of literature, including poetry, drama and the works of famous authors. Most pupils locate information quickly and use a variety of reference books to support their learning in other subjects.

102. The teaching of writing is of very good quality. As a result, the standards of work that pupils attain are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6, especially for high attainers. The school identified this as an area for development and, as a consequence, pupils' writing skills have improved significantly during the last year. When they write, pupils have a good sense of audience as they draw the reader into their works with attractive openings and varied sentence structures. Pupils throughout the school, and of all abilities, write enchanting stories and produce mature, meaningful poems. Challenging writing tasks covering a range of topics allow pupils to display flair and ingenuity in their choice of language. One Year 2 pupil displayed a sense of spirituality and social concern in a well-conceived poem: 'If I had a magic paintbrush, I would paint a book of prayers for sad people'. Above average pupils in Year 6 give expression to their feelings about those who oppress us: 'When you walk on your own, they're there! They abuse your hearts and mislead your thoughts'. They pen lively autobiographical pieces, create imaginary reports on themselves and others, write in the style of Shakespeare and HG Wells, discuss the effects of television on children, produce letters of application for posts and construct perceptive conversations with authors such as Roald Dahl. Pupils' persuasive writing style is often powerful and captivating. This is because they have been taught to evaluate a range of different texts, to identify many fascinating characteristics of writing styles and to apply their critical skills to their own writing.

103. The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, and a key factor in the rise in standards and the overall achievement of pupils. In the 11 lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was excellent in one, very good in four, good in five and satisfactory in one lesson only. In the good lessons, the teachers share their lesson objectives with pupils, work at a brisk pace, use quick-fire questions to reinforce learning at different points in the lessons and ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged appropriately. Where the teaching was satisfactory, the pace was slower than it needed to be and the teacher was not always quick to see that some pupils, especially the high attainers, were ready to move on and accept more challenging tasks.

104. Teachers generally manage their pupils consistently well and employ a range of teaching strategies in an effective way. This helps to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem, to sustain their concentration and to produce positive attitudes to the subject throughout the school. Teachers usually set high expectations and establish good classroom routines. All lessons are planned with clear objectives. However, there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness with which teachers share these with pupils, so that some

pupils confuse lesson objectives with their personal or group targets. Teachers make satisfactory use of information and communication technology (ICT) to reinforce pupils' word-processing skills and to support their language development. Teachers plan work well, but lessons are not always carefully evaluated on a daily basis so that subsequent work takes full account of pupils' responses. Teachers implement the marking policy inconsistently, with the result that pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

105. Teachers have worked very hard to implement the National Literacy Strategy consistently. The subject leaders have been instrumental in this through the careful monitoring of teaching and learning. With good support from external advisors, they have helped teachers to make very good use of in-service training. The skills of the lead and key teachers have been shared with other staff and used very well to support them. Very good assessment procedures are used increasingly well to track pupils' achievements across the school, to identify those in need of additional support and to identify and address areas of weakness in the curriculum. The use of very good reading records, which was inconsistent at the time of the last inspection, is now very good throughout the school. Pupils' learning opportunities are enriched through regular events such as working with visiting poets and authors and attending the drama club. The curriculum is rich, and makes a good contribution to their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All of these features have contributed very well to the improving standards and achievements of pupils since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

106. Attainment amongst the current group of pupils in the Reception classes is above average, so they are entering Year 1 with a good level of knowledge and understanding in the areas required to do well in mathematics. This has not always been so. The current Year 2, for example, presented a very different picture when they entered Year 1. This group has a higher than average proportion of lower attaining pupils, many with identified special educational and behavioural needs, which meant that their attainment when they were five was below average. These pupils, now at the end of Year 2, have made good progress in mathematics and now demonstrate the range of skills, knowledge and understanding which broadly matches the national average. Although the lower attaining pupils remain in the classes, good teaching and special help from learning support assistants and others have pulled up pupils' attainment into the average range. Unvalidated results from recent national tests for seven year olds suggest similar findings to those seen on inspection. Last year's tests showed differences between pupils' performance in various aspects of mathematics, but these do not appear in this group of Year 2 pupils. These pupils have progressed well in the two years since they were five. Although the proportion of abler pupils in this year is smaller than average, the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are achieving appropriately higher levels in mathematics.

107. Pupils currently in Year 6 attained above average standards in their national tests when they were seven. They are still above average, despite the staffing difficulties described elsewhere in this report which many have experienced since then. Pupils have made satisfactory progress across the four years and have made particularly good progress in Year 6. This applies to all pupils, including those whose first language is not English. Some very high attainment in mathematics has been identified, and was observed, amongst these pupils and they are making very good progress.

