

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST. BERNADETTE'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Brinnington

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106116

Headteacher: Mr M O'Brien

Reporting inspector: Dr. Eric Peagam  
14943

Dates of inspection: 29 January – 2 February 2001

Inspection number: 66876

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary school with nursery

School category: Voluntary (aided)

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Gorseway  
Foliage Road  
Brinnington  
Stockport

Postcode: SK5 8AR

Telephone number: 0161 430 4601

Fax number: 0161 406 6235

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs K Conwell

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14943	Eric Peagam	Registered inspector	Children in the Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it?
			Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
			Design and technology	What should the school do to improve further?
			Music	.
			Physical education	
			Special educational needs	
12277	Kingsley Halden	Lay inspector		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?
20368	Sue Macintosh	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
			History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Geography	
			Equal opportunities	
25559	Liz Curran	Team inspector	Science	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Art and design	
			Information and communication technology	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School is a small urban, voluntary (aided) primary school, drawing pupils mainly from the district of Brinnington, near Stockport. The admissions policy is in line with that usually found in denominational voluntary aided schools. The recognised admission number for each year group is 25, but, where appropriate, the school admits above this number so that some years have up to 29 pupils. Currently there are 183 pupils (89 boys, 94 girls) aged from 4-11. There are 40 pupils under six years of age of whom 17 attend the nursery part-time. From Years 3 to 6, pupils are taught in classes where there are two years represented. Although pupils come from a range of backgrounds, most come from an area of high unemployment and social disadvantage, with a high proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry is low and many pupils arrive in the nursery with poorly developed linguistic and social skills. There is a higher than average and rising number of pupils with special educational needs, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school experiences high mobility among its pupils, which has a destabilising effect on some class groups. There are a small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, but none for whom English is an additional language.

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

St. Bernadette's is a good school. It is very well managed, very effective and serves the needs of its community well. Many pupils arrive with low levels of linguistic and social skills and are enabled to make good progress during their time at the school. As a result, although standards attained in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are significantly below the average, these are higher than in the majority of schools in similar circumstances. Higher-attaining pupils are also well catered for. The school is highly thought of by parents and delivers a good quality of education. Although unit costs are high, the good teaching and progress, the high quality leadership and the well-deserved reputation it has in the community represent good value for money.

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

- Achievement is good; standards are higher than in the majority of schools in similar circumstances.
- Very good leadership and management secure a clear educational direction for the school.
- Good and often very good teaching, especially in basic skills, ensures that pupils make good progress.
- The school has a very good ethos and its work reflects the values in the mission statement very well.
- The school achieves a very good partnership with parents; they, in turn, set a high value on the work of the school and feel well supported by it.
- Very good behaviour and positive attitudes by pupils contribute well to their academic and social learning.
- The school promotes spiritual and moral development very effectively.
- Arrangements to support pupils' health, safety and welfare are very good; pupils are very well cared for.

### **What could be improved**

- The provision for art in terms of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and its contribution to their cultural development.
- The use of information and communication technology across the school to ensure that pupils reach an appropriate standard.
- Planning to ensure that the curriculum for pupils in mixed year group classes always builds effectively on previous learning without repetition.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills, to take responsibility and to participate in aspects of the running of the school.

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

Priorities for development identified by the school are speaking and listening, personal and social development for children at the Foundation Stage, and aspects of writing in Key Stage 2. The school has also identified the development of information and communication technology through planned, regular use of the newly created information and communication technology suite as a school-wide priority.

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

Since the school was last inspected in June 1997, improvement has been satisfactory overall and in terms of meeting new initiatives it has been good. The previous key issues have mainly been effectively addressed. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies as well as the Foundation Stage curriculum for the youngest children. The quality of teaching, previously judged good, has improved further and pupils' progress reflects this. Physical education has been particularly improved. Facilities for information and communication technology have been significantly updated and there is now a good, well-resourced curriculum for music. In other subjects, planning has improved through the adoption of a nationally recognised structure. The school now meets all its statutory requirements and provides good information for parents. The safety and well-being of pupils and the security of the school have been enhanced by the provision of perimeter fencing. Monitoring of teaching and subject planning is now established. Attendance has improved and now matches the national average. However, information and communication technology is still insufficiently embedded to underpin attainment. The school has not developed clear planning for the curriculum in mixed age classes to ensure that work builds securely on previous knowledge without repetition. In addition, shortcomings in art have not been adequately addressed. Nevertheless, the school has the structures and the necessary commitment to address these issues and is well placed to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	D	E	C
mathematics	B	E	D	B
science	D	E	D	B

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Overall standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 were significantly below the national average. They were below average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. However, when compared to schools in similar circumstances, overall attainment was above average overall, being average in English, but above average in mathematics and science. Attainment in the school has fluctuated markedly over the last three years. However, in the case of small schools like St. Bernadette's, variations between years are likely to be unreliable indicators of trends. Results are significantly affected by the number of pupils with special educational needs in any particular year and the overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs has doubled since the previous inspection. Many pupils arrive with very low levels of skill and knowledge. While at the school, although they do not achieve levels expected for their ages, they make good progress to achieve well. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and above in the Key Stage 2 tests in English and mathematics. These are based on specific expectations for individual pupils and updated annually to take account of pupil mobility. At Key Stage 2 last year, targets in English and science were significantly exceeded, in terms of both Level 4 and Level 5. In mathematics, the school did not meet its targets for attainment at Level 4, although more pupils than expected reached Level 5. In most other subjects, pupils attain standards within the expected range, but in art, pupils do not reach satisfactory levels of skills, knowledge and understanding, while in information and communication technology, achievement is unsatisfactory, having been impeded by a lack of facilities in the past.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm for the school and identify well with it. They report great satisfaction with what it does for them
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is consistently very good in class and around the school. Pupils are polite and helpful and show care for those younger than themselves.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils form friendships and support one another well, showing tolerance of differences and respect for differing beliefs. Relationships are very good
Attendance	Pupils attend well, with negligible amounts of unauthorised absence. They arrive at lessons on time and settle quickly to work

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall. It is always at least satisfactory and good or better in nearly 85%, which include 30% where it is very good. It is particularly effective for children in the Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stage 2. High quality, confident teaching and management of classes contribute well to the development of pupils' learning skills and ensure good pace and productivity in lessons. Positive approaches to behaviour management contribute very well to pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem and enable them to attempt difficult tasks without fear of failure. Teaching is very effective for pupils with special educational needs and support, both in classrooms and in withdrawal groups, is very effective. Teaching in English is usually good, both when literacy is being directly taught and when English skills are being developed through work in other subjects. In mathematics, teaching is always good and very good at times, with numeracy being well taught. In science, teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In most other subjects mainly good teaching was seen, while in music, teaching is consistently very good. In art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology, insufficient teaching was seen for judgements to be made. Where there is a weakness in teaching, this usually results from a tendency to overuse worksheets and other means of recording that limit higher-attaining pupils' ability to respond creatively or to extend their answers.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a satisfactory and still developing curriculum, which meets statutory requirements, and is strong in supporting the development of literacy and numeracy skills. For children in the Foundation Stage it is good. Recent developments including the adoption of nationally recognised planning structures and improved provision for information and communication technology have yet to have their full effect. A wider range of extra-curricular activities is planned but these are limited at present. The school links well with the main secondary school to ensure continuity and links with the community are effectively used to support pupils' learning and personal development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Effective use is made of support provided by the local education authority, and in-class support is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual and moral development are very good. Social development is good overall, but limited opportunities for service within the school reduce the impact. Cultural development is satisfactory, but limitations in art and lack of visits or visitors inhibit pupils' opportunities.

<b>Aspect (cont.)</b>	<b>Comment (cont.)</b>
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils and works hard and effectively to ensure their safety and well-being. Teachers know pupils well and monitor their development well, using their knowledge effectively in planning for individual pupils. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Formal assessment arrangements in literacy and numeracy are good and effectively used but, in some foundation subjects, arrangements for recording and comparing assessments are at an early stage of development.

