

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Carnforth, Lancashire

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119618

Headteacher: Mrs Siobhan Collingwood

Reporting inspector: Mr George Derby
25349

Dates of inspection: 18th – 20th November 2002

Inspection number: 251463

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:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kellet Road Carnforth Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M O'Donnell
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25349	George Derby	Registered inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology Science	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9002	Derek Ashton	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
10099	Sue Lewis	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Foundation stage Special educational needs English Geography History	
31075	Daphne Harris	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Currently there are 95 pupils on roll, from the ages of four to eleven, 37 boys and 58 girls. There is no nursery; children enter the Reception class on a full time basis, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five years old. At present, 12 per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, about average in comparison with other schools. Pupils who attend the school come from areas such as Carnforth, Bolton Le Sands and Yealand; those who live a distance away, come by school transport. There are some social problems in the locality and the school has suffered from bouts of vandalism. The overall attainment levels of children on entry to the school vary from year-to-year, but are generally average when compared with children found nationally and locally. Occasionally, such as for the children who took their Year 2 tests last year, they are below average on entry to the school. About 15 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, a figure which is below the national average. These pupils have a very wide range of needs including physical disability, behavioural problems and other learning difficulties and two pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Currently, just two pupils are from families with English as an additional language, but these are not at an early stage of language acquisition. There are five pupils belonging to minority ethnic groups; these are of Asian origin. There have been significant staff changes over the past few years. The school's mission statement reflects the commitment to pupils' personal growth and that they are all God's children – it reminds all that '*you are precious in my eyes*'.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Standards are high and pupils achieve very well, especially in Years 3 to 6. There is a very high commitment to pupils' academic and personal growth and to making the school a better place to learn. There is strong celebration of pupils' personal achievements and pupils feel valued and enjoy school. The teaching is very good overall. This enables pupils to make very good progress during their time in the school and to attain standards which are usually above those of pupils in schools across the country. The headteacher, staff and governing body work very successfully to create a stimulating and supportive learning environment. The school is very well led and managed and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very well because of the very good quality of teaching; they attain standards which are usually well above average.
- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their work and their behaviour is of a high standard; relationships are excellent.
- The school values pupils' achievements very well and raises their self-esteem; the activities outside lessons and the work of the school council and other groups add much to pupils' personal growth.
- The leadership and management by the headteacher and others with management responsibility and the work of governors are very good.
- Literacy and numeracy are very well taught and the support for the basic skills in subjects is very good.

What could be improved

- The pupils' attainment and progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and its use to support learning in other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection in 1997. Although there were some good features to the school's work identified at that time, the headteacher

has had much to do to tackle the weaknesses prevalent upon her appointment, especially in the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching has improved; despite considerable staffing changes over the last two years the percentage of good and very good teaching has significantly increased. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and the quality of teaching for the youngest pupils, a major weakness in the last inspection, has markedly improved. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are usually high. However, standards in ICT are still below those expected for pupils' ages. The improvements to the ICT provision have taken some time and it is only now that pupils are having consistent opportunities to learn. Pupils' behaviour in some lessons was problematic previously. The school has tackled this through its very good behaviour policy and also through the excellent relationships with pupils, engendered through the school's underlying values and principles.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by the pupils in Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards are generally high, and particularly so when compared with similar schools. However, as only a small number of pupils take the tests each year, standards can fluctuate. **In the national tests in 2002**, the standards for the **Year 2** pupils were well below the national average in reading, below average in writing but above average in mathematics. The latter was because teachers were able to read the questions to those pupils who found reading particularly difficult. The assessments made by teachers in science also indicated that standards were below average. However, a number of children in this year group entered school with standards considerably below average for children of their age and the results demonstrate much progress in comparison with standards on entry. In previous years the pupils' standards have been above average and significant numbers of pupils have attained results at the higher level (Level 3) expected for their age. For pupils taking the tests at the end of **Year 6** the results showed an improving trend and are shown in the above table. The school significantly exceeded the targets it set for Year 6 pupils. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level for their age, Level 4 and above, were in the top five per cent of schools nationally in English and science and were well above average for mathematics. Significant numbers of pupils also attained the higher level (Level 5) in English and mathematics. An above average number of pupils attained this in science. **In the work seen during the inspection**, pupils achieve well from Reception through to Year 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6. This includes the few pupils who are learning English as an additional language (EAL) and most of the pupils with learning difficulties, who make very good progress in subjects and towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. This is because of the generally high quality of teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Children in the Reception class are currently on course to exceed what is expected for their age. Standards are well above average in reading and above average in writing for pupils in Year 2. In mathematics and science they are above average and by Year 6, are well above average. Currently, and looking over the past five years, there is no significant difference in the standards for boys and girls compared to the national picture. In other subjects, with the exception of ICT, standards are appropriate for the pupils' age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. They show interest and enthusiasm and respond highly to the challenging work provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is consistently very good in lessons and outside school; older pupils show great care for younger ones.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show high levels of confidence and are keen to accept responsibility. They work every effectively, can give mature opinions on a range of topics and show respect for other pupils' values and beliefs. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Satisfactory currently, although this was below average for last year, mainly due to families taking holidays during term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The teaching is very good overall. Teachers expect a great deal from their pupils and the best teaching is seen in Years 3 to 6 where teachers' expectations are exceptionally high. This significantly helps pupils to improve the gains pupils make in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teaching is particularly effective in English, mathematics and science and literacy and numeracy skills are very well promoted through other subjects. The very good quality teaching, including the very good questioning and the interesting ways in which teachers explain things, promotes consistently good learning by pupils and is effective in developing their literacy, numeracy and scientific skills. The good teaching in most other subjects enables pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with SEN and the small number of pupils with EAL, to learn effectively. In all subjects, the teaching and support staff work together very well and this helps pupils at all levels of attainment to make very good progress. Pupils are managed particularly effectively. Planning is thoroughly thought out and pupils of different abilities and ages are provided with challenging work matched to their needs. Pupils are usually clear about what they are to do and to learn. However, teachers rely heavily of their high powers of explanation and use few other ways, such as teacher / pupil demonstration, or ICT to help pupils learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Overall the opportunities for learning are broad and relevant. The balance of activities has been well thought out. The school meets all the legal requirements to provide the National Curriculum and religious education. Although adequate provision is now made for ICT as a subject, its use to support work during lessons in other subjects is underdeveloped. Excellent provision is made for activities outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Effective management of the provision and support by teaching assistants provides good help for the majority of pupils. Work is set at an appropriate level for most pupils and is based on clear targets in individual education plans, although staff need more support from specialists to meet the need of children with the greatest level of learning need. There is a very high level of care and concern displayed by all and commitment to meeting the needs and including such children. The provision for pupils with a Statement is sound overall. However, this needs improving through greater external support and resources.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. There are excellent opportunities for pupils' social development through work in lessons and outside school; the school council, faith and justice group, golden time and circle time make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. The very effective provision for pupils' moral development, contributes significantly towards very good standards of behaviour. Spiritual development is very well promoted through assemblies and also through the expression of the school's values on a daily basis. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own culture and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Good procedures exist for supporting pupils' personal development and academic progress. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring welfare and safety and for child protection. Attendance is soundly promoted. There are highly effective procedures for promoting good behaviour. Assessment is good, overall, but some information gained could be organised and used more effectively, especially to track progress in subjects. The progress of pupils with SEN is very well monitored.

A very good partnership has been developed with parents; parents view the school's work very positively. The school is very well supported by its parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that there is a high quality staff team. Staff share the school's values and work effectively together. The headteacher is tenacious about ensuring that high standards are reached and has a very clear view as to how to achieve this. School development is well thought out with relevant priorities. There is room for developing further the role of the very competent deputy headteacher, to include more specific whole school responsibilities in line with her status.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The high calibre governing body is very successful in ensuring that statutory requirements are met. Governors work very effectively with the headteacher and are closely involved with the school and staff to support the leadership and management of the school. They know the school's strengths and where it needs to improve, very well. They have a very good range of expertise and a very strong commitment to making things even better.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. A very good check is kept on the quality of teaching by the headteacher and co-ordinators monitor their subjects well and produce perceptive and rigorous evaluations of most aspects of provision. Use is made of comparative information to evaluate performance and to set targets for improvement. The data collected is analysed well. The headteacher provides governors with regular, wide-ranging, high quality information about the school's performance. The tracking systems the school has could, however, be simplified and presented more clearly.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Effective school development planning enables the small school budget to be spent wisely. All resources are managed efficiently. The school's finances are generally tight but spending is monitored well.

The accommodation is satisfactory; however, some classrooms are cramped and there is no school library at present. Staffing levels are good; the headteacher has engaged a range of staff who bring strong expertise to their areas of responsibility. Most support staff are skilled and experienced. Learning resources for subjects are sound. The school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most parents like nearly everything about the school and are highly supportive of its work. They particularly identify that children are helped to mature and that the school expects children to work hard and do their best; they find it is easy to approach the school with an issue or problem. 	<p>A few parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> more information about their children's progress; and better provision of homework.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. However, they find the arrangements for informing parents are similar to most schools and the information provided, including reports, is usually good. Homework follows the school's policy and is of good quality overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The pupils' results in the recent National Curriculum tests

1. Standards have improved well since the last inspection when they were in line with the national average for pupils in Year 2 and above average for pupils in Year 6. Sound progress was made in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. The results of the Year 2 tests are now usually well above average, although the 2002 Year 2 national test results were below average overall. Standards were above average in mathematics, below average in writing and well below average in reading. The attainment of this group of pupils on entry to school was generally very low in reading, although their skills were strongest in mathematics. The test results reflect this, and data collected by the school show that these pupils have made good progress in relation to their starting points.
2. In reading and writing, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) and above was below average. In mathematics and from the teachers' assessments in science, the percentage was well below average. However, in mathematics the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 2 was above average and those reaching Level 3 was well above average. Teachers' assessments of the pupils' attainment did not reflect this, however. This was due to over-cautiousness by the teacher due to the pupils' weaknesses in literacy. However, the school was able to read the questions to the pupils in the tests and this overcame some of these difficulties. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and science was generally below or well below average.
3. In the 2002 Year 6 tests, the standards were well above average overall and are a result of high quality teaching and very strong planning which enables pupils to build on their previous skills. The results were above average in science but well above average in English and mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 4) and above for their age in Year 6, was well above the national average in mathematics and very high (in the top five per cent of schools) in English and science. The school's results in these subjects were the highest for the past four years – a significant achievement. The percentage reaching the higher level (Level 5) was well above average in English and mathematics, but only above average in science. This is why the standards overall in science were above average, rather than higher.

The pupils' attainment over past years

4. Over the past three years there has been no significant difference in the performance of Year 6 boys and girls compared with the national picture. Nationally, girls do better in reading and writing, although there is no difference in mathematics. It is the same for this school. Boys in Year 2 have performed better than girls over the past three years, although the results fluctuate from year-to-year because of small numbers and the variations in gender in each year group. During the inspection there was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
5. Over the past few years, the school has achieved its planned improvements to raise the attainment of pupils reaching the expected level and above for their age by Year 6.
6. The trend in standards for English, mathematics and science was in line with the national trend over the past five years, although the school's own analysis alerts the school to any fluctuations, which it immediately responds to. Since 2000, Year 6 standards have generally risen markedly and represent the emphasis put on these subjects by the school to improve quality and standards.

Standards in the work seen during the inspection

7. In the work seen during the inspection, the pupils' attainment is well above average in English for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. In mathematics and science standards are above average for Year 2 pupils and well above average for Year 6. Standards in lessons and in pupils' previous work, are promoted through the very good provision and teaching overall; this has a highly positive effect on pupils' progress. Overall, the pupils make good progress over their time in Years 1 and 2 and progress very well in Years 3 to 6. Overall, their achievements by Year 6 are high. The very good teaching and the highly perceptive evaluations by subject co-ordinators, which clearly identify strengths and weaknesses in the provision, significantly contribute to improvement generally and pupils' attainment, in particular.
8. Realistic, but challenging, statutory targets for Year 6 have been agreed for 2003 and from inspection evidence these are likely to be exceeded. In 2002, the targets set for English and mathematics were also exceeded.
9. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year-to-year. It is generally average, although more recently this has varied and some groups' attainment has been below average. Reception children, including those with special educational needs and the small group of children with English as an additional language, in the school's first class, make good progress and are on course to exceed the expected levels for their age by the start of Year 1. Informative records of pupils' achievement, kept by the teacher, help staff to keep abreast of the progress the children have made.
10. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The well-targeted support given by highly competent teaching assistants in class and the support given by the school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo), who works specifically with individuals, helps the pupils to make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. These are clear, specific and achievable and focus on the pupils' most important needs. Very good attention is given to those with complex reading difficulties, although ICT could help to support these pupils' learning. However, the school has recently admitted pupils with severe learning difficulties and needs additional support to enable these to make all the progress they can, especially in the area of communication. There is clear progress being made in the pupils' social and emotional development. However, more specialist support is required to enable the pupils, especially when taught separately by a support assistant, to make adequate progress and also to ensure that work is set at a level appropriate when taught in the mixed Reception / Year 1 class. The school's very good focus in literacy and numeracy is also having a positive effect on learning and standards. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress overall. They are well supported by the school's staff. Pupils with a high level of attainment are specifically identified and, they too, make very good progress.
11. By the end of Year 6, standards in art and design are on course to be in line with those expected for pupils' ages and pupils make sound progress. The new scheme has addressed the teaching of all aspects of the subject and the time allocation for the subject has increased, compared to last year. Pupils, by Year 6, can identify the styles of famous artists. Similarly, there has been a positive focus on improving provision in design and technology. Pupils currently attain standards in line with their age, but are on course to exceed this by the end of the year. Their progress is currently good. Work seen during the inspection shows high standards, especially in the area of product evaluation. In geography and history, standards exceed those expected for pupils' ages by Year 6 and the pupils' progress is good.
12. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' standards, by the time they leave the school, are below what is expected for Year 6 pupils. Although an improved / refurbished ICT suite is now being regularly used by pupils and skills are being taught more systematically, all this is all relatively new and the room does cause some problems for teachers in organising lessons and supporting pupils. This slows the pace of the lesson and limits the amount pupils can learn in lessons. Progress is now sound, however, and pupils build on what they have learned before. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects is limited and there is a lack of suitable software to help pupils with special educational needs. It is especially so for those with severe

learning difficulties where software to support their writing and presenting of ideas is considerably lacking.