108. Pupils in Year 1 currently show an average range of attainment. In the lesson seen, their range of skill in manipulating numbers to find out how much money they needed to buy a range of small items from their shop showed higher attaining pupils able to conceptualise quickly and write down their answers neatly using well-formed digits. Some middle attaining pupils' speed in writing their answers was impaired by weaker script, for example by writing numbers from the bottom up, but most in the middle group were average in all the aspects expected. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs (SEN), are well supported in mathematics lessons in Year 1. Teachers are constantly vigilant to identify any other SEN that are emerging to ensure that pupils get appropriate support. In the Year 1 lesson, lower attaining pupils were learning well, with the help of a learning support teacher, in simplified but similar exercises about shopping. Here, standards were well below average for a few pupils in this group, as would be expected. All pupils are making good progress in Year 1 and they are achieving well.

109. In Year 2, the large proportion of lower attaining pupils and those with SEN is clearly evident in both classes. Teachers, together with the numeracy co-ordinator, are currently assessing the future curriculum organisation that will best meet the needs of these groups as they move into the next phase of their education. All pupils here have progressed well, many with support, but neither Year 2 class seen had a learning support assistant helping the teacher in the classroom in the numeracy lesson. The five least able pupils from each Year 2 class were outside the classroom being taught by an additional teacher and a classroom assistant, but those remaining in the classroom included more low ability pupils who were experiencing difficulty. This presented a great challenge for the teachers. In one lesson seen, Year 2 pupils demonstrated an average range of competence when learning about telling and 'making' the time in digital and analogue format. Most higher attaining pupils could rapidly identify, and write or transfer onto the clock-face, more complicated times such as quarter-to-nine.

110. The present Year 3 classes were above average last year when they took their national tests at the age of seven. Many have not made the progress in mathematics which might have been expected, given this profile. Attainment in Year 3 is now average. Pupils with SEN continue to receive useful withdrawal help from learning support assistants. This provides them with a good level of challenge, so they achieve well. The majority of pupils in the two classes work with the class teachers, again with no other classroom support. In both lessons seen, the potentially higher attaining pupils in these groups were not reaching the levels of which they are capable. There was insufficient challenge for these pupils to achieve their potential.

111. The school has recognised the high proportion of pupils with SEN in the current Years 4 and 5, and has 'setted' these years in mathematics to provide more appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. This is working well, but the system is in its first year of operation and is soon to be reviewed. Inspection evidence shows that good, and very good, teaching in these years is leading to good progress for abler and for less able pupils. In Year 4, for example, a very good lesson with higher attaining pupils showed them able to respond highly effectively to 'why?' questions about geometry, angles and compass points, with good estimation and effective use of vocabulary to explain their mathematical thinking. Work for the middle and lower attaining pupils about the same topic also enabled these pupils to achieve well. In Year 5, the same setting arrangements again allow for good, well-targeted work to stretch pupils of different abilities. Even within the setted groups, work is well provided to present differing degrees of challenge for sub-sets within these broad levels. 'Booster' provision for those likely to fall just below average provides very good opportunities for pupils to work in smaller groups. Attainment seen in one of these showed some pupils working at an above average level of attainment in the 'cracking codes' task. In the higher set, a very similar activity showed many pupils operating at an above average

level of competence as they enthusiastically tackled a challenging 'letters to numbers' algebraic transformational problem. Current Year 5 pupils were well above average when they left Year 2, and the school's effective provision is ensuring that pupils of all abilities have the opportunity to develop the high levels of mathematical skill they possess. Year 6 mixed ability provision has ensured that support has been available for pupils likely to under-achieve, and has been effective in pulling up standards which had slipped somewhat when learning momentum was lost because of staffing problems. The good and very good teaching in Year 6 has provided pupils of differing abilities with very good examples of different work within the main groups. Higher attaining pupils have done very well, and were working very effectively on complex geometric problems in lessons seen. Middle and lower attaining pupils were achieving well on simpler versions of similar problems. Pupils' achievement between Years 4 and 6 is good.

112. From a very early stage pupils develop good, positive attitudes to mathematics. They enjoy the working challenges that most teachers set for them and work hard to solve them, whatever their underlying levels of ability. All pupils work harmoniously in groups, which is an important factor in the successes they achieve. They work independently, without the direct intervention of teachers when they are required to do so, helping each other; they were often heard to be very complimentary about each other's work.

113. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. Some teaching seen was very good and all was at least satisfactory. The best lessons are characterised by a brisk pace, with very clear objectives set at the start of lessons, so pupils understand what they are to do. These lessons are carefully planned with individual pupils and groups of pupils in mind, so that all are stretched beyond where they were at the start of a project or lesson. They included very good, open questioning that requires pupils to think about 'why' and 'how' things are so, pushing those who can, to expand on their answers. The very supportive care which teachers exhibit for pupils ensures that these stimuli are always within the reach of individuals, creating an environment where pupils are not afraid to be wrong or inaccurate, because they know that to try is most important. Where teaching is less good, the pace of the lesson flags, and pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, lose interest and learning loses momentum. The challenge offered is not pitched high enough for these pupils. Marking is satisfactory in most instances, but is not helpful to pupils in giving written targets useful for pupils' 'next-steps' improvement. Some examples of unsatisfactory marking provide demotivating, demoralising feedback about their achievement. This is unusual though, with most teachers' marking being encouraging and designed to bolster pupils' confidence. Although assessment occurs to some extent through oral feedback, lower attaining pupils in particular find it hard to remember what teachers have said, and need more consistent reference to their individual objectives for improvement. Teachers mostly plan lessons well around the National Numeracy Strategy. They generally adhere to the lesson structure recommended, so that pupils get a good balance of different practice within one lesson. Many teachers make good use of the opportunities presented to reinforce literacy skills through mathematics, for example through the word-based problem-solving activities. These are now usually included in every lesson because this area of mathematics was recently identified as a relative weakness in pupils' performance. These are useful, challenging additions to lessons that sometimes spill forward into homework.

114. The management of mathematics is good. The National Numeracy Strategy is now fully embedded into the work of the school and the local authority, which gave useful help when this was developing, acts now in a purely consultative role. The co-ordinator has identified most areas for development in the subject and the school's plans for reviews of various initiatives are well targeted. A good deal of assessment analysis shows pupils' attainment at different points in their progress through the school and assessment is used to provide appropriate work for pupils, for example through the setting arrangements. The

subject's use of information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. In every class, pupils have the opportunity to use computers to reinforce their learning. For example, Year 4 pupils, two at a time, were using a program about angles to reinforce their learning. In Year 3, pupils use computers to investigate two and three-dimensional shapes in Venn diagrams, while Year 5 pupils use software that is designed to improve their estimating skills. In Year 6, pupils go on line to revise mathematics on the Internet. Some useful monitoring of teaching occurs but more time is required for co-ordinators to undertake this. This will ensure that consistency in teaching mathematics enables pupils to progress through the school smoothly with equal progress in all years.

SCIENCE

115. At the ages of seven and eleven, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the national average. Since the time of the last inspection, pupils' attainment has been adversely affected by staffing difficulties and the occasional lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), make sound progress and achieve at a satisfactory level. Year 6 pupils make good progress. They attain at an above average level in their work on series and parallel circuits and on aspects of forces, for example the up-thrust forces on objects immersed in water. However the overall achievement of pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, could be higher.

116. By the end of Year 2, pupils have an adequate knowledge of simple classifications of materials and the structure of plants, and can describe the conditions needed for them to grow. They understand how human senses work, and investigate the effects of light and dark on reflective materials. They successfully use graphs in investigations to measure sound intensity and the length of shadows over time, and use their observations well to explain what they see happening when substances, such as chocolate, melt. However, pupils' skills in estimating and measuring are not sufficiently well developed in some activities, such as the investigation of forces.

117. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory grasp of scientific facts and concepts, and use investigative skills effectively. They know how to separate solids, such as salt and sand, and can explain some of the beneficial and harmful effects of micro-organisms, for example, soil enrichment by compost, and the decay of foods. In a Year 6 investigation into the effects of air bubbles in solids, pupils made reasoned predictions about the flotation in water of plain chocolate compared with chocolate containing air bubbles. In the best lessons, pupils are competent to record their work graphically, sometimes using Information and communication technology (ICT), as in the investigation of the size of the force on objects suspended in water. Computers are used satisfactorily in every year group to enhance the learning of science. For example, in Year 4 they are used by pupils to sort materials according to their properties, whilst in Year 6, pupils use a spreadsheet program to display the results of their experiments on forces.

118. Pupils enjoy their lessons and behave well, showing respect for each other, adults and equipment. However, in a few lessons, where higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged, they sometimes lose interest, and learning and achievement are impaired.