The school works hard to develop effective links with parents and is very successful in inspiring confidence and trust. Information is good, both in general terms and in terms of individual progress and parents are very appreciative of the open-door policy. They make good use of opportunities to participate as in the ‘stay and play’ sessions in the nursery, and a significant number play an important part in the daily work of the school, as well as contributing to the work of the ‘Friends of St. Bernadette’s’.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, and staff with management responsibilities at all levels carry them out well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors, who are very active across the range of their responsibilities, share a clear vision with the headteacher and are very effective in meeting their responsibilities.
The school’s evaluation of its performance	There are good systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and these are effective in maintaining standards and promoting improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Planning for the strategic use of resources is very good. The finances of the school are well managed; the budget reflects educational priorities well and is efficiently kept under review.

The school shows good regard for the principle of Best Value in terms both of what it provides and in resource acquisition. Consultation procedures are well developed and the school makes good use of the available information to check its performance against that of other schools. Staffing is appropriate with good levels of support staff. Resources are sufficient overall, although there are deficiencies in some areas. The school makes good use of the accommodation that it has, but there are shortcomings in terms of resource storage and library facilities and outdoor play resources for the youngest children are limited by the high level of vandalism that occurs outside school time.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The welcome the school offers to them and their children.</li><li>• The quality of teaching in the school.</li><li>• The ethos and values that the school promotes.</li><li>• The guidance and support their children receive.</li><li>• The information they get from the school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There were no shortcomings reported by any significant number of parents.</li></ul>

Parents were very nearly unanimous in their praise for all aspects of the school, with only a small number reporting minor shortcomings. The inspection confirmed the views of parents that they were well served by the school in terms of the high quality of teaching, the very good ethos and the very good information provided. The school was found to be very welcoming and to provide very good guidance and support for the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall, the school has maintained the standards identified in the previous report and pupils have continued to achieve well as a result of the good progress they make while at the school. Most children enter the nursery with standards of attainment well below those expected for children of this age. Pupils make good overall progress through school although standards of attainment are still below the national average in mathematics and science and well below the national average in English, by the time they leave at the age of eleven. However, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 compared with schools in similar circumstances is above average overall; it is average in English but above average in mathematics and science.
2. There are marked year-on-year fluctuations in levels of attainment in individual subjects. However, the small numbers in some year groups and the disproportionate effect of one or two pupils with special educational needs means that these results cannot be relied upon to indicate an overall trend. For example in English, the steady increase in the numbers of pupils with learning difficulties since the last inspection has resulted in a decline in overall attainment, although this includes one year when standards were well above the national average. When all attainment in core subjects is taken together, the trend over recent years has been upwards, in line with that found nationally. While standards in literacy and numeracy remain below average, pupils are making good progress as a result of the school's successful implementation of a consistent and coherent approach and this is having a beneficial effect on the development of skills and knowledge in other subjects.
3. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for its pupils by the time they leave school in terms of numbers reaching the expected National Curriculum level (Level 4) and has exceeded them this year in English and science. The number of pupils achieving Level 5 in mathematics significantly exceeded the target. Targets are derived on an individual basis and aggregated for the year group. The overall target is revised annually, to take account of pupils arriving at and leaving the school. Results from testing are analysed in detail to enable the school to identify areas of strength and weakness and used to set targets for the future.
4. The great majority of children enter the nursery with standards of attainment well below those usually expected. This is particularly the case in relation to linguistic and social skills. Children make good progress through the nursery and Reception Year in all areas of the Foundation Curriculum. Although standards are still below those defined in the Early Learning Goals in most areas by the time pupils enter Year 1, in terms of creative and physical development, standards are in line with those expected, particularly in some aspects of physical skills and music.
5. Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below those found nationally. In national tests for seven year old pupils in 2000 the overall standards at St. Bernadette's, as measured by the average point scores were well below the national average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Compared to schools in a similar context, standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics. The results for writing in the 2000 national tests were better than in 1999, but scores in reading were lower while in mathematics they were the

same. In science, where there are no national tests, pupils were assessed as attaining well below the national average and below the average for similar schools, although there were a higher than average number of pupils attaining National Curriculum Level 3. Over the four years from 1996 to 2000 the numbers of pupils attaining the expected levels have fluctuated from well above to below average, but the numbers of pupils involved are too small for any reliable trend to be established.

6. Observations in classrooms and scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that standards in core subjects are broadly similar this year. In most lessons, pupils are attaining below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, the limited opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations means that their scientific skills are below those expected at the age of seven. Standards in information and communication technology and art are also below expectations as there has been insufficient structured teaching in these subjects. However, good quality art was seen in one class, where, in aspects of the subject, pupils attain appropriately for their age. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are generally in line with those usually found at the end of Key Stage 1.
7. Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below those found nationally. In national tests for eleven year old pupils in 2000 the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels was below the national average in mathematics and science and well below it in English. When compared to schools in similar circumstances, scores were average in English but above average in mathematics and science. Scores, particularly in English have been lower in recent years because of a steadily increasing number of pupils with special educational needs.
8. Levels of attainment observed in lessons were broadly in line with last year's results. The standards of the present pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are below the levels expected for eleven year olds in English and mathematics but approaching them in science. Standards in information and communication technology and art are also below those expected as pupils receive insufficient teaching to develop skills and knowledge. In music, while pupils attain at an appropriate level in those areas that they have covered their overall knowledge and skills are below those expected. Standards in design and technology, history and physical education are in line with those usually found. In geography, overall standards match expectations; development in terms of knowledge and understanding is strong, but pupils' geographical skills are underdeveloped. Comparisons with other schools where pupils attained a similar average level at Key Stage 1, show below average improvement, but this data needs to be interpreted with caution, as there was above average mobility among pupils in that particular year group between Year 2 and Year 6. When data relating only to those pupils who spent the entire key stage in the school is considered, improvement is in line with that of similar schools. Judgements about progress therefore, are largely drawn from progress observed in lessons and on the achievements of individual pupils based on their work and teachers' records.
9. The school makes good provision for pupils of differing prior attainment. While much of the focus is, appropriately, on helping lower-attaining pupils to improve, higher attaining pupils also make good progress as a result of challenging teaching, so that at both key stages there are a higher number of pupils attaining the higher levels than would be expected given the overall results. At Key Stage 1 these pupils make good progress in reading and writing, and satisfactory progress in mathematics. At Key Stage 2, while the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in English and

science are in line with the school's overall results, higher-attaining pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics where they match the national average for Level 5 attainment. The school has made effective use of additional funding to provide extra-curricular 'Booster' classes to enable identified underachieving pupils to more fully realise their potential in end of key stage tests.

10. The school monitors the progress and welfare of the minority ethnic pupils who make up 6% of the school population. Overall they achieve well, participate fully in class and appear integrated socially into the school. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
11. A higher than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs mainly related to general or specific learning difficulties. The local education authority recognises this by assigning a learning support teacher to the school on a nearly full-time basis. These pupils make consistently good progress both when supported in class and when withdrawn for individual or group tuition. As a result of targeted support, many pupils with speech and language difficulties make sufficient progress to be removed from the special educational needs register.
12. There is a marked difference in achievement between boys and girls in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Over the last three years, in English, mathematics and science, girls have achieved broadly in line with or even exceeded the national average at the end of Key Stage 2, while boys have attained consistently below it. While this reflects national trends, test results show that the gap between girls and boys' attainment is greater than that found nationally. As a result of awareness of the gender differences in attainment, the most recent test results have been analysed to see where boys are underachieving and an action plan has been drawn up to address those areas, but these are not yet fully implemented. Pupils do however now have individual targets for English and mathematics, which are regularly reviewed by the pupil and teacher, which inform pupils how to improve.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes to the school, their response to the education offered and the relationships they enjoy are generally very good. These make a significant contribution to the standards achieved; time is very effectively used, there are very few interruptions to learning and behaviour contributes very well to the successful climate for learning. Pupils are keen to attend, arrive punctually each day and settle promptly to work in their classes. Their approach to learning reflects their commitment and seriousness. In classes they are regularly required to work collaboratively and the mutual helpfulness this entails was fully evident during lesson observations. The quality of their work, the extent to which they complete the given tasks, written or mental, the care they take over the accuracy of their answers and their readiness to display and explain their work to the observer suggest confidence and awareness of the importance of education. A Year 6 pupil, having been at the school from Reception and feeling he was representing the feelings of the other pupils, commented with some relish that 'it is a good school with good teachers, good friends and, for that matter, the best school in Brinnington.'
14. Pupils demonstrate a very clear commitment to the school's core values which are clearly stated in the school's mission statement, prominently displayed in the vestibule, and which reflect the Christian principles in which the whole life of the school is rooted. These values are seen in action in the classroom, in the dining hall, on the playground and in other activities. In lessons and in

assemblies, pupils demonstrate good respect for the values and feelings of others and show empathy towards the beliefs of other faith groups. They support each other's achievements applauding generously when certificates and other marks of approval are awarded. Pupils successfully develop moral awareness and recognise the importance of good behaviour in supporting learning and fostering and sustaining relationships. As a result, overall behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good and the school does not need to use exclusion as a sanction. Where minor incidents of misbehaviour occur, pupils speedily respond to teachers' interventions. They understand the purpose of the school's rules and the reason for sanctions, when, on occasion, these are imposed. When this occurs, pupils readily explain what they have done and the reason why it was wrong. Bullying and aggressive behaviour occur occasionally but any instances are satisfactorily resolved.