13. In music, the pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their musical skills and their attainment is that expected for their ages for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. Time has now increased for learning the subject, although this has not yet an impact on standards throughout the school. Sound progress is made in developing pupils' skills in physical education and standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected for their age.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work; they are eager to learn and to be taught and enjoy working on their tasks. This reflects the very good teaching and excellent relationships throughout the school. Pupils respond to their teachers' positive caring attitudes and expectations of courtesy and respect for others. Pupils are observant and confident and take a pride in carrying out their duties as monitors. They are involved in a wide range of activities and make the most of the opportunities provided. They work well together in different groupings and individually.
15. Children who are five and under in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class quickly adapt to classroom routines. They begin to develop independence in dressing and personal hygiene and sustain interest and concentration for increasing amounts of time at their planned and free choice activities. Children learn the difference between right and wrong and share equipment amicably.
16. Since the last inspection, the pupils' behaviour and discipline have substantially improved. Pupils are polite, courteous and friendly to each other and to adults; they show patience, tolerance and maturity in many situations, for example, when elected to the role of school councillor. No aggressive behaviour to other pupils was observed and there has been only one exclusion, in recent years. Pupils take care of school property and help with the setting up and clearance of equipment. Pupils elected to the Friendship Squad give good support to other children who may be experiencing social difficulties.
17. Pupils with special educational needs show a willingness to learn; they respond and behave well in lessons. For many, their targets for improvement relate to aspects of personal development, including behaviour. As a result of the very effective support from staff, these pupils increase their confidence, self esteem and ability to contribute significantly to lessons. They mix well with other pupils and are fully integrated into the day-to-day life of the school.
18. The quality of relationships is excellent and a significant strength of the school. This helps to create an environment for very effective learning. Pupils grow in maturity as they progress through the school carrying out their responsibilities sensibly and thoughtfully, particularly the enthusiastic school councillors. Pupils respond well to the system of awards and certificates for achievements in academic and social areas.
19. Christian values are emphasised in the way pupils raise money for charities and contribute to the local community through regular visits to old people's homes and hospitals. In addition, the faith and justice group helps pupils' apply these values in a practical way. Their personal development is significantly enhanced by these activities.
20. Current levels of attendance are satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is less than the national average. Attendance is affected by holidays taken during term time. Pupils enjoy coming to school and lessons begin promptly. Awards for good attendance are given at the discretion of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

The quality of teaching across the school

21. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and has significantly improved since the last inspection when one in ten lessons was unsatisfactory. Teaching is best in Years 3 to 6, where the highest proportion of very good or excellent teaching was seen during the inspection and where teachers' expectations are exceptionally high. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching is good and the teaching of children in the Reception class (Foundation Stage) is good (and with very good features in some areas of learning). Teaching is very good in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In personal and social development, teaching is good and has some very good features, because of the strong relationships and carefully thought out opportunities for pupils to think about what they have done as well as for independent working. In other areas the teaching is good overall, but, as the teacher is new to Foundation Stage curriculum and because of the restrictions of the room, there is occasionally insufficiently varied activity to challenge both higher attainers and lower attainers. In addition, the management of a high number of adults who support the Reception and Year 1 pupils and the range, from those who are high attaining to those with severe learning difficulties, present considerable challenges for the Reception / Year 1 teacher. These are responded to very enthusiastically and positively. However, the task is considerable.

The quality of the teaching of subjects

22. The teaching of English (including literacy skills) and mathematics (including numeracy) is very good and follows the principles laid down by the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The teaching of most other subjects also follows the structure of these lessons. The teaching of science is very good; interesting activities are provided which challenge pupils to think like scientists. The quality of teaching of ICT is satisfactory. However, the layout of the ICT suite is a significant factor which affects the quality of the support the teachers are able to give pupils. In addition, ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning in subjects or to support the quality of teaching, such as for demonstrations. There are some good examples of it being used to support literacy teaching and science; however, it is not used consistently across all subjects.
23. The teaching of art and design was very good in the one lesson seen. Resources used inspired and motivated the pupils. In design and technology no teaching was able to be seen during the inspection but from planning, photographic evidence and actual models produced by pupils, the teaching is at least good. The teaching in geography is sound and in history it is good. It is very good for the oldest pupils where historical vocabulary is developed very well. Judgements about the teaching of music were based on video evidence. The subject is taught well across the school by a knowledgeable specialist co-ordinator. The teaching in physical education is satisfactory overall but pupils are taught very well in the juniors where there is a very good level of subject knowledge and challenging activities provided.
24. Literacy is usually very well promoted in lessons and teachers take good opportunities to reinforce, correct or develop pupils' understanding of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. Phonic skills are promoted particularly effectively and teachers provide good opportunities for extending pupils' writing in other subjects. Pupils' numeracy skills are utilised well in subjects such as science, design and technology and ICT although little was seen in other subjects during the inspection. Although teachers use a variety of resources to enliven their lessons and to help pupils understand what they are learning, there is a lack of use of ICT in general to support pupils' learning in subjects and to reinforce pupils' ICT skills. There are some good examples, however, of pupils using the computer for research using the Internet and for word processing, where pupils write stories and poems in English.

The features of teaching

25. The teachers expect a great deal from pupils, in terms of work, their behaviour and their personal skills in general. The greatest expectations by teachers are in Years 3 to 6 where they are exceptionally high. Pupils rise to this and to the challenges set; this increases their motivation for learning and for participating in activities and is one of the main reasons why pupils' performance is so good. Teachers also set high standards for themselves, for instance in the very good way they plan and present work. The school's culture and what it stands for with regard to its pupils, is

communicated so well by the headteacher and governors and results in teachers providing a great commitment to their work and to the pupils. The staff want to do their best for the pupils and in doing so act as really good role models for them. Because the pupils see teachers giving so much to their work, they too put great effort into their learning as a result.

26. Teachers' management of pupils is very good all the way through the school. It is built on the very firm foundations of the very good relationships that all staff have established with pupils and also on the personal 'care' that staff have for them. Pupils respond positively to this.
27. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects is strong overall and particularly so in Years 3 to 6. Similarly, the way literacy and numeracy skills are taught developed and supported across the activities in these year groups is very good. Planning is very well-developed and what pupils are expected to learn and the activities to support these are clearly stated for the different ages of pupils in most the classes.
28. Activities match the pupils' needs and abilities very well overall, although there could be a closer match for some pupils in Reception, particularly those with the most severe learning difficulties. On the whole, however, work is generally planned very well for other pupils with special educational needs and these pupils are usually well supported both in class and when worked with on their own. Occasionally, there is insufficient monitoring by class teachers as to what their support staff are teaching, although teachers put in extra time to discuss with them what pupils have learnt when taught separately. Sometimes, ideas are not presented in varied enough ways to help pupils who learn in a different way to the rest. There is also a reasonable balance of teaching of SEN by support staff and by teachers, although for those with the most needs, there is insufficient amount of time when the pupils are taught by a specialist teacher.
29. Very good attention given to the needs of higher-attaining pupils and those who are considered to have more exceptional skills than others are well recognised. Additional work is provided, to extend and challenge further. High quality questioning, particularly, makes the pupils think and gets them to challenge their own ideas, promoting higher level learning skills such as inference and deduction.
30. Time is used well and no time is lost. The pace of lessons keeps pupils 'on their toes' and eager to learn. Pupils are usually very 'busy' in lessons. Teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils in lessons is a strong feature of their work and they reflect well on how activities might be modified or how particular pupils' needs might be provided for in the forthcoming lessons. Their review of how the lesson went and which pupils met the expected outcomes is a strong feature although, occasionally, it is too short.
31. The school's provision for the few pupils with English as an additional language is very good and it ensures that pupils are well supported in the classroom and through activities elsewhere in the school. This is mainly achieved through informal, but effective, support.

Homework

32. Homework plays an important part in raising pupils' attainment. The school's policies provide appropriate guidelines on the amount to be set for each year group, although this is not set out in the school prospectus. Homework is regularly set and linked with the work being undertaken in class, particularly in the upper classes. It is marked and evaluated but is not always linked to pupils' needs. Although pupils are occasionally asked to do some research for their homework, this could be developed further particularly for mathematics. Opportunities are, therefore, missed to develop pupils' thinking and practical problem solving in relation to their current learning. The school has provided a useful booklet called "Mathematics Activities for Out of Class" and this is available for parents to use with their child. However, it covers all age groups and it could be difficult for some parents to know what to do when. A homework club has been established to support pupils who wish to do their work in school and for those who find it difficult to work at home.

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

Pupils' opportunities for learning

33. The school provides an effective curriculum that has a good range of subjects with sufficient time now provided for each so that pupils can make at least sound progress. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and meets statutory requirements. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum was not sufficiently balanced, but this has now been addressed well.
34. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage, covering the six areas of learning, is good and is planned well for the Reception pupils in accordance with the early learning goals. The planning for the curriculum from Year 1 to Year 6 is satisfactory. The school has developed curriculum maps that cover a two-year cycle to take account of the mixed age classes and where pupils from one-year group are split. The school works hard to ensure that the curriculum is suitable to meet every pupil's needs. Non-contact time for co-ordinators is provided to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. Most planning is based on the national guidelines, but there are now several new policies and schemes of work for subjects such as information and communication technology, art and design and physical education. These have, as yet, to fully make an impact on standards across the school. The links in history are made across year groups well. For example, the older pupils in Years 2 and 3 will be learning about a period from history such as the Tudors in some depth whilst the younger pupils in that class will focus on a famous person from the same period. The lack of a library, at present, (to be remedied soon) hinders pupils' easy access to a wider information base and to develop their research skills, although some opportunity is provided in lessons, especially through the use of the Internet.
35. The school has adopted the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and has very effectively implemented these. There is a high degree of consistency in planning and in the teaching of the strategies across the school; co-ordinators have made appropriate adaptations to meet the wide range of needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs. In numeracy, there is now a greater focus on using and applying mathematics to meet the new assessment arrangements for Year 6 pupils and on data handling, to address an identified weakness. In literacy, there is an appropriate focus on creative writing as pupils find this a more challenging area. The results in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 provide positive evidence of the increasing effectiveness of the planned strategies and provision. There is also evidence of strong links across subjects that particularly benefit English such as the writing for a range of purposes within history topics. The learning objectives and expected outcomes are always clearly defined in all subjects and plans are regularly evaluated by the headteacher.
36. Overall, the school ensures well that all pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum. It works hard to support full inclusion of all pupils and places a high priority on the importance of equal access. It also recognises the difficulties that such a policy can create and is working to address them. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good in the upper school and satisfactory in the lower school. The planning and provision to address the learning needs of the pupils with the most complex needs in this part of the school is not always met within the whole class teaching. At times this is appropriate but, at others, staff need to be more creative in the way the curriculum is modified. However, these pupils are provided with individual education plans with appropriate targets. Targets are mostly sharply focused and include personal and social as well as academic targets and specific details of action to be followed for the next steps in learning. The school also provides a range of programmes to support pupils who may need some specific extra support. These include the Additional Literacy Support (ALS) programme and Springboard in mathematics, which will be introduced next term. As a result of these programmes, particularly the Additional Literacy Support, most pupils with SEN make very good progress. The school ensures that pupils for whom English is an additional language have access to the curriculum and appropriate support is provided. The planning for higher attaining pupils particularly in the upper

classes is very good in addressing their learning needs. There are appropriate challenges and pupils respond with enthusiasm.