119. The quality of teaching is satisfactory across the school, and three out of six lessons were of good quality. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Good planning and organisation and good relationships are common characteristics. In the best lessons, teachers use their knowledge well to extend pupils' thinking, and maintain high expectations through challenging tasks and thought-provoking questioning. As a result, pupils strive hard to show what they know. This occurred in a good Year 4 lesson, in which pupils

investigated the effects of friction on different surfaces. The teacher's questioning helped pupils to clarify their understanding of friction and of equal and opposite forces. As a result, several pupils suggested that a force needs to be exerted to overcome the balanced forces existing between two surfaces on a slope. Teachers also make good use of resources, as in a good Year 5 lesson about the effects of micro-organisms. The teacher made very good use of the local allotments and local gardeners to demonstrate the useful consequences of the many micro-organisms at work in compost heaps. She prepared useful worksheets to help pupils record easily the gardener's answers to their questions, and planned the effective use of a computer-linked microscope to enable pupils to see enlarged samples of micro-organisms at the end of the lesson. Since the last inspection, the proportion of good teaching is lower because of the lack of sufficient challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils. In some lessons, the type of recorded response demanded of higher attaining pupils, following an investigation, is too simple. In one lesson, for example, a pupil identified as gifted and talented was asked to draw simple pictures on a worksheet in response to an activity, and did so very easily. In another lesson, insufficient opportunity was given for a majority of pupils to make their own estimates and measurements of distances travelled by a vehicle down a slope. In another lesson about gases dissolved in water under pressure, teachers' questioning at the end of the lesson did not allow pupils to think about everyday applications and uses of the principle of gases dissolved under pressure. In a majority of lessons teachers' planning does not provide opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills, and consequently pupils are insufficiently challenged to use the computer for research and data handling.

120. Since the last inspection, teachers have improved their use of assessment. Good opportunities are provided to test pupils' understanding regularly through half term tests, and information is now used well to plan further work. The co-ordinator has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has identified useful priorities in the development plan. A good inventory of resources is available and she is aware of the need to develop further the science computer software provision.

ART AND DESIGN

121. At the time of the last inspection, the standard of attainment in art and design was judged to be in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Owing to the school's timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe one class in Year 1 and one in Year 4. However, from an examination of pupils' work in folders, sketchbooks and on display, and from discussions with teachers and pupils, inspection evidence suggests that standards meet those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils achieve satisfactorily from Years 1 to 6.

122. By the end of Year 2, pupils use a satisfactory range of materials, including pencils and poster paints. Work on display shows that high attainers especially have good control for their age and blend colours to achieve a desired shade. They develop a reasonable idea of perspective and produce appropriate self-portraits. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used satisfactorily in the teaching of art and design. Pupils in Year 1 record their experiences and explore ideas from first-hand observations. They complete colourful air-drying clay sculptures, which are proudly displayed in their classrooms, and produce impressive charcoal-smudged drawings in the style of Lowry. Displays indicate that Year 2 pupils have worked in the style of Clarice Cliff and produced striking drawings and paintings of the baptistry windows in Coventry Cathedral.

123. Throughout the school there are numerous examples of the celebration of art and design, and artists from other cultures in the world. Paintings and drawings, which are largely the result of a recent multi-cultural day, adorn corridors and classroom walls. There are Kenyan shields, African masks and several attractive examples of Aboriginal and Australian art. In Year 5, pupils have studied various aspects of Italian art through the ages, including the memorable painting of the Mona Lisa. They have also undertaken studies of mosaics and produced decorative examples of Venetian carnival masks. Year 6 pupils have designed Aztec masks, and created engaging Henna hand paintings and felicitous wall paintings of Indian gods. There are good links with other subjects, especially geography and history.

124. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, the two lessons seen were at least of satisfactory standard. Where the teaching was good in one lesson, the teacher knew her subject well and had high expectations. Skilful questioning and appropriate planning and resources supported learning effectively. Support staff and a parent were used well to encourage pupils of different abilities and to reinforce learning in this lesson. However, it is apparent from teachers' planning that there is often a lack of clear direction in the development of skills and techniques throughout the school. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use a range of media and three-dimensional work. This is because art and design is not always given sufficient priority on the school's timetable.