15. Personal development of pupils, on the whole, is good. Discussions with pupils about their work, their attitudes to education, their sense of moral responsibility, their attendance and punctuality, their approach to classroom assignments and their response to class teacher's instructions reveal an increasing maturity as they pass through the school. Pupils undertake allocated tasks such as delivering registers to the office responsibly and a group of Year 6 pupils have set up a 'litter-busters' group to deal with playground litter. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative or contribute to policy-making or planning within the school at an appropriate level. Within lessons, the use of otherwise appropriate worksheets for the completion of tasks sometimes has the unintended effect of limiting opportunities for pupils to show creativity and originality or even to insert their own ideas.
16. Attendance at the school is in line with the national average and, given the difficulties many pupils face, this represents good achievement. Where pupils are absent it is for legitimate reasons and there is a negligible amount of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good, with only the occasional arrival after the registers are closed. Parents co-operate very well with the school to ensure that attendance is given an appropriate priority.

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

17. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is often very good and always at least satisfactory. It is very good in 30% of lessons, good in 56% of lessons, and satisfactory in 14%. This is a further improvement on the overall good teaching seen in the last inspection where there was some unsatisfactory teaching and a lower proportion of good and very good teaching. In this inspection, good and very good teaching was seen in both key stages. Teaching is particularly effective for children in the Foundation Stage and pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.
18. The pupils' learning is good and this is the direct result of the quality of teaching. A significant feature, for example, is the way in which teachers share the objectives for lessons with pupils and refer back to them during and at the end of lessons. This helps pupils to understand what they are learning and why, and what they need to know and do to achieve more. The high quality, confident and enthusiastic teaching and management of classes contribute well to the development of pupils' learning and ensure good pace and productivity in lessons, especially in literacy and numeracy. In a few lessons where pupils spend a long time listening to the teacher, they lose concentration and become restless. At other times, teachers unintentionally limit the extent to which pupils can produce creative or extended written responses by the inappropriate use of

worksheets. This is particularly significant when the demands of the activity are insufficiently challenging for higher-attaining pupils. Consistent positive approaches to managing pupils' behaviour, by praise and encouragement, contribute to pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Support staff work effectively with lower attaining pupils, which enables them to learn well and achieve the lesson objectives.

19. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very effective. It is always at least good and often very good, enabling children to make good progress in learning and developing self-confidence. Management of behaviour is unobtrusive and largely rooted in the very good rapport teachers develop with the children.
20. Teaching in both key stages in English is good overall. All teachers implement the National Literacy Strategy successfully. Key skills are well taught which contributes to pupils' good learning. Lessons are well planned, pace is good and teachers' questions are effective in revising pupils' previous learning and challenging their thinking. Teachers share lesson objectives with pupils who work hard to achieve them.
21. Teaching in mathematics is good overall. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy to good effect and the quality of teaching and learning in these lessons is always at least good, and very good in nearly half the lessons seen, across both key stages. The good teaching reflects the good planning of class work, and group work, with good opportunities for pupils to achieve the objectives set and to explain their methods to the class. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of numeracy with clear explanations and good varied questioning which encourages all pupils to contribute.
22. In science, geography, history and physical education, teaching is good overall; in lessons it is always at least satisfactory and good or very good in most. In music, mainly provided by a specialist teacher, the teaching is always very good. There is insufficient evidence to report fully on teaching in design and technology, information and communication technology and art.
23. Teaching is very effective for pupils with special educational needs; all teachers plan effectively to take account of all levels of attainment within their class and take great care to identify and address learning difficulties. Support staff work very effectively to ensure that pupils have equal access to learning opportunities and pupils derive considerable benefit from the skills of the local education authority Learning Support Service teacher who works flexibly with individual pupils and groups to address specific learning needs.
24. Homework is set regularly. Younger children read at home which contributes significantly to their progress. In classes across both key stages there are examples of pupils, learning at home making a good contribution to their achievements. Some older pupils support their learning by visiting the public library, or using the Internet or a CD-ROM, to locate information for a topic in history, for example.

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

25. The curriculum provides pupils with an appropriate range of broad, balanced and relevant learning

experiences to promote their intellectual and academic development. The school offers a satisfactory and still developing curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Recent developments, including the adoption of new national schemes of work and planning structures, in some subjects, have yet to have their full effect. For example, recent improved provision for information and communication technology is reflected in teachers' planning for the subject across the curriculum, but there is as yet little evidence of that in lessons, pupils' books or displays. The new planning structures provide the basis for ensuring continuity and progression for pupils through the years in all subjects. This is an area of improvement since the last inspection when planning for information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education, was unsatisfactory. However, there is insufficient planning to ensure that, when pupils are taught in mixed-age groups, work always builds on what has gone before without repetition of topics.

26. The curriculum for children under five is very effective, preparing children well for Key Stage 1. All strands of the Foundation Curriculum are addressed in detail and the school has developed very effective structures for ensuring that children make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals by defining activities that not only address these, but take into account the particular needs of the children.
27. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad, balanced and relevant. It complies with all requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning and schemes of work provide for National Curriculum coverage in all subjects. Good use is made of cross-curricular planning within topics to give pupils a wide range of appropriate experiences as well as to support and develop basic skills. However, the planned curriculum is not consistently delivered in art. The effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the emphasis that the school places on them, have improved learning opportunities further. 'Booster' classes provide additional opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and understanding in mathematics and English.
28. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is well provided for both in lessons and as a result of the informal curriculum provided in assemblies and through the guidance offered to pupils. Provision for sex education and drugs awareness is met through the science curriculum and personal, social and health education for older pupils. Sex education is reinforced in Year 6 with the opportunity to see a video followed by discussion with the school nurse. The school follows the Diocesan and local authority guidelines on sex education.
29. The provision and support for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is good. The headteacher as special educational needs co-ordinator is very effective in monitoring and supporting the process by which teachers identify the specific curriculum needs of pupils with special educational needs. High quality individual education plans are well used to support planning and monitor progress through the setting of explicit and appropriate targets together with the means by which they are to be achieved. The local education authority offers additional support through the Learning Support Service, and this support is very effectively deployed to provide individual or group support for pupils with special educational needs.
30. Extra-curricular provision in the school is satisfactory, although limited at present. Those activities that are running take place after school – football twice a week, netball and Irish dancing, and are well attended by girls and boys, and enhance the provision of physical education in the school. A wider range of extra-curricular activities is planned, including a computer club using the recently

installed computer suite.

31. The school has effective links with the community and the local secondary school to which most pupils transfer. The school invites and welcomes parents and members of the community to its masses and assemblies in the school hall. People from the local community, for example the police, the school nurse, the dentist and the school crossing patrol, come in to school to speak to the children, either in assembly or in class. Pupils visit the retreat of the Sisters of Evron in Liverpool for a day to help them prepare for their first Communion. Older pupils visit the local Home for the Aged to sing carols at Christmas time. Some pupils from the local secondary school come to school to do some drama with Year 6. Year 7 teachers come to the school to meet staff and Year 6 pupils before they transfer, to provide continuity for them.