37. The headteacher has overall management responsibility for the curriculum with the support of the senior management team. The subject co-ordinators monitor the curriculum very effectively by writing a subject evaluation at the end of each year. The identified areas of weakness then form the basis for action and budgets. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum.
38. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. The school provides a wide range of activities including a breakfast club where pupils can pay a small amount to have a breakfast that is subsidised by grants and local companies. Sport is particularly well catered for and includes football, netball and swimming on a Monday evening for both pupils and parents. Other activities include science, information and communication technology, chess and a faith and justice group. This meets during a lunchtime and has specific responsibilities, such as maintaining the school prayer table. They also visit the elderly at a centre and regularly have lunch with them. The aim of the group is to put their faith into practice, whilst raising their awareness of other sectors of their local community and issues affecting the wider global community such as poverty in Third World countries. This has a significant impact on their personal development.
39. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. Circle time is used on a regular basis and the staff has undertaken training in managing it. This has resulted in a planned progression as pupils move up the school. For example, in a circle time session, pupils in Years 3 and 4 felt confident in sharing their feelings and experiences about loneliness. They listened carefully and sensitively to one another, respecting each other's feelings. Health education, including sex education is effectively developed within the normal school day as opportunities arise and within the science curriculum.

Links with the community and partner institutions

40. Links with the community, and particularly the Church, are very good and these provide a rich source of material and support for many areas of learning. In addition, a good range of visitors supports pupils' learning in subjects across many subjects. Relationships with partner institutions are good. For example, although most pupils transfer to Our Lady's High School, a limited number do transfer to the High school adjoining the school. The headteacher has, therefore, developed positive links with both schools to the benefit of all pupils. This aids the smooth transition of pupils from Year 6 to their secondary schools.

The opportunities for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral social and cultural development

41. The school makes very good provision overall for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There has been further improvement since the last inspection when pupils' spiritual, moral and social development was judged as good with cultural development satisfactory. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is now very good. The school provides an atmosphere where all pupils are valued. Stories, discussions and the daily act of worship affirm the importance of respect for others' beliefs and values. Consequently, subjects such as science, history, art, personal, social and health education, including activities such as circle time successfully promote their spiritual awareness and provide opportunities for pupils to discuss matters that concern them. Conversations with pupils and scrutiny of their past work, show that thought has been given to the uniqueness and preciousness of life and the earth and individuals' place in God's world. During a session on "The weather", pupils in the youngest class listened to a poem on the weather with their eyes closed to support them in "hearing and feeling" the words. They then went outside to see and feel the effects of the wind, thus developing their knowledge of such effects, but also allowing a sense of 'the wonder' of it.
42. The school places a high priority on the importance of moral development and promotes it very well. Pupils are given a strong moral lead through the school's Christian ethos, aims of the school, the behaviour policy and through the values promoted in assemblies and lessons. The

effective role models provided by adults working in the school also support the pupils in developing their own moral code. Pupils are encouraged to engage in individual discussion with adults to talk through perceived problems and in this way are taught the difference between right and wrong in a positive way. This enables them to become increasingly aware of the need to make appropriate choices in life and to treat others with respect. The effects of this are clearly apparent in the way pupils respond to one another and to the adults with whom they work. In most lessons the teachers promote pupils' self-esteem well through equal partnerships in the learning process and through achievement rewarded. Consequently, pupils feel valued as individuals and are confident that their ideas will be heard and appreciated.

43. The provision for pupils' social skills is excellent. The school develops the pupils' sense of responsibility well. In many lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to work co-operatively and most do so harmoniously and productively. In addition, many pupils take part in extra-curricular activities that involve working and playing with other pupils. The residential visit for Year 6 to the Lake District provides an important opportunity for pupils to learn to live together, to take responsibility for themselves and to become independent. The school council helps to promote an understanding of collective responsibility. The elected members report to the council on concerns raised in their class and report back on actions democratically decided.
44. The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development, including the raising of multi-cultural awareness. Religious education, English, history, art and design and geography assist pupils in the development of an understanding of their own culture and introduce them to other cultural traditions and religious practices. For example, the assemblies during the inspection focused on the Muslim faith and the start of Ramadan. The display in the hall introduced pupils to the Koran and some artefacts. The links between faiths were also made. There is, however, a missed opportunity to use music from around the world in assemblies, although in music lessons pupils do sing a wide range of songs from other cultures. Although the school has few pupils from minority ethnic heritages, their cultures are valued and the school works hard and successfully to broaden pupils' understanding and promote tolerance and harmony. The school is planning opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the beliefs and values of the diversity of cultures in Britain today through links with a school in Liverpool.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school's pastoral care and welfare

45. The school takes very good care of its pupils. They are made to feel safe and secure within a calm but disciplined atmosphere. Staff know the children and their families well and show a good understanding of their emotional needs in school, home and within the community. The quality of learning is enhanced by this support. The pupils' personal development is tracked well, formally and informally, through the very good knowledge staff have of the pupils, as well as through the review of their personal targets.
46. The school provides a breakfast club and is involved in the running of an after school club linked to the Catholic church. Pupils' achievements are recognised, highly praised and celebrated in the classroom and during assemblies with suitable awards. The school council provides an excellent example of the way the school cares for its pupils, by allowing them to share in and influence some of the school's development plans. The faith and justice group makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
47. Child protection procedures are very good. All staff are aware of the arrangements and the school maintains good links with the education welfare services. The school provides a safe and harmonious environment which makes an effective contribution to the standards the pupils achieve. A comprehensive health and safety policy contributes to the pupils' welfare and good procedures exist for carrying out risk assessments. The governors carry out regular health and safety inspections.

48. The school has very good procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour and eliminating any oppressive behaviour. Since the last inspection, a new behaviour management policy has provided comprehensive guidance on how to deal with unacceptable behaviour and is implemented throughout the school. When the very few instances of misbehaviour do occur they are dealt with quickly.
49. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Unexplained absences are quickly followed up and the educational welfare officer provides effective support. It could be beneficial to extend the good attendance award scheme, currently only for pupils with problematic attendance, to all pupils.
50. Induction procedures for children aged five and under and arrangements for other new pupils are very good. The younger children have their own designated play area which has a selection of mobile toys and climbing apparatus. Parents and children are invited to attend a series of pre-school afternoons to meet their teachers and other new children. This provides a forum for the school to explain its expectations and gives an opportunity for parents to ask questions. Transitional arrangements for pupils' secondary education are very good and include meeting with former pupils, who relate their experiences in adapting to secondary education.

Assessment and the monitoring of pupil's' academic performance and support for pupils' special educational needs

51. There are now good formal and informal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the information gained from these is used well. Assessment and monitoring of progress has improved well since the last inspection. Systems have been strengthened significantly by a number of developments. These are particularly in relation to assessment and monitoring in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and by the more recent development of systems for monitoring progress and levels in subjects other than these. Some of these, such as the use of 'P' levels (the pre-National Curriculum levels) for the youngest pupils and those with additional learning needs, are at an early stage of development.
52. In English, mathematics and science, the procedures and practices for monitoring pupils' academic progress are now very good. A system of regular assigning of pupils to levels, good use of day-to day assessment opportunities and an effective referral system to the SENCo for more diagnostic assessment supports teachers' effective planning for and teaching of classes, groups and individuals. The school monitors all pupils' progress well, through effective use of initial baseline assessment on entry, the tracking of progress through the national 'Stepping Stones' system and the use of the information gained through this and the Year 2 SATS to help evaluate progress and predict future expected levels.
53. The school's support systems are strengthened by a system of setting targets for all pupils; parents and children value this and their involvement; they say that they know what they now need to do to progress further. There is still, however, room for improvement in the ways in which the school assesses and monitors pupils' progress in some individual subjects, for example ICT. Although teachers know the pupils in their class very well, its ability to plan to meet the differing needs of pupils in all subjects is affected by this weakness.
54. A carefully planned programme of statutory and non-statutory tests is followed throughout the school in English, mathematics and science. The results are analysed carefully and are used effectively to set whole school targets, to track individual pupils' progress and to set challenging targets for improvement. Good use is made of this information for identifying pupils who need additional support through additional literacy support (ALS) and to identify individual pupils who have particular strengths and talents. In English, for example, pupils' individual writing portfolios demonstrate the range and improving quality of their work very effectively. Teachers also make good use of the information gained in their weekly planning for these subjects. The school has recently developed further its assessment procedures for subjects, such as music, history and geography. In other subjects, assessments relating to individual units of work covered are also being trialled or developed. These are used effectively to consider what pupils have learnt at the

end of each unit of work, but need to be more systematically tied into National Curriculum levels. Teachers keep very good class assessment files within their classrooms and use these well to guide their work. However, there is a need to consider how reports and such information are collated more centrally, to ensure more efficient use of the information.

55. The school makes good use of more detailed assessments to identify pupils who have very specific learning and other difficulties. The part-time SENCo is very effective in using the information gained to plan individual programmes for those children with very specific literacy and numeracy needs and this enables these pupils to make very good progress in these programmes over time.
56. Most pupils with SEN have their needs met very well. The learning support assistants mostly provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs. This is undertaken in close co-operation with teachers. Parents of children with special educational needs feel well supported and are very satisfied with the progress of their children. There is usually close liaison with schools and agencies that transfer pupils who have special educational needs; the knowledge gained from this benefits pupils immensely and helps the school plan effectively for them from their initial entry to Our Lady's.
57. There were two pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need at the time of the inspection; both were in the Reception class. Although many of these children's needs were being met very well within the school, not all their needs were being provided for and only limited external advice, resources and support were available to support the most complex learning needs; this means that some individual children cannot make the progress that they could, nor are being enabled to access the school and the curriculum in the most appropriate ways, particularly in areas such as communication. None of the current pupils had had an Annual Review as yet, but procedures for pupils previously in the school comply with statutory requirements. For other pupils with SEN the school gives good attention to the revised Code of Practice. Individual education plans (IEPs) are of good quality; targets are generally very specific and relevant to the child's needs. Care and behaviour plans exist for pupils where relevant and targets within all of these are very well known to parents as well as teachers. Pupils and parents are involved appropriately in setting and evaluating targets. Visiting teachers and therapists provide some support to the school, in relation to pupils listed as having SEN. However, although their support and advice is very much valued, the time and resources available are too limited, particularly for individual pupils with the most complex needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The partnership with parents is very good. Parents' response to the inspection questionnaire and their comments at the pre-inspection meeting showed that they think very highly of the school. Parents have positive views about their children's progress and the quality of teaching. They are pleased with the very good standards, pastoral support, the Catholic principles, the discipline and community spirit. Inspection findings mostly confirm the parents' views of the school. An effective Parent, Teacher and Friends Association supports the school through substantial fund raising and organising social events. Pupils' learning, behaviour and personal development benefit from the very good liaison with parents.
59. Parents make a strong contribution to their children's learning at home and at school. Links with parents are of a consistently high quality. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit and help in the life and work of the school. Several parents help in class, for instance, supporting pupils' reading.
60. The quality of information for parents is very good. Home-school records provide an effective means of exchanging information between home and school. A detailed prospectus, governors' reports and the headteacher's newsletters provide a wealth of information and keep parents well informed. School documentation is clearly presented and enhances the reader's image of the school.

61. Annual reports on pupils' progress are generally well written, in depth and critical where necessary. Sometimes, it is difficult for parents to gain a sense of children's progress over time and it will be useful for the school to improve the collation of information. The reports contain suggestions about how parents might help their child to improve. Opportunities for further consultation are provided on a termly basis and parents are happy with the fact they can contact teachers anytime, formally and informally. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in their child's review and kept well informed of their progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

62. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are very good. The commitment of all staff and governors to making the school a better place to learn is excellent. The headteacher is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Together, they form a very strong team who are very concerned about standards and how to maintain and improve these. They both have class responsibility (the headteacher for part of the time) and act as very strong teaching role models for the rest of the staff. Part of the reason for standards in Year 3 to 6 being so high and pupils' achievements so good, is the very good quality of teaching. The SENCO provides good leadership and is up to date with policies and procedures which ensure that the provision is well managed. However, a recent challenge is the need to develop and manage provision to support pupils who have more extreme needs than the school has had previously had experience of. The local education authority has provided some help and effective use is made of staff to support such pupils. However, more knowledge and expertise is required than the school has at present.
63. In just under three years, since the headteacher has been in the school, there have been significant developments that have benefited pupils' learning and given the school a very clear educational direction. Although the previous inspection, five years ago, identified that the school was 'providing a good standard of education', there was much to do and the school's national performance data, together with guidance from the local education authority, indicated that standards and the quality of education required improvement. This especially related to improving the quality of teaching, the causes of underachievement for Reception children and behaviour management by staff. This has been achieved well through the headteacher's very strong commitment to the school; standards and the quality of teaching have improved well, as a result.
64. The very good sense of direction and the school's ability to improve in relation to this, is partly achieved through well developed teamwork and respect for colleagues. The senior management team now take on a wider role in whole school development and there are plans to further delegate some of the headteacher's many responsibilities. In this small school, staff necessarily have many responsibilities. These are considered and overviewed well by the management, in terms of the staff's balance of expertise and experience and also in terms of developing staff's skills. Changes in responsibilities occur on the basis of review of school performance, the need for staff development and the balance of workload. For instance, the 'infants' team leader is to take on an assessment role in order to develop her skills, an area currently and very competently carried out by the headteacher. There is scope, however, for the deputy headteacher to use her many talents in relation to more substantive whole school priorities.
65. The senior management team meets regularly to monitor progress and identify areas which need further improvement. All staff have subject responsibilities and make a strong contribution to the development of their areas. They play a very effective role in monitoring standards, although most of the checking on the quality of the teaching is carried out very well by the headteacher, with thorough and perceptive evaluations of the staff's work. A particularly strong feature is the way all co-ordinators produce a subject self-evaluation at the end of the school year. This reports on most aspects of their work in subjects and is to a common format so that consistency in reporting is well achieved.
66. Overall, the school's knowledge of how it is performing and how it is developing is one of its strongest features. The headteacher keeps a very close eye on pupils' performance overall,

analysing assessment data and using information for planning and setting targets. Because of the school's ethos and parental awareness of how very strongly it reflects its aims and values in its work, especially in relation to supporting all pupils, the school attracts pupils of a wide ability range. Standards, in relation to national performance data, vary from year-to-year, although they are generally above or well above average. The school rightly prides itself on its ability to demonstrate pupils' progress; it knows which pupils need extra help, as well as how year groups are likely to perform across the school. All information gained from these processes goes towards setting targets in the very insightful school improvement plan. This is a particularly strategic document which identifies priorities well in broad terms over three years and in detail for the immediate ones over one year. Although subjects for a priority review appear in the plan, those that are not are represented in the annual maintenance plan. However, not all subjects are covered and individual action plans for all subjects would be beneficial to ensure that all subjects develop at an appropriate pace.