125. Although sketchbooks have recently been introduced for every pupil, their application is often variable. There are no assessment procedures in place to identify pupils' achievements and to inform teaching and learning. The coordinator, who is an art and design specialist teacher, provides sound leadership and acknowledges that there are many areas for development in art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. As at the time of the last inspection, standards at age seven are in line with those expected for pupils' age. Standards at age 11 are just below that seen nationally. The school is well aware of this and has made significant improvements that are beginning to raise achievement for pupils aged eight to eleven. These include providing expert training for the appointed subject leader and a comprehensive plan identifying the way forward. The school has chosen to concentrate on the planning element of design. Although the planned series of activities focus well on skills that enable pupils to design, modify and evaluate their work, pupils aged 11 have not benefited from the improved provision so this has not yet had an impact on standards attained at age 11.

127. Pupils aged five to seven achieve well. Seven year olds display enjoyment of the practical nature of design and technology. They have designed a 'Roly-poly' vehicle, quickly learning that the wheel settings corresponded to the movement as it travels. Pupils selected and used decorative resources efficiently, some higher attaining pupils adding ribbon streamers when modifying their design, to create an effect on moving. They explained that 'some are designed to roll fast – at speed, others to go off in different ways'. Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, were very eager to complete their models so that they could test them.

128. Pupils aged nine to eleven are making up for some lost ground in previous years in their knowledge of different materials and techniques, and of skills such as sewing and threading a needle. Strong links with the community partnership centre significantly lift pupils' understanding of real world computer assisted design and technology. This is good

use of ICT. Pupils aged 11 have benefited greatly from their chess figure design project, which also enhanced their numeracy skills, demanding precision, dialogue and thought. Teachers are now using the school's recently acquired series of activities to structure their lessons, and as a result, pupils are gaining experience in all the phases of the design process. However, pupils age eight to 11 are generally not as confident as pupils of a similar age because of their past limited range of experiences. Some pupils are overly dependent on the teacher or other pupils to select resources and use a template. Despite this insecurity, pupils are learning rapidly, especially in evaluating their designs against the purpose intended.

129. In the two lessons seen in Year 2, teaching was good. Lessons and work seen during the inspection indicate that teaching is satisfactory for pupils aged eight to 11. Teaching is more successful when the activity inspires and delights pupils, and teachers' questioning challenges pupils' understanding of design and purpose. Teachers make good reference to safety in lessons and increasingly use correct terminology. Good use is made of pupils' work to encourage comments as they see and compare each other's designs. The generally very good relationships and pupils' enjoyment in lessons are helping to raise standards in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

130. Standards of pupil's work at the ages of seven and eleven, the progress they make and their overall achievement are in line with national expectations. This represents good progress since the last inspection when standards were deemed unsatisfactory.

131. By the age of seven pupils practise their mapping skills, using symbols and drawing a route based on the story of Hansel and Gretel. High attaining pupils make good progress when they examine a local map and mark on it places that they visit such as the local swimming pool. All pupils make sound progress when they use plans and a key to help them identify their likes and dislikes of the school environment. Satisfactory learning takes place when pupils extend their knowledge about words associated with weather. By the age of 11 pupils have drawn routes to school, and are working with printed maps of the world. In Year 4, pupils plan a journey to Kenya, thereby extending their knowledge of regions around the world. In Year 6, the pupils identify major aspects of India, such as rivers and towns. They make judgements about the good and less-good aspects of village life.

132. Pupil's knowledge of physical geography is developed satisfactorily in every year group. High attaining pupils write in detail about the water cycle, and life in the rain forest. Pupils learn to use words and phrases correctly, such as *tributary*, *waterfalls* and *the life cycle of a river*. However, their understanding and ability to recall such knowledge is not secure with some Year 6 pupils unable to explain what is meant by erosion and its effects.

133. Throughout the school, examination of past work and lesson observations show that teachers provide a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to build their knowledge of geography. However, there is less emphasis on the teaching of geographical skills such as the use of evidence sources, for example, aerial photographs and Ordnance Survey maps.

134. The subject makes a good contribution to reinforcing literacy, providing opportunities for pupils to extend their vocabulary, as well as to write at length. Less reinforcement of numeracy takes place. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used successfully in geography, for example when Year 6 pupils use the Internet to find information on the animals of the Rain Forest. In Years 1 and 2 pupils identify weather symbols on the computer screen.

135. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Relationships in lessons are very positive and pupils co-operate well, such as when they share books and when they develop presentations about life in the Rain Forest in Year 6. Assessment procedures are not yet sufficiently refined to enable targets to be set for pupils, but are being developed. Such information would help teachers to plan work that is more appropriate for pupils of differing abilities. Teachers' marking is supportive, with many encouraging remarks being made, but little guidance is given about how pupils can improve their work.