### **Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

32. The prospectus sets out a clear mission statement that commits the school to promoting the academic, spiritual and personal development of the individual in a calm and happy Christian environment. Within this, the fostering of faith through valuing the individual, promoting love and respect for God and encouraging a strong sense of community is a central focus which underpins the school's curriculum aims. The school strongly cultivates pupils' personal development with provision being good overall.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school has a high commitment to pupils' spiritual development that pervades its work, as set out in the school's mission statement, *'to promote the academic, spiritual and personal development of the individual in a calm and happy Christian environment'*. Acts of worship, including those in classrooms, promote an awareness of Deity and offer good opportunities for reflection. In a class where 'Our wishes for the future' are displayed as stars on a tree, pupils showed sensitivity, empathy and awareness of others in their wishes, such as 'I hope for world peace', 'I would like people to stop smoking' and 'I hope blind people will always have hope'. (In another class, pupils composed prayers asking God 'to help others and help them achieve' and 'to stop fighting in Israel'.)
34. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The programme for personal, social and health education, which includes circle time, offers good opportunities to explore moral dilemmas and enable pupils to develop an understanding of the process for distinguishing right from wrong. Some of these opportunities are linked to ongoing work in the curriculum. For instance, pupils in Year 5/6 class debated the issue of fox-hunting, as a follow-up to their work in literacy. Distinguishing right from wrong is reinforced by an anti-bullying policy and booklet for parents, and a good behaviour policy that all the adults in the school put into practice in a consistent and caring manner. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond. School rules are displayed prominently on corridors and in classrooms and pupils are awarded house points for keeping them and behaving well. Weekly achievement assemblies reinforce this award system, with class teachers and dinner supervisors awarding stickers for achievement and good behaviour respectively. This acts as a further incentive for pupils to work hard and behave well.
35. Provision for pupils' social development is good overall. The caring atmosphere throughout the school and the high quality of relationships support the pupils' social development very well. Children in the Foundation Stage are given very good opportunities to develop socially and this is

built on as pupils proceed through the school. Pupils behave well in assemblies. They enter and leave in an orderly manner. They listen well in assembly and in class, to each other and the teacher, and put their hands up to contribute. In class, pupils have further opportunities to develop their social skills. They work well independently in their groups, often working in pairs, either formally with a 'learning buddy' or discussing their work with their neighbour. When they read plays, they enjoy apportioning the roles themselves and reading the play together as a group. In some lessons, pupils select resources independently and confidently. However, there are insufficient opportunities for social development through participatory structures within the school. For example, there is no representative body such as a school council where pupils raise issues, make decisions and generally have a voice. This limits the opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility, (although one pupil, concerned about litter in the playground, organised volunteers from the class and raised the issue in assembly).

36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses in some aspects. Some subjects give pupils a good sense of cultures and beliefs from around the world, broadening their awareness. For example, in geography pupils learn about different countries and locations and ways of life, such as Chembakoli in India and Tokuro in Mexico. As a result of studies in religious education older pupils are able to talk knowledgeably about Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. When learning about Hinduism, pupils performed a class assembly about the story of Lord Rama and Sita, and how they overcome evil, to the rest of the school. They make 'rangoli' symmetrical patterns associated with the Hindu festival Diwali, in mathematics. In music, pupils have access to instruments and music from different cultures, but there are insufficient opportunities to learn about music and the part that it plays in human societies. In art, there are too few opportunities to support cultural or multicultural understandings. In addition, limited extra-curricular activities and visits out of school and visitors to school reduce the impact of provision for pupils' cultural development

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

37. The provision made by the school for the care and welfare of its pupils is very good. Arrangements and procedures for child protection are very good and staff are familiar with them. The headteacher is the nominated person for child protection purposes and has received appropriate training. All staff are briefed for the recognition of any signs of abuse brought into school by pupils and know how to deal with such cases. Care and support of pupils are a high priority for all staff. A good feature of this care is the 'worry box' in the vestibule which pupils can, and do, use to bring to the attention of the headteacher their personal concerns or problems.
38. The operation of the health and safety policy is monitored by the governing body, through one of its members working in conjunction with the headteacher. There is an appropriate number of qualified first-aiders on the staff. Fire drills are held regularly, some times unannounced, and evacuation times are recorded in the school office. The school's main entrance is protected by a security system operated from the school office. This is generally effective, but there is no direct line of sight, which would enable the secretary to visually monitor the entrance.
39. There are good arrangements for monitoring attendance. The local education authority's education welfare officer visits the school at regular intervals and good support is given to the headteacher and class teachers in promoting good attendance and punctuality. All absences are

accounted for and followed up where appropriate. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are especially good, as are those for the control and elimination of bullying or hostile conduct amongst pupils. The overall ethos of the school plays a significant part in this and all incidents are recorded and monitored. A small ethnic minority in the school is properly integrated. The school successfully implements its equal opportunities policy, part of which is to *'develop in all pupils, understanding of, and tolerance and respect for, the cultures and beliefs of others'*. A good example of this is the attitude of older pupils who have been learning about Hinduism in religious education. The pupils display interest and respect when discussing it. In class, pupils sit amicably in mixed gender and race groups at tables, or all together on the carpet. If any incidents of racism are reported, these are recorded and followed up, and parents are involved.

40. The school's procedures for monitoring academic attainment and progress are satisfactory and those for monitoring personal development are good. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and use this knowledge effectively in planning individual work. There are very good systems for establishing baseline levels for children entering the nursery and detailed assessment at regular intervals is very well used for monitoring progress and planning the next steps. There are good systems for recording pupils' progress in relation to numeracy objectives and this approach is being extended to literacy. Assessment of the progress of pupils with special educational needs is very effective with good use being made of the individual education plans. There are, in most classes good arrangements for feedback to pupils in lessons and at the end of the day.
41. An agreed marking policy is consistently used throughout the school and pupils are generally appreciative of class teacher's comments which, in many cases, show them the nature of any shortcomings and how to correct faulty work. Assessment is well used to set termly targets for each class, showing areas of improvement to be undertaken by each pupil in a class during that term. This provides teachers with a good basis for monitoring individual academic progress and attainment and ensuring pupils attain at a satisfactory level. However, in many foundation subjects, while there are effective systems for recording progress and an appropriate start has been made on a system for moderating assessments, these are still, in many cases, embryonic.

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

42. The partnership between parents and school is one of the strengths of the school. The relationship of mutual support works well in terms of promoting the schools' activities and programmes and in underpinning the very good attitudes shown by pupils towards the school. Parents express full confidence in the headteacher and class teachers and are pleased with the access they have to them. They make effective use of personal interviews and the regular parents meetings to ensure that they are informed about their children's work, performance and progress. There are good arrangements to ensure that parental views are taken into account in the formulation of school policies.
43. The pre-inspection meeting for parents was well attended. The views expressed were very positive and showed a high level of satisfaction with the school in all aspects of its work. A large number of voluntary and highly complimentary letters about the school were also received by inspectors along with replies to the questionnaire sent to parents. Parents are very satisfied with the communication between them and the school. Annual school reports are informative and comprehensive, there are regular informative letters and the governors' annual report and school prospectus, which fully meet requirements, are valued in terms of the information they provide. In addition, parents appreciate the daily personal contacts with staff, which enable any issues to be examined and resolved quickly.
44. Parents provide good support for their children's learning by their commitment to homework. Although, for a variety of reasons, parents provide a limited amount of in-school support, the school benefits very well from the contribution of those who do so and parents play a full role in the governing body. They also provide significant financial support for the school through the fund raising undertaken by the 'Friends of St Bernadette's'. One parent supports pupils' learning by coming in to talk to classes about Africa. A few parents come in to hear readers, or work on the computers with groups of pupils, or in other lessons. Many of the non-teaching staff who work in the school are themselves parents of children at the school. A weekly 'Stay and Play' session offered by the nursery to parents is welcomed and well used by parents not only as an opportunity to participate in the life of the school but also as an effective way to support their children's introduction to the school.

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

45. Not only has the high quality of leadership and management reported at the time of the previous inspection been maintained, but new developments in monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school ensure that these aspects of the school are now very good overall. Shortcomings in meeting statutory requirements have all been addressed and the governing body has good arrangements to ensure that any future requirements are met. Overall, management ensures that the clear educational goals are translated into policy with an agreed approach to action planning across all aspects of the school's work. However, curriculum planning for mixed age groups is insufficiently established to ensure that pupils always build on previous work without repetition.
46. The governing body is very effective in overseeing the work of the school; governors participate actively in policy-making and target setting, monitoring implementation well. In this, they are significantly aided by the detailed and informative reports prepared by the headteacher. They

have good systems for reviewing the work of the school and have a clear idea of its strengths as well as identifying areas for development. The various sub-committees undertake detailed scrutiny of finance, curriculum and other matters, and provide detailed reports of their work. Assessment information is analysed and reviewed and curriculum initiatives and spending decisions are effectively evaluated. Individual governors take an active interest in specific areas such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, working effectively with staff to promote these. The school has recently been awarded Investors in People status.