67. The new systems and procedures for performance management have been implemented successfully. The headteacher and staff all have school and personal targets that are reviewed and assessed on a regular basis.
68. Governors, and especially the Chair of governors, provide very strong support for the school and have wide expertise among them upon which to draw. They have benefited from governor training and the reports from their committees and other governors' minutes show a strong insightfulness relating to school issues. They are regular visitors to the school and are very well informed about school development and contribute significantly in the development planning process. Some help out in classes and others monitor specific aspects of the school's work, such as literacy provision. They have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, especially of the trends and fluctuations in pupils' attainment and the reasons for these. They contribute very strongly to school development and are actively involved in decisions about finance and the curriculum. Their role as a 'critical-friend' to the school is very strongly developed. Individual governors have key roles and responsibilities which they carry out effectively, such as for individual subjects, as well as for aspects such as special educational needs. Governors are well versed in the complexities of funding for such pupils and the current problems the school has in supporting pupils with complex needs. They are actively campaigning to improve provision from external sources. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and they in turn keep parents informed well of their work, especially through the very good annual report they produce.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

69. The school has sufficient, suitably qualified staff and, overall, class sizes are adequate. Staff have a good range of curriculum knowledge overall, this is particularly good in English, mathematics and science. However, the admission of some pupils with severe learning difficulties in the lower part of the school has meant that teachers need a greater range of support and guidance in order to improve their own knowledge of how to help such pupils. The headteacher has been particularly adept at appointing part-time staff to increase the range of expertise in the school and has been successful in this. Many of the appointments in the past two years have been for this purpose. Although some classes now have part-time teachers, because of the very good communication within the school and the very strong teaching, learning is not negatively affected - rather, it is enhanced.
70. An increase in the number of teaching assistants has been made since the last inspection. This is largely because the school has admitted pupils with learning difficulties or medical needs. Although a good start has been made to individually supporting such pupils, some need training in the wider aspects of pupil management and particularly, how to develop pupils' communication skills. The school has a well-qualified and conscientious special educational needs co-ordinator, who supports staff, parents and pupils well. The combination of school staff and outside agencies provides suitable provision for the majority of the pupils with learning difficulties although a minority need greater help.

71. In the Foundation Stage, particularly, the teaching assistants are often used to good effect as they work with small groups of children, helping the children's learning. Occasionally, in some classes the assistants are not always used as well as they could be, when teachers are taking whole-class sessions. All teachers received computer training and evidence of their improving knowledge can be seen in the school. However, some support staff could better support the pupils, if they too had training.
72. Induction of new staff and newly qualified teachers is particularly good and the arrangements for teachers' professional development are good. The many new staff in the last two years have been well supported, especially in communicating their plans and liaising with other staff who work with the pupils. These are linked to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan.
73. The accommodation is adequate overall and is used effectively to support pupils' learning. It is in good order, well cleaned and cared for. The classrooms are generally light and spacious and the school grounds extensive. There are suitable plans to develop the outdoor facilities so there are environmental areas. The playground seating is a good addition and improvements to the accommodation have generally been good. The Foundation Stage outdoor play area, although small, has recently been upgraded with suitable play equipment. However, the Reception / Year 1 class, with the large number of adults and the wide range of ability and need, is particularly cramped, which means that Foundation Stage activity areas are limited in space. There is no library, at present, although one is planned. The ICT room has taken the place of this. Its layout is problematic, space between computers cramped and seating inappropriate for the varying heights of pupils. The teacher cannot easily get to pupils who need help and pupils in some areas of the room cannot easily see the teacher when a whole class session is being taught.
74. The school is very conscious of the new legal requirements for disabled pupils and is doing everything it can to try to overcome any restrictions. Modifications are planned on the basis of need, such as wheelchair access to the lower part of the school, should it be needed.
75. The school's resources, to support pupils' learning, are satisfactory. Improvements have been made to ensure that there are adequate books to use for literacy, including 'Big Books'. Although there is no 'physical' school library as such, the range of non-fiction is adequate and the good number of computers the school has are used to some extent for research purposes. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' learning. However, they are generally underused to support learning in subjects. The computers are used effectively to support administration. Access to equipment is not always easy for staff as there are limited storage facilities in the school.

The school's strategic use of resources and financial planning

76. Governors and the headteacher have good procedures to plan and oversee school finances and budget. Governors have a good strategic overview of the finances and are fully involved in budget setting, development planning and linking monies to necessary improvements. The development plan is well costed and money is spent on the right priorities with actions to a relevant timescale. There is an effective finance committee, where governors regularly review the school's spending and keep a careful track of expenditure. They have recently spent money on upgrading the computer suite and although the layout is problematic, pupils are having systematic teaching and improving their skills in ICT. Governors' work would be even more effective if they could assess the cost-effectiveness of expenditure such as this in terms of the effect such spending has had on pupils' attainment.
77. Financial control is good and the school's administration on a day-to-day basis is very good. The issues from the last financial audit, carried out by the local education authority, have been adequately addressed. Governors use best value principles well in the decisions they make; the school's approach to self-evaluation has a significant benefit on the ability of governors to compare the school's results with other schools and to challenge the school to do even better. Grants obtained by the school (through the 'Standards Fund'), including those for pupils with special educational needs, are wisely spent on the areas for which they are designated. However, there

are insufficient funds able to be spent on gaining the services of staff with specialist knowledge in order to meet the needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties.

78. The school recognises that it needs to attract funds from elsewhere to finance some of the proposed future developments. Finances are tight, especially with the money now spent on special educational needs. A key priority over the next two years is to investigate sources of funding from elsewhere as well as to develop a marketing strategy for the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- **improve the pupils' standards in ICT, its use across the curriculum to support learning in other subjects and to reinforce the development of pupils' ICT skills.**

In addition to the key issue above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan.

In consultation with the LEA and its associated support services, improve the provision for those SEN pupils with severe learning difficulties, including the skills and expertise of staff teaching and supporting such pupils and the resources that they have available to support teaching and learning.

Improve the systems for assessing and tracking of pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science so that standards and progress of groups and individuals are tracked easily and can be used effectively to inform lesson planning and subject improvement.

Improve provision and standards in spelling so that they are at least in line with attainment in other aspects of English.

* recognised by the school and identified in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

36

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	16	8	11	0	0	0
Percentage	3	44	22	31	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents just under three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	95
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys*	Girls*	Total
	2002	2	10	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (95)	83 (95)	83 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	10	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (95)	83 (95)	75 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

* Too few pupils took the tests to record results for boys and girls separately

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls*	Total
	2002	14	6	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	20	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (93)	95 (86)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

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

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

**** Too few girls took the tests to be able to report results for boys and girls separately.***

*****Results not available.***

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	90	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	271,122
Total expenditure	289,979
Expenditure per pupil	2,900
Balance brought forward from previous year	42,759
Balance carried forward to next year	23,902

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	95
Number of questionnaires returned	28

Percentage of responses in each category

Number of responses in brackets

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	29	0	7	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	29	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	54	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	64	36	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	46	11	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	18	0	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	21	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	54	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	43	0	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	29	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	39	0	0	4

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

79. The children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year-to-year. However, it is generally average in most areas of learning when the children enter the Reception class, although a small number often have below average skills. This is because of the school's very mixed catchment area and the known care and support provided by the school for children with difficulties. Children in the Foundation Stage (that is, those who are five years of age and under) including those with SEN, make at least good progress in all areas of learning; by the time they finish their Reception year almost all are likely to achieve or exceed the expected levels for their age, in all areas of learning. They achieve particularly well in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. This is because of the very good teaching, including how they are encouraged to express their ideas and listen to others and the ways in which the teacher planning and the lessons are linked effectively to the school's overall response to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
80. The quality of the teaching is good overall. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection when the teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching is very good in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Children are given careful models for extending their speaking and listening skills and are systematically supported in their early literacy and numeracy skills. In personal and social development, teaching is good and has some very good features, because of the strong relationships and carefully thought out opportunities for reflection and for independent working. In other areas the teaching is good overall, but, as the teacher is new to Foundation Stage curriculum and because of the restrictions of the room, there is occasionally insufficiently varied an activity to challenge both higher attainers and lower attainers, as in a science lesson exploring the properties of light.
81. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. The good planning and the strong support from the teacher and the teaching assistants mean that both groups experience a strong and appropriate range of learning opportunities that meets their needs well. The intended learning outcomes for lessons are clearly identified and the teacher carefully records children's responses to their experiences. Provision has been strengthened recently through the new, if somewhat small, outdoor play area and the linking of medium-term planning to Early Learning Goals as well as National Curriculum subjects. Assessment and monitoring of children's progress is good, through the teacher's own record system and use of the national 'Stepping Stones'. This, plus the use of a strong baseline assessment system at the beginning and end of their Reception year, provides a very good basis for tracking individual children's progress across all areas of learning, as well as children's general responsiveness and enthusiasm for learning. It is also being used by the school to predict and evaluate the children's progress as they move through the school.
82. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall. However, the classroom is too small for the numbers of pupils and the complexity of their needs; this makes the organisation of areas for learning very difficult. There is limited storage for large play toys. Although the teacher tries hard to keep an interesting and varied learning environment, the limitations of the room mean that children cannot have as much freedom for social and large play, construction and some creative aspects of their work as they should. This particularly affects the youngest children and those with special educational needs. Support staff are well used and most contribute very effectively to children's learning. There is very strong support for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Children are encouraged to celebrate and wonder at what they see, hear and do. There is an ethos of care and concern for others and mutual respect is carefully nurtured. Children with special educational needs generally have their needs met well and make good progress. However, as yet, staff have limited expertise in meeting the needs of those individual children with the most severe learning difficulties. There is a need for more advisory and practical support and resources to enable staff to plan for and teach such children more effectively.

Personal, social and emotional development

83. Children began the school year with average skills in this area of learning and have made good progress. A high proportion of the group will exceed the levels of other children of their age, by the end of their Reception year. This is partly because of the emphasis that the school places in its everyday life on the child as a person, but also because of the strong models for behaviour presented by the older pupils in the class. This means children settle very quickly into class routines. In all sessions observed, children's attitudes and behaviour were good and they were very good in some lessons. The children behave very well outdoors in the small outdoor play area and at playtime, they share resources unselfishly and play together well. Children are very keen to participate, answer questions and contribute. In literacy sessions they listen carefully to each other and applaud each other's successes. Many children change for physical education lessons with little adult help and they are quick to help each other with buttons and laces. They are enthusiastic in lessons and respond well to teaching and non-teaching staff. They settle quickly to group activities, chatting about what they are doing, but also supporting and helping each other.
84. They learn well from the behaviour of older pupils in the class and demonstrated concern and yet maturity, when a child with special educational needs displayed difficult behaviour. One reached out to calm him while trying to engage him in their activity. Children enjoy the opportunities they have to help and the opportunity to be 'VIP' for the week. Through this system they learn very effectively about the qualities that are valued in themselves and in others. The opportunities that are provided for reflection at the beginning and end of lessons and the ways in which adults talk with them support their growing sense of responsibility very well. Very clear messages from their teachers and relevant stories help children to learn to distinguish right from wrong, to have respect for each other and to form constructive relationships with peers and adults.