136. Teaching of geography is satisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and manage lessons well, allowing them to proceed uninterrupted and with pupils' attention kept on their work. On occasions, the learning objectives for lessons are too general and so opportunities to further develop geographical skills are missed.

137. The subject leader monitors the curriculum and standards, and manages the subject very enthusiastically and successfully. This has contributed to the rise in standards. The subject has a scheme of work in place that meets the demands of the National Curriculum, and consideration has been given to extending the curriculum. The introduction of the travels of Barnaby Bear in Year 1 has allowed the school to successfully address the problem of coverage highlighted in the last inspection report. Similarly, the multi-cultural week has also increased the profile of the subject in the school and has increased the knowledge of pupils about the countries covered. Teachers' planning and pupils' work is inspected, but the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to observe lessons. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory, and good use is made of the locality, for example, for traffic surveys.

HISTORY

138. No history lessons were observed, and no judgement can therefore be made on the quality of teaching. The following judgments are based on examination of pupils' past work and teachers' planning, together with discussions with teachers, the subject co-ordinator and pupils.

139. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' standards at age seven and eleven are in line with expectations for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL), are making satisfactory progress.

140. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have a sound understanding of the passage of time. They examine the changes associated with their own growth, and how schools and dress have changed since Victorian times. Their knowledge of local history progresses satisfactorily when pupils examine the contribution of people such as James Starley to the development of the bicycle in Coventry. By the age of 11, pupils make sound progress in their learning about such topics as Ancient Egypt, the Romans, the Saxons, the Vikings, and Britain since the 1930s. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn about the home life of people in Roman times. Low attaining pupils label drawings of soldiers and highlight various aspects of Roman life. Higher attaining pupils write about the story of Romulus and Remus and the invasion of Britain by Julius Caesar. By Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory gains in their historical knowledge, and high attainers write detailed diaries about the experiences of marchers during the Jarrow Crusade.

141. Less secure are the standards associated with the development of specific history skills. The teaching of skills is developing, such as when pupils use a visit to the local museum to identify how we know about the past. They make sound progress when Year 4 pupils are asked to draw Tudor family trees, and to deal with artefacts about the Aztecs. Particularly encouraging is the expectation that pupils raise their own questions about what they wish to know about the Victorians. However, the teaching of such skills is inconsistent between classes and year groups.

142. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to extend their historical knowledge, although less attention is paid in plans to adopting a skills-based approach to the subject. All teachers have a satisfactory working knowledge of the subject. Marking of pupil's work is supportive but does not provide information about what the pupils must do to improve their standards. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good, with an obvious pride in their work.

143. The subject leader monitors the curriculum, and the subject has an appropriate scheme of work that enables the full National Curriculum to be delivered. Work sampling and the analysis of teachers' planning take place, although the co-ordinator has had no opportunities to observe lessons.

144. Assessment and recording arrangements are in need of further development. The lack of targeted assessment opportunities in history means that the tracking of pupils' progress and attainment is not making a significant contribution to informing teachers' planning, or the setting of appropriate targets for pupils. The subject is developing a useful portfolio of pupils' work. It is planned to link this to expected levels, providing guidance to teachers about standards within the subject. Whilst some efforts have been made to identify those pupils who have a particular talent, there exist gaps in planning in terms of identifying work specifically aimed at pupils with differing abilities.

145. The subject makes a good contribution to literacy. It highlights key words, and provides extended writing opportunities such as when pupils are asked to write in detail about the importance of the River Nile to the peoples of Ancient Egypt. Through their studies on the Aztecs pupils learn of other forms of writing such as codices. The support for numeracy is satisfactory. However, whilst there are examples of pupils making use of the Internet for topic research involving the Tudors, such opportunities are inconsistent. Pupils do, however, use computers to carry out research from CD ROMS, and overall, the use of ICT in history is satisfactory.

146. Subject resources are satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 have benefited greatly from visitors talking about their experiences in the last world war as a civilian and as a prisoner. However, across the school, opportunities for pupils to visit places of historical interest are limited.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

147. As at the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment in ICT are broadly in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven.

148. Enthusiastic and committed subject leadership during the past year has brought substantial improvements in many areas of the subject. The school encountered a delay in the upgrading of hardware and Internet connections through circumstances beyond their control. As a result, developments in the use of e-mail, simulations and control technology

are planned but have not yet had an impact on pupils' achievement, particularly for pupils aged nine to eleven. The full breadth of National Curriculum provision is now in place. Rapid improvement over the past year has secured improvement in the previously identified gap in control technology.