47. Governors, headteacher and staff have a shared vision for the school and assiduously promote the clearly defined values that underpin the mission statement and aims of the school. This results in an ethos in which the commitment to high achievement is very well supported by the formal and informal promotion of a caring community that reflects the Christian orientation of the school very well.
48. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very effective in enabling staff, pupils and parents to feel that they are part of this community and in developing a climate of trust within which any failure is seen as an opportunity to learn to be successful. He is highly regarded by them and the relationships he develops are instrumental in sustaining the high standing of the school in the community. Delegation is very effectively managed, and staff with subject responsibilities manage these well, including the monitoring of the teaching and planning in their subject.
49. Financial planning is very effective and clearly targeted at the school's educational objectives. The school development plan, although having a short-term focus, effectively identifies and addresses the curriculum and other needs of the school and provides a clear basis for setting the budget priorities. It is, in the context of the school, an effective planning document, which gives considerable attention to detail. The majority of the targets appropriately relate to continuing improvement in curriculum and other provision and response to external initiatives rather than major school-generated developments. It is firmly based on an analysis of needs to which all staff and other interested parties have contributed and builds on the long list of completed targets from the previous development plan. Spending is carefully monitored and there are contingency plans to deal with any surplus that arises from the uncertainties of funding that arise from government initiatives after the budget has been set. There are very good systems for financial administration, audit report recommendations have been implemented, there is an up-to-date inventory and register of business interests, and care is taken to ensure that specific grants and special educational needs funding are appropriately used. The school carries a prudent balance of around 5% of its annual budget.
50. Governors and staff have a clear understanding of the principles of best value and apply them well, particularly in terms of acquiring resources and consulting with parents, pupils and the local education authority, as well as using comparative data to compare the work of the school with those in similar circumstances. The school has adopted the Diocesan policy for performance management and ensures that the work of all staff, including senior management is effectively monitored. The school makes very effective use of new technology in its work and has invested heavily in provision for information and communication technology.
51. Staffing levels are appropriate for the number of pupils and in-service training and local education authority support have been very effectively used to ensure that there is a good level of expertise

for each subject. There are good induction procedures for new staff and the school works well with the local education authority in enabling newly qualified teachers to develop the skills they need to play a full part in the school. Classroom assistants and learning support staff are very effectively deployed to make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning. Management of special educational needs is very effectively undertaken by the headteacher as co-ordinator, and the very effective teamwork between school and local education authority support staff makes a significant contribution to the good progress that pupils with special educational needs make.

52. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, but an increase in the number of pupils has meant that the school no longer has a library in which pupils can develop research skills, and the concern about vandalism means that outdoor play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage are limited. The range and quality of resources for learning vary between subjects but they are satisfactory overall. There are shortages of resources in some history and geography topics, which have been already identified by the subject co-ordinators and funding allocated. Resources for information and communication technology are very good and those for music and physical education are much improved since the previous inspection.
53. The overall level of funding is high; the school spends more per pupil than the great majority of primary schools. However, in light of the high quality of educational provision, the very good management of resources and the high level of achievement when compared with schools in similar circumstances, the school gives good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve further the quality of education and the progress pupils make, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- improve attainment in information and communication technology by implementing the action plan to make effective use of the very good resources and ensure that the planned in-service training equips all teachers to be confident and skilled in the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum (*see paragraphs 6, 25, 113-115*);
- improve the provision for art in terms of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding by ensuring that good practice found in Key Stage 1 is effectively disseminated and plan effectively to ensure that the subject makes a sufficient contribution to pupils' cultural development (*see paragraphs 6, 29, 36, 100, 101*);
- institute formal planning, for example, a two-year cycle, to ensure that when pupils are taught in mixed age groups, there is no undue repetition of topics and that work securely builds on their previous learning (*see paragraph 25*);
- increase the opportunities for pupils to develop greater independence and to take more responsibility by encouraging more open-ended tasks and recording in lessons, by improved opportunities for independent research, for example by having access to a library, and by enabling them to contribute at an appropriate level to decision-making within the school (*see paragraphs 15, 36*).

55. In addition, the school should consider the following minor issues in its action planning:

- improvement in opportunities for Key Stage 1 pupils to experience investigations in science (*see paragraph 94*);
- wider use of music to increase pupils' cultural awareness and to give them the opportunity to develop individual skills through curricular and extra-curricular activities (*see paragraphs 36, 123*);
- providing a wider range of outdoor play opportunities for Foundation Stage children (*see paragraphs 52, 56*);
- extending the present arrangements for monitoring and moderation of assessment to cover all foundation subjects (*see paragraph 94*).

## 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	28

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	30	56	14	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	9	166
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	51

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	82

#### **English as an additional language**

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

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	94.3
National comparative data	94.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.03
National comparative data	0.1

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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	8	11	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	5	5
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	13	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (73)	74 (69)	74 (77)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	5	5
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	12	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (73)	68 (81)	74 (81)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	12	16	28

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	10
	Girls	11	11	15
	Total	17	18	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (63 )	64 (56)	89 (69)
	National	75 (70 )	72 (69)	85 (78)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	6	7
	Girls	11	10	10
	Total	13	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	46 (60)	57 (69)	61 (69)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	156
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.0
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	316,703
Total expenditure	311,723
Expenditure per pupil	2,180
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,470
Balance carried forward to next year	11,450

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	145
Number of questionnaires returned	70

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	11	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	87	13	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	91	7	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	67	23	9	0	1
The teaching is good.	94	6	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	86	13	1	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	93	6	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	94	6	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	88	10	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	91	9	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	91	9	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	22	3	0	6

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. The previous inspection found that provision for under-fives was good, with a broad and balanced curriculum that met their needs well, but there were limited outdoor play opportunities in Reception. While outdoor play facilities are still an issue as the school has frequently been the target of vandals, provision has continued to be good. The school has successfully introduced the Foundation Stage curriculum which spans the nursery and Reception classes. There is clear, unified planning with a two-year cycle of topics to ensure that children do not repeat work.
57. Teaching is good overall; it is always at least good and often very good, so that children are enabled to make good progress across the whole curriculum. Teachers plan a good range of activities that address several areas of development simultaneously and ensure that any incidental opportunities to make teaching points are not missed. The effect of this is that teaching is at the same high standard across the whole Foundation Curriculum. Activities are very orderly and teachers exercise a quiet and unobtrusive but very effective management of behaviour. They develop a very good rapport with children that is very effective in promoting their self-confidence. They use directed questioning very well to help children to explain what they have been doing and what they have learned. Arrangements to monitor children's development are very good; attainment is assessed on entry and again at the end of each year. There are very effective induction arrangements using the 'settling-in' sheets and records of progress or concerns. There is also a useful 'Profile book' which maintained jointly with the children's homes. Overall, assessment is well used to track individual progress and provide early identification of special educational needs.
58. Facilities are generally good and recently resources for literacy and mathematics have been significantly improved, particularly for the Reception class. The school plans to improve communication further by moving the Reception class next door to the Nursery, but has not yet taken this sensible step. The Nursery teacher works hard to engage the parents in the children's activities and the Thursday morning 'Stay and Play' session is very successful in achieving this.

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

59. The school is strongly committed to promoting the personal and social development of children in the Foundation Stage, many of whom arrive with poorly developed skills. They make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals, although only a minority achieve these by the age of six. From the time they arrive in the nursery, children experience calm, consistent routines that establish positive habits and enable them to participate in a wide range of activities. From the outset, children are encouraged to make choices, for example, about whether the morning greeting is to be said or sung, and activities are designed to offer opportunities to work and play with other children. They take considerable pleasure in celebrating their own and each other's birthdays and enjoy the rituals associated with this. They show an increasing ability to sustain role-play when they engage in making number 'spells' in the 'house' or play together with toys on the carpet. Older children demonstrate an ability to relate successfully in groups and respond appropriately to a range of adults. They work together to produce a 'script' to illustrate a story they have heard.