Communication, language and literacy

85. Children make very good progress in this area. On entry to the school most children's attainments in these areas are average and some below. By the end of the Reception year most will exceed the expected levels for their age. The children are given frequent opportunities to listen and extend their vocabulary; for example, during storytelling and in their weather and mathematics sessions. They listen attentively to their teachers, when new rhymes and stories are introduced; those with poorer skills are quickly brought on-task by their teacher's encouragement. Very supportive teacher and support staff questioning enables most to express their wants and needs and to demonstrate their understanding. The highest attainers speak confidently in small group and whole class sessions and use the new vocabulary such as 'wind gauge' that they have learnt.
86. Children make good progress in early reading and writing activities. They distinguish print from pictures and can follow a text with adult support. Most know some initial letters and sounds and a small number of words and names that they recognise on sight. Higher attaining pupils can sound out and build up simple words such as 'red' or 'rat'. A significant number can write their names independently and enjoy writing freely. They 'have a go' at writing and practice their handwriting carefully. Higher attainers have a growing bank of words that they read and write. A few write simple short sentences. They make reasonable attempts at unknown words. All children, including those with SEN, show great respect for books. These are used effectively to support children's early literacy skills and interest in books as well as their learning in other areas. The children are very proud of class books they have made about their outings and experiences and the teacher makes good use of photographs to support these. This means that even the individual children with most complex needs love to share books, handle them with care and respect and make progress in their ability to attend and listen. For example a child with severe learning difficulties watched and listened carefully, because of his teachers' expressive storytelling and reading and the good opportunities for class involvement within the lesson. Children's work in communication, language and literacy is well planned and monitored to fit in with the school's literacy strategy, as well as with the early learning goals. Almost all children with special educational needs make similarly very good progress in communication, language and literacy. However staff need more guidance as to how to meet the needs of the children with the most

limited communication skills, including the place of signs, symbols and technological aids to support progress.

Mathematical development

87. Children make very good progress in their mathematical development and their attainment at the end of Reception is at least comparable and often above that of others of their age. The current group of children had been in the Reception class for less than a term at the time of the inspection but had already made significant gains in their mathematical understanding since entry. Almost all could count reliably to 10, could identify numbers at least to five and were beginning to manipulate the numbers within this; a few counted with confidence much beyond this, understood simple addition and subtraction and counted forward with confidence. In a lesson on number lines, a higher attaining child told his teacher that '*less* means going backwards from five, *more* means going forward.' Very systematic support in their timetabled mathematics lessons and in other lessons means counting and simple addition, subtraction and sharing is made relevant to children's everyday lives.
88. The teacher is very good at identifying individual children's confusions and devising practical activities, such as a class number ladder game in the hall, that reinforced their understanding further. They are also learning how to double numbers such as 2 and 5. A few count forwards in 2s and 10s in group counting. Children know the names of basic shapes and can fit them together to make other shapes. The more able know how to write down simple sums, write the numbers accurately and know that to count on you must hold the number 'in your head'. They begin to use words like *shorter*, *longer* and *taller* accurately. Through their sand and water play they are beginning to form an early understanding of volume and capacity, although the lack of space in the classroom sometimes limits the opportunities for these activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

89. Progress in children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. The teaching in this area is good overall and sometimes very good; occasionally, such as in a science lesson, it is only satisfactory, because there are missed opportunities to extend the more able children's learning. Children have opportunities to experiment with the properties of water and sand. They learn about people and places in and beyond their environment; for example, through the use of stories and pictures about the school in the past, about baptism and babies they learn about growing up. The teacher's good explanations enable all children to move on in their understanding of how things change over time. Few construction materials were observed in use. In geography they learn about features of their locality, such as the church, the library and the post office. They consider the clothes that they need for different types of weather. This is done in a very practical and meaningful way so that all pupils are included and learn more about materials. Children are keen to use the computers and most use a mouse competently; there could, however, be more opportunities provided within the classroom for independent and group work using these to support learning and particularly the learning of pupils with special educational needs through adapted software, symbols and keyboards/ mouse.

Physical development

90. Children's progress in physical development is good overall and their attainment is in line with national expectations. Some have very developed body awareness, but the range is varied. In their timetabled physical education and dance lessons they explore and develop gymnastic skills. They change for lessons without too much support. They follow instructions accurately, change movements according to instructions, demonstrating that they understand about controlled movements. They use flowing movements like milk being poured and 'shake' like cornflakes in a packet. A small outdoor playground offers some climbing and large toy play opportunities further. This allows children to make good progress in their co-ordination, body awareness and more gross physical skills, although more could be done to extend children's skills and to challenge them whilst they are in the outdoor play area. Children make good progress in manipulative skills using equipment such as pencils, crayons, scissors, paint, brushes, glue and some construction equipment. Pupils with special educational needs are included well in these sessions. The

teacher and support staff use other children as examples and models and this enables them to join in at their own level, making good progress in their co-operation, attending and self/ body awareness.

Creative development

91. Children make good progress and attain expected standards, a significant number are on-line to exceed them. They have good opportunities to draw, colour, paint, cut and glue and are developing increasing control in using different techniques such as drawing, cutting and colouring. They know a range of colours and are encouraged to observe colours and shapes closely. Children are developing the ability to represent the world around them and to produce recognisable drawings, paintings or models. The children are learning to sing tunefully and join in readily at singing and speaking and listening times with a range of nursery and action rhymes, songs and hymns. They can clap in time to a refrain of a song and some move rhythmically whilst they sing. Because of the timing of the inspection little work with musical instruments was observed. There are some opportunities for structured and unstructured role-play to develop and stimulate children's imaginations, for example through the Post Office created for the topic being studied. However, there is limited adult support available to extend this and limited space to enable such role play to extend further. However, the expressive storytelling sessions and the many opportunities that children have to join in lessons support their imagination very well. Staff teach pupils how to use materials and tools in a safe way and children respond to this guidance well.

ENGLISH

92. The school has improved the standards in all aspects of English compared with those found at the time of the previous inspection, when standards were deemed 'satisfactory and often good'. Currently, standards overall are well above average by the time pupils reach Year 6, although there is some variability according to year groups. This is because of the very small numbers and the prior attainment levels of each group, particularly the current Year 3 group of pupils. Standards are well above average in speaking and listening and in reading and above average in writing. Pupils' achievement in English and the progress pupils make over the time they are in the school, is very good. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection and is because of the very good quality of teaching, the school's very effective response to the National Literacy Strategy and the strong support for literacy and self-expression which is provided by other subjects.
93. For Year 2 pupils, standards in the national tests in reading and writing are usually above or well above average. Similarly for Year 6 pupils, these are usually well above average. However, in 2002, the Year 2 pupils' standards in the national tests were worse than in previous years and were well below average in reading and below average in writing. This was because of their considerably low starting points on entry to school. However, when this is taken into account, progress records show that these pupils achieved well in comparison with their initial attainment. Boys outperformed girls in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 in 2002, although this was not the case by Year 6. The school has carefully examined its results over time to explore these differences and concluded rightly that no pupils are disadvantaged by the teaching approaches in the school, because of gender. The results for Year 6 pupils in the 2002 national tests were the highest for the last four years and a significant achievement as a result of the hard work the school has put into raising standards in English; they were very high when compared with schools nationally and well above average for those pupils attaining at the higher level (Level 5).
94. Inspection evidence confirms standards in speaking and listening, in reading and in handwriting are currently well above average in English by Years 2 and 6. In writing they are slightly above average in Year 2 and above average by Year 6, although pupils' spelling skills are generally average across the school. Throughout the school pupils make very good progress in speaking, listening and reading from their starting points; although progress and achievement is more wide ranging in writing, it is still at least good and often better. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is also very good in relation to the targets in their individual education plans and in the subject itself. The school SENCo provides very strong support, particularly for those pupils with specific difficulties in reading and writing. Almost all of these pupils make strong progress in relation to their special educational needs as a result of the carefully thought out programmes of support and the very good monitoring of their progress. They also make strong progress in their confidence and self-esteem.

95. By Year 2 pupils generally listen attentively to their teachers for example, when listening to stories or reading of other texts. Younger pupils learn to attend for longer periods of time, to take their turn and to join in familiar routines or action and finger rhymes. They attend well in activities such as guided group reading or writing and in lessons in other subjects. They listen carefully, for example, when their teacher reviews work on weather in a geography lesson and try hard to use the new vocabulary she has introduced. By the end of Year 2, they are confident to express their views on a range of topics and the highest attaining pupils know that they must give their reasons for their views. This they do carefully as they talk about the characters in their stories and reading books. They willingly share their work in the groups and are proud to share their ideas in assemblies or whole class sessions. They use English terms such as *author*, *illustrator*, *adjective*, *verb* and *noun*. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils' listen well to each other's ideas as they explore different lines of a poem they are devising through shared writing. Staff provide very good role models in the way that they treat pupils' contributions with respect, whilst clearly signalling to them what is good about the answer that they have given, or how they could improve it. The pupils are quick to use such feedback and amend their suggestions. By Year 6 many pupils have well above average speaking skills demonstrated in the ways in which they think about what has been said and offer their ideas and explanations. Most are articulate speakers who express themselves clearly and, when required, can expand their answers confidently. They use a range of English terms such as *alliteration*, *imagery* and *symbolism*, when talking about the poetry or texts they are reading and make good attempts at explaining their meaning. For example, they explain what they are doing with accuracy and increasingly complex language, taking careful account of the listeners' needs and self-correcting to use a more technical term to show that they understand it. Pupils who are less articulate are very well supported by staff, who extend their language well and give them time to express themselves.
96. Pupils leave the Reception year with a good foundation of reading skills and strong, positive attitudes to books and to writing. This is built on well during Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 2, pupils' reading skills are generally well above those expected for their age. Pupils in Year 1 recognise and blend phonics (sounds) when reading new words and recognise familiar words in a text. They show a developing knowledge of features of print such as full stops and capital letters. They handle books with care and enjoy stories tremendously. Pupils in Year 2 read simple texts with accuracy, interest and developing fluency. Higher attainers explain that '?' denotes a question and that when you see an exclamation mark it means that something has to be said 'more powerfully', because they are 'surprised or angry...'. They name favourite books and know the title, author's and illustrator's name. Even where pupils are less fluent readers they are keen to talk about their reading and most identify a favourite author or book that they read at home. Average and higher attaining pupils understand that a fiction book has stories within it and that non-fiction books are 'true' and can be used to find out information. All pupils think carefully about the characters in their stories and are beginning to appreciate rhyme and atmosphere in their poetry sessions.
97. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read challenging texts independently, accurately and fluently and use their reading skills well to research either on the Internet or through books. They can recall earlier parts of a story well and talk of favourite books and authors. With their teacher they read extracts from classic and modern texts such as 'The Silver Sword' and 'Harry Potter' with understanding and comment on differences between their own experiences and the characters. Pupils use dictionaries and a thesaurus appropriately and also have other developed strategies for approaching unknown words, such as using skimming, context or more complex blends. Reading skills are systematically supported throughout Years 3 to 6, as pupils learn to read effectively for information and begin to identify features of characters and have their attention drawn to text features. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use *keys* and an *index* well to identify the information they need in geography. In Years 5 and 6 they use a range of reference materials to inform their writing for 'The Roman Times' newspaper. By Year 6 they can research a chosen topic in humanities using text and ICT resources. Lower attainers are helped to think more carefully about what they are reading, because of the very good support provided by the teaching assistant and voluntary helpers.