149. The school has worked hard to develop provision. Staff expertise, hardware and software across the school have improved to meet increasing national expectations. Most teachers have partly completed a nationally accredited training programme, and this is bearing fruit in pupils' improving achievement. All pupils use ICT in the well-equipped computer suite, which is networked to most classrooms. Additionally, teachers are guided by a new and comprehensive series of learning activities. As a result, the school is now well positioned to accelerate the further development of the subject.

150. Word processing and desktop publishing are well developed in all year groups. Achievement is often good and sometimes very good across a wide variety of text-handling work. Six and seven year old pupils work with word-banks to instantly add text to illustrate a picture, and pupils aged nine and ten import pictures from a range of sources, such as clipart and Internet web sites. Pupils learn to reposition, manipulate or add effects to create a range of information texts. These include posters, flyers, reports, project materials and certificates. Pupils aged 11 demonstrated high standards of attainment by producing a leaver's certificate and making presentations using Power Point.

151. Pupils aged six and seven have experienced using graphics and paint programmes. Delightful 'Mr Men' pictures show very good achievement with fine control and imaginative use of line. Year 5 pupils used a graphics programme in an observed lesson to draw a plan of part of their classroom. Most pupils were able to achieve the planned learning intentions to draw and manipulate shapes to represent objects then apply colour and text effects, this work being at the standard expected for their age.

152. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. As a consequence of the training they have received, teachers' knowledge of the subject is improving, as is their confidence to teach the subject. Using their good lesson plans, they manage pupils well and ensure that all pupils gain good advantage from the new facilities available. The varying degrees of success in pupils' achievement are closely linked to the quality of teaching. Very good, well-organised teaching was seen providing pupils with clear links to their prior knowledge and skills. Skilful demonstrations of the precise steps to be taken, together with the use of accurate technical vocabulary, enabled pupils to use new ideas and skills. Pupils' achievement was greatest in those lessons where teachers planned for ICT knowledge and skills to be taught in small steps. Some teachers with high expectations attempted to bridge pupils' gaps in knowledge by planning ambitious leaps. In the example seen, higher attaining pupils were able to achieve a good degree of success through collaboration and exploration.

153. Links with the community provide very good opportunities for pupils to experience ICT in a different setting, such as an industrial flavour through links with the community industrial partnership. Pupils aged 11 worked well with a local company on a design and technology, numeracy related project using computer assisted design tools to make chess pieces and key rings. This valuable link is a prime opportunity for pupils to see ICT applied to the world of work.

154. Pupils' with special educational needs (SEN) work enthusiastically and with developing confidence, making similar progress to all other pupils. In one instance, an 11 year old pupil made very good progress and shone in the class because the teacher ensured a good level of challenge. Higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged by their work and often have the opportunity to make presentations to audiences, such as in assemblies.

MUSIC

155. Music is a strength of the school and standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in music is high. They achieve well, especially in singing, and their achievements in music add significantly to their spiritual and personal development. They develop good attitudes towards music when they are in their early years, sustaining this sense of enjoyment as they move through all years in the school. Music is at the heart of the religious aspects of celebration and self-expression at all stages of pupils' development. Pupils' singing testifies strongly to the success of the school's aims of creating happy, confident children.

156. Standards in singing are above average by the time pupils are seven. In assemblies, for example, pupils' pitch is good, they sing with a good sense of rhythm and articulate words clearly. Other aspects of music in the Year 1 lesson seen show pupils able to develop rhythms using percussion instruments to the expected level of competence. They can identify different musical elements, such as slow or fast beats in the music they hear, and can create appropriate movements to represent these. Many pupils can talk about the music using appropriate technical vocabulary, and those in Year 1 learned swiftly how to make sounds with new instruments such as the 'chatterbox'. All were very interested to see and hear how this worked.

157. By the time they are 11, pupils' attainment in music is above average, partly because their responses to music throughout the school are very good. A new co-ordinator has revitalised the subject and schemes of work have created good opportunities for pupils to experience all the elements of music in projects and in most lessons. In each of the years between seven and 11, pupils have good opportunities to listen to music of many different types. Those in Year 6, for example, studying Brazilian music, which linked well with their project about rainforests. They were so successful and confident after their practice, using voices and instruments in the lesson, that they decided to perform the piece in assembly the next day. This performance was very effective, illustrating vocally and instrumentally the theme which the whole of Year 6 were presenting.