They sit together and chat while having their snacks and display increasing social confidence. They demonstrate a good attitude to work, concentrating for extended periods and treating resources with care. They take great pleasure in showing their parents what they are doing on Thursday 'Stay and Play' sessions.

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

60. Although a small number of children arrive in the nursery with appropriately developed linguistic skills, the majority have limited speaking and listening skills and have no experience of reading or writing. While in the nursery, and particularly in the Reception class, they make good progress in all of these areas, so that although standards are below those expected at the beginning of Key Stage 1, in many respects they are approaching them. Speaking and listening develops well through the consistent use of toys and other artefacts to provide a starting point for description and discussion; the youngest children identify a range of toy animals and imitate the noise they make. They listen carefully, for example, to the story of the spider who 'was too busy making her web' and make sensible contributions. They particularly enjoy joining in the repetitive refrain at the end of each page. Older children listen carefully during sessions that follow the pattern of the school's literacy strategy and repeat what they have heard. Children make good progress in developing early reading and writing skills. In the nursery, they make increasingly consistent marks that develop into early writing, with left to right orientation. As they move through the stage, they use upper and lower case letters appropriately in writing their name independently. They progress from first tracing to copying what the teacher has written. They use a variety of materials to practise making letter shapes. In the Reception class, pupils' reading skills develop well as they learn about rhyme, joining in the poem 'My Cat Likes To Hide In Boxes' and transfer the phonic knowledge they are acquiring into work on initial consonants and simple words.

### ***Mathematical development***

61. Children make good progress in understanding mathematical concepts. In the nursery, they count the number of children present and record this using a tally system. They count the number of legs on each of a range of toy animals. Higher-attaining children show knowledge of shapes; they recognise and identify a range of two dimensional figures, demonstrating this by making models of them with pasta shapes. They learn a range of words which are related to size through simple rhymes as with 'the elephant'. In the Reception class, children learn well in lessons that are modelled on the numeracy strategy used in the school. They learn to use money for shopping, adding amounts together and counting coins to check their addition. They learn both the vocabulary and the symbols associated with addition and subtraction. They use a computer to sort items according to various characteristics. Number songs and rhymes are effectively used to demonstrate and reinforce their understanding of numerical order. Children increasingly understand directional and positional language as well as sequencing skills when they make a study of 'journeys', and early data-handling skills are developed through collecting information on 'our favourite toys'. They recall the names of three dimensional objects such as cube and sphere and learn to recognise a square pyramid. By the time they reach the age of six, a minority attain at the expected level, but most do not reach this level.

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

62. Children in the Foundation Stage are well prepared for National Curriculum requirements in terms of science, design and technology, humanities and information and communication technology. They develop a range of skills and broaden their understanding well as a result of the balanced programme of activities they are offered. They learn to use tools when they cut out and assemble teddy-bear models and when they make a jack-in-the-box toy. They use a range of simple construction toys to make models and refine these as they develop. They learn the processes involved in making a cup of tea and other simple cooking tasks performing these in the right order. They use a computer mouse to select, move and order objects. They demonstrate a sense of time and order as they recite the days of the week. Overall, while some children attain at the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority attain below this level.

### ***Physical development***

63. By the time children leave the Reception class they are achieving in line with expectations in a good variety of physical skills and activities. Although poor weather limited the opportunity to see outdoor play during the inspection, children clearly use a range of toys and other equipment to extend their abilities. However, there is a lack of fixed playground equipment. In a skills activity, Reception class children showed good control when moving a ball around the hall and complying with a range of conditions. They used hands and feet effectively and showed a good awareness of the ways in which different body parts can be used to support movement. They show a well-developed awareness of space when moving about, changing direction in good time to avoid collision through being aware of how others are moving. They follow the warm-up and warm-down routines very well, taking them seriously and trying hard. They are able to undress and dress themselves with little help and this is accomplished quickly and efficiently.

### ***Creative development***

64. Children's creative skills develop well and they attain at levels in line with those expected nationally. They learn to use colour and make tissue paper collages and pasta patterns. They learn to sing, and increasingly hold a tune when they perform as a group. When older children take part in a rendering of 'We're Going On A Bear Hunt', they demonstrate skills in playing simple percussion instruments and respond to a range of hand signals which are used to indicate who should be playing and the volume required. They show an awareness of the musical elements of pulse, tempo, dynamic and timbre, although they do not have the vocabulary. In musical ability, children attain at an appropriate level by the beginning of Key Stage 1.

## **ENGLISH**

65. Although, since the time of the last inspection results have been, on occasion, above the national average, they have been below or well below the national average for the past two years. Evidence from this inspection suggests that the school is maintaining standards on a par with similar schools but below the national average. These results reflect the increased number of pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. The above average level of pupil mobility particularly for the pupils taking tests in 2000, makes it difficult to judge progress against similar schools using the improvement over Key Stage 1 results as these were substantially different pupils. Additionally, individual pupils have a disproportionate impact on averages in the tests, due

to the relatively small size of some year groups, making variations between years unreliable indicators of trends. From the evidence of individual records and scrutiny of previous work pupils enter the school with language skills that are mostly well below average and make good progress to achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave.

66. Standards achieved by the small group of seven-year-olds in the national tests in 2000, were below the national average in writing and well below in reading. However, there was an above average proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in reading. This reflects a small minority of pupils who enter the school with good literacy skills and who continue to attain at above expected levels. In comparison with similar schools results were broadly average for all aspects of English
67. Overall standards in speaking and listening are below average, though from Reception, most children begin to listen carefully to the teacher and each other. Their rate of progress is good given that many children's language skills are well below average on entry to the school. For instance, pupils in the Year 2/3 class listen attentively when clapping out accurately the number of syllables in a word, or to the reading of '*Cinderella*'. A minority of pupils listen well but contribute little and lack confidence. In a few lessons, younger pupils become restless after a time on the carpet, and so listen and contribute less. In Year 2 a majority of pupils talk competently in an informal setting, for example when talking to an adult about their reading. The majority respond effectively when the teacher asks challenging questions of individual pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils.
68. Standards observed in reading in Key Stage 1 are below average overall, which indicates that last year's test results when attainment was well below average were not typical. Within each year group there is a wide spread of attainment from above average to well below average readers. The youngest pupils repeat rhymes with expression, following the teacher and recognise initial letter sounds. By Year 2 when reading a big book together in class the majority of pupils read direct speech and any words in bold type with emphasis and appropriate expression. They do this effectively because they understand what they are reading. They also take note of punctuation such as exclamation marks and full stops and apply this in their own reading. They read with increasing confidence and can retell the story. Below average readers have less confidence, fewer strategies to use when stuck to help them, relying on memory.
69. Standards in writing in Key Stage 1 are below average. Writing is being particularly targeted for development by teachers, as the area in literacy where teacher assessments indicate that pupils are consistently achieving least well. In Year 1 the majority are able to write with spaces between words, but upper case and lower case letters are not secure, nor is the spacing between words consistent, for example when writing a book review. Above average writers show awareness of how full stops are used and write a few sentences independently. Their books show a range of writing, from news to writing instructions, a letter and book reviews, and improvement in presentation of their writing over time. By Year 2 the majority of pupils are beginning to join their handwriting. They make good progress in developing the length and structure of their stories, as when they write an account of a pantomime visit and sequence their own story accompanied by illustrations. The majority of pupils make good progress in their handwriting, the organisation of their writing, spelling and punctuation. For example, they use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them spell unfamiliar words, and split words up into syllables to help them spell longer words. Lower attaining pupils are enabled to achieve well by being well supported in class by teaching

assistants who record pupils' ideas when working in groups so they achieve their learning objectives (and read to the class what they have written together, reflecting their discussion).

70. Standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in the national tests were well below the national average in 2000 but in comparison with similar schools they were broadly average. Current pupils nearing the end of Key Stage 2 are attaining below average levels, but higher levels than the previous Year 6, where there were a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils continue to make good progress in speaking and listening. By the end of the key stage, standards are approaching those expected, although remaining below them. Pupils listen to the views of others and the majority show developing confidence as they describe their work. In the Year 3/4 class pupils listen attentively and participate eagerly, many suggesting alternative exciting verbs to engage the listener or reader, such as 'emerge' for 'appear'. In this and other classes pupils discuss their work in pairs which helps to develop their speaking and listening skills and build their confidence. Pupils also become confident speakers when presenting a class assembly, when acting as narrators in a role play, or preparing and presenting arguments, for example, for and against fox-hunting, in the Year 5/6 class.
71. Although standards in reading remain below average throughout Key Stage 2, pupils develop their reading further and make good progress. For example, two above average readers in Year 3 take over reading the story *'Hide and Shriek'* from the teacher. They read with fluency and expression without losing the momentum of the story and maintaining the attention of their audience, the rest of the class. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall with the additional support they receive. They read hesitantly with little confidence, a word at a time. They have limited strategies to help them read, for example identifying the first letter of a word and then guessing, one pupil confusing 'fall' for 'flow' and 'great' for 'giant', which shows the pupil has little idea of the sense of the story. Most pupils enjoy reading, and many read for pleasure at home. Year 6 pupils enjoy books by Enid Blyton, Jacqueline Wilson, and the Harry Potter stories for example, and discuss the differences in style and content between the authors. Some pupils visit the local library to help them with research projects in history and geography particularly, and use CD-ROMs to locate information. Activities in class, for example asking pupils to place sentences or paragraphs in a newspaper report in the order in which they make sense, increase pupils' reading ability by concentrating on the meaning.
72. All pupils make good use of the regular reading times in class, which improves their reading. They either read quietly to themselves, or read to an adult or read a play together in a group, which they enjoy, or read in pairs with pupils from another class. They have reading record books filled in by parents and carers and school staff, and older pupils have an additional one for themselves to fill in which they all use, writing comments about what they're reading, which helps them become critical readers, as well as providing a record.
73. Although standards in writing are below average in Key Stage 2, throughout the key stage a minority of higher attaining pupils show an increasing ability to create interest, suspense and curiosity in their writing. They use an increasingly wide descriptive vocabulary and variety of structures and connectives in their writing and achieve above the national average for their age. Other pupils, who achieve below the national average for their age, develop some of these features in their writing but not all. The lowest attaining pupils receiving support with spelling, punctuation, presentation and sentence structure so they achieve some of the variety in writing that

other pupils do. Pupils write for a range of purposes, including newspaper reports, poems, planning a play, a reading review, a wide variety of reports, letters, persuasive and discussion writing. For example, in the Year 3/4 class there is an 'Iron Man's Writing Workshop' with newspaper reports, some desk-top published, with headings such as 'Iron Man escapes from Iron Mountain – Newsflash!' and examples of pupils' writing of the story of Ted Hughes' *'The Iron Man'*. The contrasting styles of each show pupils' good understanding of the conventions of writing for different purposes. Pupils have evaluated their writing, which makes them more aware of their own learning and progress. Comments range from, 'I thought hard to gather ideas' to 'I used full stops and capital letters' which indicate the range of attainment within the class. All the teachers make positive comments in pupils' books, praising their efforts. However, information and communication technology is insufficiently used as a tool for drafting and revising work and pupils' skills in its use are not developed satisfactorily

74. The quality of teaching is good overall as it was at the previous inspection. There is, however, now a higher proportion of very good teaching which indicates improvement. A strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers cater for the wide spread of attainment in their classes; they vary their questioning for differently attaining pupils; they provide varied tasks, including varied levels of support, so all achieve and are challenged. Classroom teaching assistants work effectively with the teachers and encourage lower attaining pupils to listen and participate. Teachers share the learning objectives for lessons with the pupils, so pupils know what they are learning and why. Teachers return to the objectives at the end of the lesson to see if they have been achieved. Pupils explain to the class what they have been doing which demonstrates their learning. Teachers encourage pupils to work in pairs so they have opportunities to talk about their work together and support each other, which helps them to learn. Teachers use guided writing when working with groups effectively to develop the range and quality of pupils' writing. In addition, in Year 6 the teacher's comments encourage some pupils to redraft their writing, for example a letter, with suggestions for improvement, and praise where pupils have followed the advice and as a result improved the quality of their writing. The teacher in the Year 3/4 class gives tips for improvement with reference to pupils' targets which shows pupils how to improve their writing.
75. In a few instances pupils are listening to the teacher for long periods of time and young pupils particularly lose concentration and become restless, so learn less. There is no consistent approach to guided reading which takes place outside of the literacy hour in most classes. Where there is no particular focus to the guided reading session and no assessment of pupils' achievement in developing the skills and strategies they need, opportunities to improve their reading are lost.
76. Teachers provide good opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and speaking and listening skills in subjects other than English. For example, in history pupils write articles for the 'Tudor Messenger' on the destruction of the monasteries, and write a comparison of 'then and now'. Work in religious education gives them the opportunity to describe 'Things I like about myself' in the Year 4/5 class. Younger pupils discuss enthusiastically a photo of a village in Mexico in geography, and compare features of it such as the church with their own experience.
77. The co-ordinators have worked hard to ensure consistency in the termly planning of the literacy hour throughout the school, particularly in the mixed-age classes, to avoid repetition and provide continuity, with the support of the local literacy consultant. Teachers' planning now focuses on the

older-age pupils in these classes with an appropriate range for the younger pupils, so that older pupils are challenged effectively and expectations are appropriately high. They have also drawn up targets to improve speaking and listening and writing in particular throughout the school, and pupils have individual learning targets set and reviewed regularly to help them improve, in addition to class targets.

78. Recent training has added to teachers' expertise and confidence in teaching writing. After an analysis of recent test results showed that girls' results are nearer the national average than boys', the co-ordinators have recently drawn up an appropriate action plan to target the areas in literacy where boys are underachieving,
79. There is no school library, as the former library is now a classroom, and this limits pupils' knowledge of classification systems and opportunities to build independent research skills within the school. Whereas some pupils visit the local library or have access to the Internet at home to help them find out more, this does not apply to all pupils. The school is well served, however, by the local education library service that supplies boxes of books on requested topics which usefully supplement the school's own supply in each classroom.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. The previous inspection report found that pupils made satisfactory progress to achieve in line with national expectations in both key stages. Although current attainment in mathematics is significantly below the national average at both key stages, pupils make good progress from a low base to achieve well by the end of Key Stage 2 with attainment above average for schools in similar circumstances. When pupils' results are compared with the standards they achieved in tests at age seven, they are seen to have made good progress. This represents a satisfactory level of improvement. There are marked fluctuations in results at both key stages over time, so that the pattern is erratic, reflecting the disproportionate effect of a few pupils, for example, numbers with special educational needs on a small cohort. There is, therefore, no reliable indicator of an overall trend. During the inspection, in most lessons, pupils were attaining below expected levels, reflecting last year's test results but pupils in Year 6 were achieving broadly in line with expectations.
81. The overall attainment of pupils in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 is below the national average and this is confirmed by inspection. In 2000, results were lower: the number of pupils attaining Level 2 was well below average, while the number attaining higher levels is below average. Comparative data for national test results show a decline since the previous inspection in relation to the national average. In comparison with similar schools, results are currently average across all attainment targets. Gender comparisons of average test scores show girls achieving better than boys, being very close to the national average, while boys attain well below average levels. The targets set by the school for attainment were met last year. Further analysis of the results by the school indicates that the weakest areas are in numeracy skills and knowledge of shape space and measure, but pupils demonstrate strengths in using and applying mathematics
82. Progress in Key Stage 1 is good overall, particularly in terms of numeracy. The very good preparation now being provided in the Reception class enables teaching to build effectively on developing skills and knowledge. The youngest pupils reinforce their mathematical vocabulary

through mental and practical work. In lessons, they use number 'fans' successfully to provide answers to mental arithmetic questions and use various pieces of apparatus such as an abacus or a number line to check mental calculations. They use their knowledge of number bonds to 10 to fill in missing digits in addition or subtraction sentences learning to recognise and use addition and subtraction signs. Higher-attaining pupils use a number line to perform operations on numbers up to 99. They learn to rank objects in order according to size using non-standard units to measure quantities.