98. By the end of Year 2, there is a much broader spread of attainment in writing generally and in spelling than for other areas of English. A strength of the writing curriculum throughout the school is that almost all pupils write freely and are confident to put 'pen to paper'. The careful support for pupils' writing confidence in the Reception class is built on well by the Year 1 and 2 teachers so that by the end of Year 2, pupils write independently and are able to read back what they have written, although some rely heavily on non-conventional spelling. By the end of Year 6 pupils write confidently for a range of purposes. They learn about taking notes from other texts, design advertisements and write persuasive arguments and letters around such issues as bullying. They write imaginative stories and poems which demonstrate good vocabulary choices and use of simile and imagery. There is a steady improvement in punctuation and spelling as pupils progress through the school and higher attainers spell words such as *circumscribe* and *telepathic* without difficulty. However, a significant number are still experiencing difficulties with spelling. The school has recognised this and there is evidence of more systematic teaching of spelling rules being now in place. Some very good teaching of such rules was seen in a Year 5 and 6 class, but even within this group were a number of pupils, who did not have specific learning difficulties, but whose spelling skills lagged behind other aspects of their writing. There is a need for the school to detail more clearly how and when spelling rules will be taught and how pupils' work will be 'corrected' particularly within subjects other than English. Handwriting is very good throughout the school; pupils take a great deal of care with the presentation of their work. By Year 2, pupils form letters accurately, legibly and their joined writing is developing appropriately. By Year 6, pupils' handwriting is fluent and neat.
99. The quality of the teaching is very good overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Some very good and excellent teaching was seen particularly of the oldest pupils, where the teacher is very well organised, has very high expectations of the pupils and has a very good grasp of the subject. This means that all pupils including higher attainers and those with special educational needs are stretched and make very good progress in relation to their starting points when they entered this class. Very good teaching was seen in one lesson, where the teacher's careful planning and clear presentation of the task to the children, enabled them to succeed well in identifying the 'roots' of verbs and the rules for adapting their spellings. Similarly, in a Year 3 and 4 class writing lesson, the very good subject knowledge of the teacher and her very strong knowledge of the pupils, enabled a collaborative writing of a poem about 'isolation in the playground' to be highly successful. The pupils were enthusiastic in their contributions and thought carefully about them in relation to the task as set by the teacher (to use *simile* and *alliteration*). All enjoyed the challenges given to them by their teacher. Most teachers tell stories expressively, bringing the story to life for the children. This enables even the youngest children to attend for sometimes very long periods of time. Work is carefully planned to take account of individual and groups of children's needs and lesson objectives are shared with pupils. This means they are clear about what they will learn. Some individual teachers make good use of positive, detailed marking, but there is some inconsistency in this area. Almost all teachers make effective use of the plenary sessions at the end of lessons to reflect on pupils' learning. They have very good relationships with pupils and support pupils' independent and collaborative work very well. Occasionally, the pace of a lesson is too slow and fails to retain the pupils' interest. Learning support assistants support pupils very well in whole class and group sessions and when they withdraw them for individual or small group support. 'Booster' literacy classes are implemented well.
100. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in English are very good because of the interesting way lessons are presented and the way high quality work is demanded from them by staff. Pupils attend well and are very appreciative of the support that their teachers and others give them. They take care with their work and try to incorporate the advice of their teachers in it. They and their teachers are beginning to use ICT well to support their learning in English – to practise new skills, to research and to plan, present and revise their work.
101. The curriculum in English has been strengthened very well by the school's response to the National Literacy Strategy, although there is leeway for further developing and monitoring the range of texts that individual year groups read over their time in school, given their placement in mixed year classes. The curriculum is highly relevant and interesting to pupils. It is broad, balanced and

meets statutory requirements. Assessment and monitoring procedures are now strong and the quality of the written reports provided for parents is good. The new writing portfolios should help the school in its quest to improve writing standards even further and to identify early those pupils who need additional support. Formal and informal assessments, including reading and spelling tests and a profile devised by the SENCO, supplement statutory tests well.

102. English is very well managed and led by a strong and committed co-ordinator. She has a clear vision for the subject, regularly monitors the planning and teaching of literacy and has identified the need to develop aspects of spelling and assessment procedures further. She is involved in analysing pupil performance and target setting at whole school level, as well as overseeing standards in general. Many opportunities are provided in English to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural well-being and pupils' responsibility for their own learning is supported very carefully. Drama and role play is used appropriately by individual teachers and through whole school performances and basic skills, including library and research skills are developed systematically. There is scope for even more use of ICT to support English skills within some year groups and for the support of ICT skills within English itself. Resources in English are good and there is good use of visits and visiting players, book fairs to extend these.

MATHEMATICS

103. The standards achieved in mathematics by the Year 2 pupils in the 2002 National Curriculum tests were above national average when compared to all schools. Although the percentage of pupils attaining at the expected level and above (Level 2) was well below average, the percentage of pupils attaining at the higher level (Level 3) and was well above the national average, with a half of the pupils attaining this level. Although the results for the expected Level 2 were lower than the previous three years, the number of pupils in the group is small. In addition, when these pupils entered in the school in Reception, their attainment in mathematical understanding was above average, although reading overall was well below. Teachers report that the support given to reading of the questions in the Year 2 tests helped those pupils to overcome barriers caused by their reading difficulties. Boys out-performed girls in this year group but on reviewing the averages over the last three years there are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls. Inspection evidence found standards above average for current Year 2 pupils who are likely to achieve above expected levels and similar for the higher levels. At the time of the last report, it was stated that most pupils reached the expected standards for Year 2 pupils, but fewer pupils achieved the higher level.
104. Pupils, by Year 6 achieved standards in 2002 tests that were well above the national average and were very high when compared with those in similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher Level 5 was also well above the national average. These results are similar to those recorded at the time of the last of inspection. Standards have risen over the last three years and inspection findings show that standards are likely to remain well above average for the current Year 6 pupils. The co-ordinator has carefully analysed these results and the tests taken at the end of Years 3, 4, and 5 and has identified some weaknesses such as data handling that need to be addressed.
105. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and the range of their work covers all aspects of the subject. By Year 2, they are able to sequence numbers to 100 and understand the idea of place value. All pupils are able to count forward in tens and some are counting backwards with confidence. The higher attainers are beginning to understand multiplication as repeated addition whilst most pupils can subtract 10 from any number up to 100. They measure with some accuracy using standard units and have begun to work with the fractions of halves and quarters. The higher attainers are confidently working with eighths and one pupil recognised that an eighth of 16 is two. Most pupils in Year 1 are able to use a 100 square to find 10 more and can explain with confidence how they did it. The higher attainers have begun to make up their own addition sums to 10. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress, receiving the support they need to achieve.

106. Most pupils in the juniors (Years 3 to 6) make very good progress and this shows an improvement since the last inspection when progress was only satisfactory. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 can represent, extract and interpret data. They can reduce fractions to its simplest form by cancelling common factors and have good recall of their multiplication tables and number bonds. Data handling is taught well in Years 3 and 4. As a result, pupils construct graphs from their own data and then form questions. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are able to develop a frequency table using data collected. The rate of progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is also very good due to the quality of teaching and the extra support they receive in the upper classes.
107. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The link between teaching and learning during the inspection was very clear. The high expectations and clear learning objectives support pupils' learning. These are shared with pupils, with the result that they know what they are to do and what they should learn in the lesson. Lessons are carefully planned based on the National Numeracy Framework. The teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The quality of the mental oral part of the lessons, to develop mathematical thinking, is a strength across the school with pupils readily contributing and well able to explain their answers. In some lessons, pupils were asked to write answers on white boards and hold them up for checking, whilst in one class the mental calculations required were matched to the different abilities within the class, for example, when pupils were asked to double numbers with either one or two decimal places.
108. In the lessons where the teaching was very good or excellent the teacher's planning was of a high standard. In one lesson the well-planned introduction enabled pupils to concentrate on the place value when adding two numbers with two decimal places and then to practise the skill in a game of Bingo with pupils divided into three groups according to ability. Later in the lesson they were able to classify quadrilaterals using criteria such as parallel sides and equal angles. Pupils use a wide range of technical vocabulary such as *bisect*, *irregular*, *adjacent*, *lines of symmetry*, *diagonal lines* as well as defining *trapeziums*, *rhombi* and *polygons*. The use of much focused questioning at the end of the lesson enabled the teacher to assess the progress made and to ensure the learning was fully understood. In a class for younger pupils, the practical work supported pupils in the understanding of multiplication and developing their knowledge of the factors of a number. Higher attainers are beginning to explore the patterns in factors. The pace and energy of the very good and better lessons are key factors in engaging and motivating pupils, so that they apply themselves and learn well. Behaviour is good or very good in all lessons and pupils work well together when required. They have very positive attitudes to the subject and enjoy their learning.
109. Teachers expect high levels of presentation and this is very good throughout the school. Pupils' work is well laid out and neat. However, there is some variability in the quality of marking. Although all work seen is marked, the majority of it had few comments to help pupils to be aware of the strengths within their work, how they can improve and what they can do next. There is a good level of resources kept within each classroom, with spares held by the co-ordinator. Teachers make good links between mathematics and the wider curriculum and from pupils' work, numeracy skills are utilised and promoted well in other subjects such as science, design and technology and ICT. However, only a few examples were seen during the inspection. Information and communication technology is used to support the learning in the classrooms, but insufficiently.
110. The co-ordination of mathematics is very good. The co-ordinator leads and develops the teachers' awareness of current issues, such as the need to focus on her own findings from analysis or the national issues of developing pupils' ability to use and apply their learnt knowledge to wider problems. She monitors the quality of teaching, looks at pupils' work and reviews teachers' plans to ensure they continue to make good progress. Assessment procedures review what pupils have learnt against the objectives taught. In the Year 5 and 6 class pupils write the objective for the lesson at the beginning of their work, supporting them in starting to evaluate their own progress and for the teacher to assess progress against it. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were inaccurate last year, as no pupils were identified to have reached the higher levels. Further analysis of the Years 2 tests will support the school in raising these standards. The more able

pupils are to be identified through the introduction of world-class tests, although the present knowledge that the teachers have ensures pupils who have specific abilities in mathematics are identified. In the lessons seen the higher attainers were sufficiently challenged with work set to meet their specific needs.

SCIENCE

111. Since the last inspection, standards in science have somewhat varied for the pupils taking the Year 6 National Curriculum tests. However, they have been at least average and often above or well above average. This reflects the variations in the abilities of the pupils taking the tests over the past few years, although there has been a marked improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) and above for their age.
112. The picture is similar for the pupils taking the Year 2 assessments. Except for 2002, in the previous years, 85 to 89 per cent of Year 2 pupils have reached and often exceeded the level expected for their age. In the 2002 assessments, the standards achieved by the Year 2 pupils were well below average. This was because the percentage reaching the expected level was well below average and reflected the needs and abilities of a particularly low attaining group of pupils taking the tests. No pupils were assessed by their teachers as having attained Level 3 (the higher level) as their depth of scientific knowledge was deemed to be insufficient to justify this level. In the previous year those reaching the expected level or above was average and it was above average for those attaining Level 3.
113. The co-ordinator's own comprehensive analysis of standards, carried out in summer 2002, has indicated that for pupils in Years 1 to 2 there had been much time spent on observation and exploration. Although work spent on recording observations and identifying predictions had taken place, this needed to be strengthened. Training has been provided and it is clearly evident in the pupils' work and from lesson observation, that investigation and experimentation is at the heart of the work in science in Years 1 and 2 and that this aspect is now tackled to a greater depth than previously.
114. Standards seen during the inspection are above average for pupils in Year 2. They are well above average for pupils in Year 6 and these pupils are on course to at least reach, or exceed, the targets set for 2003. These standards accurately reflect the make-up of the current groups of pupils and the numbers of pupils with special educational needs; there is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. The school provides systematic opportunities for practical investigative and experimental work. The rigorous ways pupils are taught to carry this out promote their thinking skills and help them to really grasp scientific ideas. In addition, the use of specific scientific vocabulary and the emphasis on understanding the scientific ideas related to this, helps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well. Overall, pupils' achievements (including those pupils with SEN and the small number with EAL) are very good. All achieve very well due to good or very good teaching and a strong willingness by the pupils to learn.
115. By Year 2, pupils achieve well; this is because the teaching and planning of work is good, leading to pupils building well on what they have learned previously and making good progress. Younger pupils in Year 1 think about the sources of light and how objects can let light through them. They know that light cannot shine through paper which is black but test the amount of light that can 'shine' through different types of paper. Pupils' work shows good description and evaluation of their findings, clearly showing how their scientific thinking is developing well. The teacher's use of a writing frame to help them record their ideas and findings helps them focus their thoughts better, especially the lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs. By Year 2, they produce a comparison chart to say how man-made or natural materials can be changed, through say bending or twisting. They can say which objects use electricity from the mains and which from batteries. They know that batteries need to be connected correctly and that there has to be a complete circuit to make a bulb light up. Most are adept at constructing simple circuits and some are more than capable of inserting switches in their circuits.
116. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they achieve very well; this is through the very good and 'expert' teaching by the teachers who teach in Years 3 to 6 and their comprehensive planning. The Year 3 pupils are very clear about what constitutes a 'fair test', although lower attaining pupils still need a lot of help with this idea. The pupils go on to extend their ideas about electrical circuits in Years 3 and 4 by the challenge of experimenting with the effects of different components upon the brightness of bulbs in the circuit. They formulate questions as hypotheses and show very good

accuracy in their reasoning. By Year 6, most pupils show an impressive skill in identifying what is needed to construct an investigation; they can identify what they must keep the same and what can be changed in order for their test to be fair. In one such test, they examined the effects of the change of the surface area of a liquid on evaporation. They set the equipment up quickly and accurately and readily used their skill of note taking and recording to identify what was needed for them to proceed. The pupils have a very good grasp of key vocabulary, such as 'variable' and use this readily in their discussions with each other. They make particular progress in their ability to measure accurately and know that this is absolutely essential for precise results. There has been recent emphasis in Years 3 to 6 on the use of data and data handling. This has helped the pupils to better record their findings and interpret their results, especially to deduce and infer.