158. Many examples were seen, particularly amongst older pupils, where soloists, particularly singers, are willing to perform in 'public' or in front of the class. This gives them additional, useful experience and develops their confidence greatly. Often other pupils, as the audience, applaud spontaneously in appreciation. In many such ways, music contributes highly effectively to pupils' social and cultural development and to the spiritual life of the school. In a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils of all abilities were working on compositions to develop a musical 'sandwich'. This involves composing and performing different themes, then putting them all together in sequence to make a class composition. Each group, and later the whole class, made very good progress within the lesson and the final piece demonstrated above average competence for Year 4. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were developing a good swing rhythm in song and could play various instruments competently as accompaniment.

159. Teaching of music is good. The new co-ordinator has successfully developed staff confidence in the teaching of the subject, in part through the very good selection of a published scheme of work and also by obtaining appropriate resources. As younger pupils' attainment increases, the current level of resources for instruments, particularly tuned instruments such as electronic keyboards, will be inadequate to match this increased achievement as they move through the school. The subject development plan identifies these resourcing issues and others such as the need to acquire and use additional ICT software in music. ICT, including recording devices, are used extensively, and overall, the use of ICT is satisfactory. Guitar lessons occur and a recorder group operates. These, together with the choir, represent good extra-curricular opportunities, and visiting musicians enhance these further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

160. As at the time of the last inspection, standards of work are in line with expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Throughout the school pupils carry out warm-up exercises and describe the effects of exercise on the heart. Pupils aged seven to eleven describe the importance, and the effects on their body, of health-related exercise. The school makes good use of the local centre for swimming. Very good attention is paid to safety issues across the school, with pupils knowledgeable about how to behave and carry equipment safely.

161. Boys and girls participate in a good range of games, and overall reach satisfactory standards. In Year 1, pupils make very good progress when practising their throwing and catching skills on their own and in small groups. High attaining pupils show consistent control when throwing and catching the ball as they move across the hall. By Year 5, pupils demonstrate sound skills when practising throwing the ball under and over-arm. Lower attaining pupils have problems of control when throwing the ball, and lose direction. Most pupils, however, are able consistently to throw the ball accurately, and catch it consistently.

162. In Year 2, pupils show sound standards when they dribble large and small balls around cones. They work hard, and high attaining pupils make good progress during the lesson and show that they are able to dribble with increasing speed and control. By Year 5, in cricket, the majority of pupils are able to hold the bat correctly, and high attaining pupils are able to hit the ball in the direction they want to. The pupils who are fielding demonstrate their understanding of the various throwing techniques when they return the ball using under and over-arm throws. Lower attaining pupils struggle to maintain accuracy and direction.

163. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make satisfactory progress in lessons. Teachers give help and advice appropriately; other pupils give good support. Teachers identify those pupils who are exceptionally talented and arrange for them to receive professional coaching from football and tennis coaches. However, within lessons, activities for such pupils, as well as higher attainers, are not planned on a consistent basis. This results in rates of progress for these pupils being inconsistent across the school.

164. Pupils enjoy physical education and are keen and enthusiastic during lessons. In particular they show respect for their teachers and their fellow pupils, co-operate well when asked to work in pairs and in groups and take turns well, for example, when deciding who should bat in a cricket game.

165. The quality of teaching of those aspects of physical education observed was good. Teachers manage pupils well. Relationships in lessons are good, resulting in pupils having the confidence to try and to make mistakes. Learning is accelerated and standards of work

rise when teachers develop learning objectives that identify specifically what pupils are going to learn, and what activity will best develop such skills. In some lessons learning objectives are too vague, with work activities for pupils of differing ability not developed. Many opportunities are developed for pupils to watch and comment upon the work of others. However, lesson planning does not always allow for evaluation where pupils benefit from each other's feedback. Teachers make good use of the opportunities to reinforce the school's literacy strategy, by using technical language.

166. Good subject management is in evidence, with an appropriate policy and curriculum documentation having been developed. Monitoring of the curriculum and standards takes place through the examination of teachers' plans and observing pupils' work. There are, however, few opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe lessons. Assessment and recording of what pupils have achieved is developing, in accordance with a pilot program that is currently underway. However, such information is not consistently used to keep pupils informed more specifically of areas in need of improvement, or to inform teachers' planning of lessons.

167. Resources are good and the subject makes good use of the various opportunities for competitive sports. Parents make a positive contribution to the subject's good extra-curricular opportunities that include mini tag-rugby and Gaelic football. The school has provided training for parents who have volunteered to help.