117. The teaching of science is very good overall. Activities are very interesting and the pupils really enjoy the lessons which make them 'scientifically think'. They are very clear about what they are to learn and do. The teaching is strongest in the junior department due to the high degree of knowledge by the Year 3 and 4 teacher and Year 5 and 6 teacher, both of whom have science 'backgrounds' and a vast experience in teaching or advising on science in the primary school. The teachers here very strongly demonstrate ideas either themselves or often by using the pupils as role models. They also use the pupils with the strongest skills to work or support pupils who are less strong. A key feature which helps the pupils to learn very effectively is in the very challenging way the work is presented in most classes. Pupils are helped to 'think' and behave as 'real scientists'. The deeply probing questioning by teachers makes pupils think about what they are testing, what they are trying to find out and to use their existing scientific knowledge to hypothesise. The use of writing frames to support their ideas and the utilising of data techniques (including the recording through the use of ICT), such as tables and spreadsheets, helps to successfully improve logical thinking. It also helps them to lay out their work and present it well. The very good attention to scientific vocabulary helps pupils gather their thoughts quickly when responding to questions or planning, although occasionally they could do with more exposure to how the words are correctly written, as some pupils show the occasional inaccuracies in spelling in their workbooks.
118. In Years 1 and 2, although the teaching is good and a wide variety of challenging activities presented, the variation in pupils' abilities and attainment is extremely wide and is a real challenge for the teachers to plan for. This is generally done well, although at times, and especially in Year 1 (which is part of the Reception class), some higher attaining pupils are provided with, or supported to carry out, less demanding work than they are capable of. Given the extremely wide variation in this class it is not always possible for the teacher to supervise effectively for all groups, especially if some are working elsewhere in the building. Teachers' marking is constructive and praises well what pupils have understood or have produced. This also provides a good opportunity to guide pupils further and to set targets for improvement.
119. Science is well supported through voluntary helpers, including the parish priest (a school governor). Through working with the pupils, he has a good knowledge of their skills and the issues that face staff in lessons. This also helps to form strong relationships and pupils are especially keen for him to work with them.
120. The subject is well led and managed and provision has improved well since the last inspection. The co-ordinator advises and supports her colleagues well. She has a very good grasp of the issues facing the subject and its development, the attainment levels in each class and the reasons for these. The subject policy has been thoroughly reviewed and investigation and experimentation has been very well emphasised. Pupils' progress is assessed, recorded and tracked well. This is planned to improve further with closer attention given to pupils' achievement assessed against the objectives set for the medium term, in addition to the current 'skills checklist'. Targets to identify further improvement on an ongoing year-by-year basis are also planned. Lower and higher attaining pupils' needs are identified well and focused upon specifically. Through checking on standards in the subjects and analysing planning and pupils' work, some weaknesses in practical work in Years 1 and 2 have been rectified. A science 'week', organised by the co-ordinator and regular science visits and visitors to the school, also strengthen pupils' attainment in science. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

121. During the inspection, only one art and design lesson was seen in the Year 5 and 6 class. Additional evidence is taken from a scrutiny of work on display, evaluation from the co-ordinator and through discussion with some pupils. From the limited evidence seen standards match the expected levels by Year 6 for all pupils including those with special educational needs. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection although the range of work was said to be narrow. The new scheme of work addresses this well and covers all areas. Pupils are now making sound progress, however, although the lack of time given to art last year has limited the progress pupils have made overall and the impact of the very strong teaching.
122. In Year 2, pupils explain about colour mixing and colour 'families'. Pupils' sketchbooks in Years 3 and 4 show work that is of a satisfactory standard. Pupils use pencil shading with paper collage to create some interesting pictures. These basic skills are taught appropriately and help pupils to consider the tonal value of their pictures. Their sketches of three-dimensional shapes show the development of pupils understanding of perspective and this provides a useful introduction to support pupils when they sketched the school.
123. Display work around the school, incorporating pupils' efforts, confirms that a range of techniques is being developed. The displays in the hall have the theme of colour and are in the style of different famous artists. The older pupils in Years 5 and 6 chose the Dutch artist Piet Mondrian and developed their paintings in his non-representational style; younger junior pupils worked together in creating pictures in the style of L.S. Lowry, by using charcoal on emulsified card. Although there is much evidence of pupils' efforts, the displays do not always state the name of the class or year group that produced them. This is a missed opportunity to publicly celebrate individual and group achievement. In the classrooms, there is less evidence of artwork undertaken and only limited evidence of the use of any computer paint and design packages across the school. In one class the "Dazzle" program has been used, but not all pupils' work is displayed or named. There are very few interactive displays that actively involve the viewer in any of the displays.
124. The quality of teaching and learning in the lesson seen was very good. The lesson was planned appropriately and the resources prepared to inspire and motivate pupils. The teacher recapped well on previous work with clay to ensure pupils all knew how to manage the medium and develop the skills required to make a variety of pots. Clear demonstrations and instructions provided pupils with a range of opportunities. Their previous work on the making of paper pots further developed their understanding of different designs they could use. The very good use of technical vocabulary supported pupils in learning about the different techniques that they are using.
125. The management of the subject is satisfactory, but as the co-ordinator was absent during the inspection, evidence was taken from the documentation provided. She has ensured that resources and their storage is adequate and is encouraging greater use of sketch-pads in the junior classes. Assessment practices are not yet developed to monitor skills and attainment over time. The curriculum is organised appropriately covering two years, with sufficient emphasis given to all six aspects of the subject. These include drawing, painting, textiles, collage, printing and sculpture.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Standards in design and technology are currently in line with what is expected for pupils' ages by Year 2 and by Year 6. They are rising, however, and it is likely that these will be above expectations by the end of the year. Although it was not possible, due to timetabling arrangements, to see any teaching of design and technology, from the pupils' work and photographic evidence the quality of teaching is at least good. It is evident that the work is planned well, to challenge pupils' ideas and thinking and to help them to solve specific problems which are set. Pupils' ability to self-evaluate their ideas, design and products has progressed really well since last year. However, the effects of the strong teaching are not yet fully realised across all aspects of pupils' attainment. This is because the timetabling for design and technology has been problematic in the past and some teachers have found it difficult to cover all the work planned.

This has been recognised through the school's thorough self-review progress and adjustments made to the timetable for this academic year. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress along with the rest of the pupils and there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

127. By Year 2, pupils plan well their designs for picture frames and produce a wide variety of ideas, such as frames made of shells. They use tools to cut balsa wood and smooth the edges using glass paper. They competently join their frames and produce stable structures. Their finished products are constructed to a high standard and photographs show that pupils have really enjoyed the activity. Evaluations are carefully made and pupils use smiley or sad faces to indicate the best and worst part of the product and write about how they could make it better. By Year 6, the pupils produce complex 'moving aliens' which shows well their understanding of articulated levers. Some pupils have produced complex movements involving three or more levers. Evaluation is strong and pupils show a good critical awareness of their work. Most can identify what they need to do to improve upon their ideas and products.
128. Although the co-ordinator was absent at the time of the inspection, evidence from self-evaluation, the current response from the school and the effect of this on pupils' rising standards all indicate that the leadership and management of design and technology are good. The self-evaluation, at the end of the academic year was highly considered by the school and action readily taken to rectify weaknesses. An outline plan for the development of the subject has been made with clear, relevant priorities and forms parts of a more 'strategic' plan ('maintenance plan') with success criteria and costings. It would benefit from specific targets relating to how pupils' attainment is intended to rise.
129. Monitoring of pupils' progress is carried out through assessments made at the end of each module of work. There is limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning in design and technology, something which has been recognised by the co-ordinator. This needs to be planned for, especially relating to aspects of control. There is evidence that design and graphics work now takes place in ICT lessons and this is a good link; however, the school has little equipment or knowledge to support the control aspects, at present. Good progress has been made overall in developing the provision since the previous inspection; teaching, learning and pupils' progress have all improved; attainment is rising through good strategic planning for the subject and teaching of the broad programme of study.

GEOGRAPHY

130. Due to timetabling arrangements, only a limited number of geography lessons could be seen during the inspection. However, observations, scrutiny of work, discussions with the subject co-ordinator and with staff and pupils and the lessons seen support the judgement that the school's provision for geography is good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when provision was satisfactory. Pupils' attainment in geography is as expected for Year 2 pupils; very sound foundations, however, have been laid for the ways in which pupils think about the features of the world around them. As a result, by the time they are in Year 6, the pupils' attainment in geography exceeds that of others of their age.
131. Many pupils have very limited geographical understandings in comparison with others of their age on entry to the school and sound foundations are laid for pupils' geographical knowledge in their Reception year. Over their time in the school, the pupils' achievements and progress in geography is good. This is because of the often good teaching and planning and because of the careful ways in which geography skills are reinforced through other areas of the curriculum such as history and mathematics.
132. In Year 1 pupils develop their understanding of weather, of different climates and of how we adapt to them. A range of visits support pupils' understanding of the key features of their locality and through stories and other work they are encouraged to compare these with other countries. By Year 2, pupils have, for example, a good understanding of the features of seashores and towns and most know some of the meanings of some of the symbols to be found on a map. Through visits to

- places such as Morecambe they are able to relate these to real life. Higher attainers construct a simple map of the area, whilst others have extended their understanding of seaside and geographical terms.
133. Through their studies of the local area, the pupils have become very familiar with maps and plans in a variety of scales. This is a particularly strong feature. In Years 3 and 4 they learn to identify and name some of the physical features of the local area – using Ordnance Survey maps to identify key routes. Higher attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 locate route ways and grid references accurately and explain what they are doing well.
 134. By Year 6, the pupils have good geographical knowledge about places near to home and further afield, compared to other children of their age and have made good progress in developing their geography study skills. They produce well researched projects about an area or country of choice, for example about the River Nile or aspects of Egypt. These show good understanding of the key features of the environment, are very well presented and use appropriate geographical language and terms. They reveal a high level of map skills and awareness of environmental issues. In discussion, the pupils in Year 6 offer reasoned explanations of the dangers to the world through, for example, pollution and know how the features of an environment, such as a river, influence the life style of its inhabitants.
 135. The small number of lessons observed and the evidence in pupils' books shows teaching in geography to be good overall. Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and use and explain subject vocabulary and concepts well. They make good use of whole class and plenary sessions to reinforce pupils' learning, using effective questioning strategies. Relationships with pupils are good and lessons are used well to support pupils' curiosity and interest in others' lives and experiences. Most teachers ensure that all pupils are included in lessons by providing appropriate levels of support, although they do not always plan for different levels of challenge in the learning. Geography makes a valuable contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, but there is still scope for pupils to practise and extend ICT skills in lessons across the school.
 136. The curriculum in geography is good and meets the National Curriculum requirements. Teachers build on each unit of work well to ensure pupils' skills and understandings are systematically supported, striking a good balance between independent work, opportunities for research and more teacher directed work. They record carefully pupils' responses to the desired learning outcomes for the units, which are linked well to the national schemes of work. There is strong support for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development through the range of topics studied, the exploration of environmental issues, the comparisons of different localities and civilisations and the many opportunities provided for collaboration.
 137. Geography is currently being co-ordinated well by the headteacher who overviews planning and has the opportunity to informally and formally monitor the subject. The school's very strong self-evaluation process ensures that insightful reports are made annually as to how effectively the subject is provided for and this drives subject development well. However, the arrangements for tracking and recording the progress of pupils are not sufficiently effective in relation to National Curriculum levels and standards and needs further development.

HISTORY

138. By Year 2 and Year 6 pupils demonstrate understanding of historical ideas and language above those generally for their age. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when provision and standards were satisfactory overall. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment, because of the good quality of learning opportunities that the school provides and the good and often very good teaching across the school.
139. By the end of their Reception year, pupils are well prepared for thinking about others' lives and past events and these developing skills are built on well in Years 1 and 2. A series of well thought

out topics enables pupils to think about key events in their lives and those of others, including how things have changed since their parents and grandparents were born. The pupils make simple comparisons of objects and experiences of life now and at other times. Through careful links to the present day, they are beginning to understand how past events influence current ways. For example, as part of their study on Remembrance Day in Carnforth and how this related to past World Wars, the Year 2 pupils compared this ceremony with how others marked it. Most pupils knew that the poppies grew in the fields around the trenches; some said they represented the colour of the blood and helped us to think about all the people who have died in wars. Pupils are developing a good sense of chronological understanding and know the names of some key figures in history or key events. They write descriptions of their own lives and recall their first day at school; higher attaining pupils remember their feelings and reactions and appreciate how they have changed since then. There is good use of local libraries and museums to support pupils' understanding and to help them to begin to understand the different sources that can be used to find out about life in other times.

140. During Years 3 to 6, pupils learn about significant people and events from both the distant and recent past. Through a carefully devised series of topics they study continuity and change within the locality and in other parts of the world. As they progress through school they use a good range of ways of finding out information, including using the Internet, so that by the time they are in Year 6 they research a topic of their own very well, using local libraries, the Internet and books as sources. In Years 3 and 4 they have studied *Invaders and Settlers* and have a good grasp of key vocabulary associated with the topic. Higher attainers can remember key details about Sutton Hoo and appreciate some of the hardships of Anglo Saxon life. Pupils in Year 6 recall key events and names in relation to the Roman invasion of Britain and compare aspects of the life of Roman armies and those of troops of today. Higher attainers know how the army was organised, what the forum was and use words like amphitheatre and coliseum. Lower attainers can offer suggestions as to what a Roman centurion looked like and the sort of weapons he carried. All pupils are developing good ways of reflecting on past events and civilisations. This is because of the very good teaching of the older children by a specialist teacher who leads the subject and is particularly good at including all pupils within the lessons.
141. Work in pupils' books shows that they are able to use timelines to locate historical events in a chronological context and make comparisons between past and present. Pupils have also studied aspects of Greek, Roman and Tudor history, for example studying daily life in Greece.
142. Teaching in history is good overall. It is very good for the oldest children. Teachers extend pupils' understanding well right across the school and make good use of appropriate historical vocabulary. The planning is very well related to the school's medium-term planning and good use is made of end of unit assessments. Marking is used well by most teachers to extend pupils' ideas further and to let them know what is good about their work. Teachers are particularly good at getting pupils to explain their ideas and to reflect on what they already know. They use plenary sessions consistently well to share work, review understandings and to say what pupils will learn next. Occasionally in the younger mixed age classes, there is insufficient variety in the materials used and younger and less able pupils become restless, when the pace of the lesson and the material and presentation is not interesting enough for them.
143. History is very well led by the co-ordinator, who is enthusiastic and committed to the development of the subject. Through the focus on the subject and the very strong self-evaluation process, the curriculum for history has been strengthened recently. In addition, a good, but relatively new, assessment and monitoring procedure, tied into work units and National Curriculum levels, should help to track pupils' progress carefully in history and enable the subject co-ordinator to evaluate standards even more effectively. Currently, teaching is not monitored in the subject, although planning and pupils' work is overviewed effectively. History makes a very strong contribution to pupils' literacy development and to their moral and cultural awareness. Through the topics studied pupils research and apply their literacy skills and develop an increasing understanding of diversity and change. Computers are used increasingly to support pupils' learning in history and to apply and further develop pupils' ICT skills, through their use of the Internet and their presentation of their history work, although there is scope to develop this further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144. The provision for ICT was identified as a particular weakness in the last inspection; pupils made unsatisfactory progress because they did not have sufficient access to computers and their attainment was, therefore, lower than it should have been. All pupils are now taught ICT in a computer suite which has been very recently upgraded to ensure that pupils have reasonable access to a sufficient number of computers. Support via a 'bought-in' technician, as well as through voluntary help from a high school, is also helping to ensure that the system is more reliable than in the past. The recently adopted planning is generally well thought out and pupils are now systematically taught most of the skills required for them to apply to practical situations. However, all this is relatively new and although pupils now make sound progress from their starting points, the national expectations are more demanding and the pupils' attainment is still lower than it should be.
145. There are some good examples of ICT being used to support pupils' learning, such as in literacy in Years 3 and 4 where pupils identified homophones through clicking and dragging text, recorded their data in a Year 5 and 6 science investigation using table format and word processing in a Year 5 and 6 history reporting session, where the pupils retold the story of the 'Christians and the lions' in a 'sports report' genre. However, overall, the use of ICT to support the use and application of skills is too limited. Co-ordinators, through their high quality, self-review of their subjects have identified this as an area for improvement. Planning in other subjects, however, still needs to systematically detail how ICT skills are to be developed through opportunities which also support learning in the subjects themselves.
146. Although there is no significant difference in the progress which boys and girls make in ICT or for most pupils with special educational needs, there is a lack of software to support pupils with difficulties and especially those with the most needs. For instance, there is no software such as for predictive typing or in the form of a spell checker for pupils who have real problems interpreting print. For those pupils with severe learning difficulties, there is very little to help them develop their ideas, such as software which enables choices to be made and communicated.
147. By Year 2, the pupils have built on their previous skills gained in Year 1 in using a mouse, identifying icons and clicking on icons to make things happen, such as in constructing a simple pictogram. Some pupils are able to copy text from a written draft of the poems they have created. Some find the location of some keys on the keyboard quite difficult, although those who have computers at home can use the shift and cap lock keys quite confidently. By Year 3 and 4 pupils create three-dimensional (3D) effect designs, based on models and pictures previously examined. They use 'graphic' tools confidently to drag and angle lines and 'flood fill' areas with colour. Higher attaining pupils use shading well to create the 3D effect and have also understood well how the corner angles of their designs should be made in order for them to look correct. Pupils in Year 5 regularly use the computer for word processing although some have weak editing skills and struggle to understand procedures such as cut and paste. By Year 6, pupils begin to use spreadsheets and can locate the cells where their data is to be placed. Some know that layout is very important and pay particular attention to labelling their columns of information. They know that spreadsheets can be used with formulae to calculate, for instance, the perimeter of a rectangle. Discussions with Year 6 pupils indicated that they have used computers well for displaying data in graphical form and that they have constructed simple text and picture pages in a storybook format. Overall, their knowledge is 'patchy'. They have used the Internet for finding information on various topics but, as the Internet has been unreliable, little practical work with email has taken place. They have good knowledge relating to word processing, but their understanding of databases and the use of control ideas for programming is weak.
148. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is based on very good, detailed planning, with clear attention paid to what pupils are expected to learn. There is a good knowledge of the particular skills to be learned when a unit of work is taught (especially now that some teachers have completed the national training recently) and mostly interesting and 'child-friendly' software is used. Some support staff time would be better used if they too had knowledge of the programs,

rather than having to wait, like the pupils, for help from the teacher. However, staff do give pupils good individual attention which helps them develop their skills or build on ideas they have, such as for their designs. Teachers give clear instructions at the beginning of the lesson, but there is too little demonstration and some pupils struggle with a long list of instructions or sequences to follow. Discussion with teachers indicate that they have provided pupils with picture sequences, in the past, to help them find their way through a number of drop-down menus. This is good practice and supports pupils' independence. The quality of teaching is affected markedly by the problematic layout of the ICT room and also teachers' lack of knowledge of how to teach in an environment very different from their classrooms. The seating is inappropriate for many pupils, being at the wrong height; computers and, therefore, pupils are too close to each other with little working space; pupils' cannot always see what is happening when the teacher does demonstrate because objects are in the way. It is also difficult for teachers to view what all pupils are doing. This resulted in one lesson in some boys dominating the activity, when they were paired to work with a less dominant girl. However, teachers generally provide very good opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas among themselves and to collaborate when working. In addition, pupils' good examples and ideas are readily praised and shown to others, promoting self-esteem enabling pupils to learn from good practice.

149. The subject is well led and soundly managed by a fairly knowledgeable co-ordinator who has worked hard to develop the subject. Subject leadership is in a process of transition, with the headteacher eventually taking this over. Planning generally has been very well thought out and financial planning and decision-making good, albeit resourcing up to the level required has taken a while. The subject development plan is a detailed document which clearly states what the school needs to do to develop ICT provision in broad terms but does not identify specific targets for improving pupils' level of attainment. Monitoring of pupils' progress is based on a highly detailed and thorough end-of-academic-year evaluation of provision. It is a high quality self-review, which indicates that the school is aware that teaching of ICT has improved and that pupils' standards are now higher, although it states that 'we are not where we want to be'. Direction and guidance for staff from this evaluation are very clear, although a weakness is the lack of formal checking that this is being followed. The school recognises that there is no effective ongoing record of pupils' attainment, based on assessment of what they have learned. It plans to put one in place over this year. Staff review carefully at the end of year what the pupils have attained and this informs the co-ordinator's evaluation, however. An action plan for ICT, as an additional tool to the ICT development plan, based of this level of self-evaluation detail, would help to move the school significantly forward.

MUSIC

150. No music lessons were seen during the inspection as the subject is taught in the latter half of the week. However, evidence has been taken from video recordings of two lessons for pupils in Reception and Year 1 and Years 3 and 4 and a hymn practice for pupils from Year 1 to 6. Discussions were also held with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. On the basis of this limited evidence, a scrutiny of the school's documentation, a small amount of pupils' work and the detailed records of pupils' achievements, standards in music are at least in line with those of other pupils of their ages by Year 2 and Year 6. At the time of the last inspection standards, were above expectations and progress was good. During last year, the time provided for learning music increased, but this has yet to have an effect on standards across the school.
151. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 are able to use body percussion effectively to copy the teacher's rhythms and some pupils are able to use a drum to develop their understanding of pulse. Pupils moved rhythmically to the music carefully responding to changes in tempo and dynamics. During the lesson they learnt a song about birthdays with obvious enjoyment and made good progress responding enthusiastically to the positive teaching, concentrating hard when listening to the teacher. All pupils with special educational needs are included and make good progress because of the support they are given.
152. In Year 3 and 4, pupils developed further their understanding of rhythm and pulse. In one of the songs taught, pupils were able to sing in the round using both pulse and rhythm. They found this

work challenging, but no evaluation of each other's performances was observed to extend their ability to evaluate. Their knowledge and understanding of the elements of music and musical terminology is beginning to develop and is in line with the level expected of pupils of this age. The work of Year 6 pupils shows that groups of pupils are able to produce a piece of music using percussion instruments and then use representational symbols as the key to the score.

153. In the video-tape of recorded hymn practice the teacher used her voice and the guitar effectively to support pupils' singing. Pupils enjoy this form of singing and stated that "It is a way of praising God in song" whilst another pupil described it as "It is like being jolly when praying". Pupils primarily used hymn-books to learn the words and time was spent finding the numbers. The lack of the use of an overhead projector meant that the younger pupils were not supported in learning the words of unfamiliar hymns. Also as hymns are not sung in assemblies, pupils miss the opportunity to perform those they have learnt during the hymn practice.
154. The co-ordinator, as a specialist teacher, is effective in teaching music to all year groups. The range of tuned instruments and untuned percussion is satisfactory, but the storage in the hall is limited and not well displayed. Although the policy needs updating, the co-ordinator has modified the national guidance as a basis for developing a new scheme of work to meet the needs of pupils. The introduction of the new plans is improving the provision, but they have not been in place for sufficient time to impact more positively on standards. No links with computer technology are yet in place. However, there is a detailed system for assessing and recording pupils' progress in music over time. Extra-curricular activities are to be reintroduced at the beginning of next term, including choir and orchestra. Pupils are supported in learning the recorder and there are opportunities to learn a range of instruments through teachers who come into school. The cost of this has to be met by parents, but there is support for families who have difficulty paying.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. Standards throughout the school are in line with those expected for pupils' ages by Year 2 and Year 6. There is little difference in the standards between boys and girls and all pupils are included in all activities. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make satisfactory progress. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection, although attainment was reported to be above expectations in the upper classes.
156. The school offers a broad range of varied activities to support the pupils' physical development and the pupils' learning has benefited as a result. During the inspection dance, gymnastics and indoor games were observed. Pupils in Year 6 have satisfactory skills and are learning to control their body movements well, although their work lacks fluency and their own evaluations of work are weak. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to develop a sequence of dance movements to a theme about circus skills and can demonstrate them with confidence but find it difficult to listen to the instructions and the music.
157. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes very good, as seen in a junior class when the teacher was enthusiastic and showed very good knowledge of the subject. The very good pace in this lesson and the variety of games supported pupils well in practising their skills. There is a common approach and clear expectations in physical education as a result of the introduction of the new scheme of work. The planning is carefully thought through to offer a broad range of activities over a two-year programme taking account of the two year groups in each class. For example, seasonal games, dance, gymnastics and athletics are offered on a half termly basis. In addition, pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn to swim using the high school pool. By the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils can swim 25 metres. At the beginning of Year 6, pupils attend an outdoor pursuits centre where they are offered opportunities to take part in such activities as canoeing. Work in gymnastics, games and dance from Year 2 through to Year 6 focuses on building on what the pupils have already learned and can do and develops their skills and techniques. As the new scheme of planned lessons has been introduced very recently the full benefits of skill development are not yet evident throughout the school.
158. Pupils enjoy themselves and work hard in lessons. In a Year 3 and 4 class, the pupils have high levels of co-ordination and control, for instance when throwing the ball using chest passes. Pupils

work well when working in pairs and in larger groups developing and practising their skills. In Year 6 in their gymnastics lesson pupils develop a sequencing of movements in a pattern of jumps, rolls and balances, which they demonstrate with enthusiasm. In all lessons pupils show that they understand the importance of a warm up at the start of the lesson and a cool down at the end. Teachers praise and encourage pupils and good use is made of demonstration, but pupils are not yet evaluating their own and other's work to improve performance.

159. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, are supported appropriately and included fully in activities. All pupils behave considerately towards each other and show respect for the equipment they use. Pupils are appropriately dressed for the activities. Throughout the school routines are well established for these lessons and learning time is used productively. Due attention is given to safety in all lessons, including instructing the pupils on how to move equipment safely.
160. The co-ordinator, who has only been in post for a year, offers very good leadership and is influencing the raising of standards in physical education. She has developed the new policy and scheme of work. As yet, she has not monitored teaching but plans to work alongside teachers to develop their subject knowledge further. However, she is moderating the planning and talks to pupils about the standards they achieve.
161. The school makes good use of its indoor and outdoor facilities for physical education. Resources for physical pursuits are good and these are stored and well labelled for easy access. There are a large number of after school activities that enrich the curriculum, for example football and netball and swimming. The school takes part in local sporting competitions with some degree of success.