83. By the end of the key stage, pupils identify tens and units in sums, construct and read simple charts which represent data they have collected and identify odd and even numbers and a range of three dimensional shapes. They recognise coins and perform calculations involving small sums of money. They understand simple multiplication and measure in standard units such as centimetres. They use mathematical language to describe movement as when they read and then design a treasure map on squared paper. They have a satisfactory knowledge of reflective symmetry and identify axes of symmetry on simple shapes.
84. At Key Stage 2, results have fluctuated over time, but there is, overall, a significant improvement over test results at Key Stage 1. There was a below average proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 in 2000 but that proportion attaining Level 5 was in line with the average. Although pupils are still attaining below the national average overall, the shortfall is less, and, in comparison with similar schools, attainment is above average. Attainment is below the national average for pupils attaining Level 4 but in line with the national average for those attaining Level 5. Again gender comparisons show girls attaining better than boys; girls attain at above-average levels while boys continue to attain below them. However, the relative position of boys has improved over time. The targets set for last year were not met in terms of pupils attaining Level 4, but the number attaining Level 5 was higher than the target set. Again analysis shows weaknesses in numeracy skills and knowledge of shape, space and measure, but strengths in using and applying mathematics.
85. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils use a number ladder to reinforce their understanding of subtraction. They practise addition by grouping, adding two-digit numbers together. They round numbers up or down. They understand a range of metric measures and calculate the perimeter of plane figures. They reliably read a clock and calculate change when shopping. Higher-attaining pupils learn their multiplication tables for 2, 5 and 10 and derive doubles of large numbers through their knowledge of multiples of components (e.g.  $60 \times 2 = [6+6] \times 10 = 120$ ). They learn a range of words to describe the process of multiplication. As they move through the key stage, they acquire an understanding of place value, inverse operations (e.g. adding/subtracting) and learn to divide by a single digit. They handle larger numbers, developing and refining methods for column subtraction of whole numbers including partition and decomposition and check their answers using suitable apparatus including calculators. They estimate distances and make an appropriate choice of unit when measuring. Data handling skills are developed when they use graphs to record the weight of waste materials collected.
86. By the end of the key stage, pupils know multiplication tables to 10, and perform mental calculations using the four rules of number. They understand and use the process of long multiplication. They select from their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems and undertake extended investigations. They work with simple, vulgar, improper and decimal fractions and show understanding of the relationship between them. Higher-attaining pupils work with co-

ordinates and understand place value with decimals. They recognise and derive equivalent fractions and simplify calculations by identifying common factors and reducing fractions.

87. In both key stages, pupils are making good progress in numeracy, albeit while attaining at below expected levels, largely as a result of the emphasis placed on it in the school. Good foundations are laid in the Reception class and the regular, well-constructed numeracy lessons ensure that these are properly built on. Good opportunities to develop and employ their developing skills are planned for in cross-curricular work and these skills are effectively used. All groups of pupils make similar levels of progress as a result of the planning for different levels of attainment that all teachers undertake. This includes pupils with special educational needs who make good progress as a result of well-targeted support.
88. Pupils respond well to mathematics lessons, they listen carefully and try hard to complete their work. They show a lively interest in the subject so that, even at the end of a long day, pupils in Year 6 were happy to stay beyond home time to finish an exercise in 'code-cracking'. In oral work, pupils compete to answer questions and demonstrate their recall of previous learning. They make good efforts to maintain the standard of presentation that teachers insist upon and undertake homework and corrections willingly. Behaviour is always good and often very good. This enables lessons to proceed very smoothly and contributes well to pupils' achievement. In lessons there is a very good working atmosphere with a constant buzz of task-related discussion by which pupils support one another well in group work.
89. Teaching in mathematics is good overall; it is always at least good and often very good. This reflects the pattern reported at the previous inspection. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and plan very effectively to ensure that all pupils benefit. High expectations are demonstrated by the choice of numeracy objectives related to the higher age group when planning for mixed-age classes. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and apply this very effectively. This has adequately addressed the issue of mental arithmetic and recall strategies raised by the previous report. Within lessons, oral assessment and feedback are very effective in keeping pupils on track and the marking in books is helpful and usually indicates the way forward. Management of pupils, based on very good relationships and a consistently positive approach is very effective and lessons have good pace so that time is well used. This is enhanced by the sense of urgency created by imposing and adhering to deadlines for tasks. Teachers make very good use of resources, including issuing pupils with their own white boards and using the overhead projector very effectively for demonstrations.
90. Planning for mathematics ensures that there is an appropriate balance between the attainment targets within the National Curriculum. While the majority of dedicated mathematics lessons focus on aspects of numeracy, teachers plan very effectively to cover other aspects in cross-curricular tasks. As a result pupils experience real-life use of data handling in geography and science and develop the language of place and direction in physical education, including dance. Other areas are supported when pupils draw time lines of different periods, starting with the pupil's own life, and explore symmetrical patterns in artefacts from Islamic and Hindu religious traditions. There are appropriate arrangements for assessment including structure for moderation to ensure that teachers apply the same standards. There are numeracy record sheets containing the numeracy objectives for each year. Medium term objectives for numeracy are kept on individual sheets along with any other standardised test results to provide records of progress.

91. Arrangements for the management of the subject are good. The subject is given a high priority by governors and staff, and good use is made of opportunities for in-service training. Teaching and learning is monitored regularly by the co-ordinator and the headteacher and the results of national tests are analysed and evaluated. Since the last inspection the numeracy strategy has been very effectively implemented and the action plan for the subject indicates a commitment to continuing improvement through addressing areas of relative weakness. Resources are sufficient and well managed, although information and communication technology is insufficiently used while teachers await training. This was an action point from the previous inspection. Overall, resources provide satisfactory support for standards.

## **SCIENCE**

92. The previous inspection report indicated that standards of attainment at the end of both key stages were average and that pupils made satisfactory progress. Although standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are lower than those reported at the last inspection, being below the national average, assessment information shows that pupils make satisfactory progress from a low base during their time in Key Stage 1. They make good progress in Key Stage 2 and achieve well, attaining above the average for similar schools.
93. There are no national tests for seven year olds in science, but the teacher's own assessments in 2000, indicated that attainment was well below the national average and below the average compared to schools of similar backgrounds. However, the numbers of pupils assessed as attaining Level 3 in science was above the national average and well above the average when compared to schools with similar backgrounds. Although this reflects a decline in results since the previous inspection, the small number of pupils in the year group means that differences may not be significant.
94. By the age of seven, pupils are beginning, with support, to write up an investigation on worksheets prepared by the teacher; for example the effect on materials when heated and cooled. However, many pupils' understanding and use of technical language are very limited. Very few have moved on to a higher level in their understanding of the reversibility of some changes in materials. Most pupils need support to conduct a simple experiment and have little understanding of how to make a test fair or to suggest ideas that can be tested. There is limited opportunity for the experimental and investigative science necessary to develop understanding for pupils at this key stage. This was a weakness across the whole subject at the time of the last inspection, which has now been partially addressed. The examination of pupils' work over the past year shows insufficient opportunities for them to predict, plan and investigate ideas themselves. Standards currently being attained are below those expected for seven year old pupils.
95. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment in 2000 were below the national average but above average compared to similar schools. Boys achieved at levels that were lower than those for girls in the school and those for boys nationally. The standards of the present pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are approaching the levels expected for eleven year olds in science.
96. By the age of eleven, pupils are able to record observations and measurements and present their findings in a line graph; for example the amount of sugar that will dissolve in different amounts of

water. They can use scientific words such as evaporation and condensation to describe changes to materials. Pupils understand the life processes of living things and their environment. In one lesson pupils were able to demonstrate their understanding of food chains, following a visit to local woodland.

97. The quality of teaching is good overall; it is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2 where some very good teaching is seen. This is in line with that previously reported, although there is now a higher proportion of very good teaching in Key Stage 2. An examination of pupils' work in Key Stage 1 does not reflect the satisfactory teaching seen during the week of the inspection. This work often reflects an undue reliance on worksheets and a lack of suitably matched work for the differing abilities within the class. The progress and learning of pupils in Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide appropriate activities. Their questioning skills are good; this was particularly evident in the Year 5/6 class. The management and control of all lessons are good and relationships with pupils are positive and friendly. Pupils sustain good levels of concentration and are interested in their work. They work together well, offering each other support when appropriate.
98. The school has appropriate plans to develop teachers' subject knowledge further through a programme of training with the focus particularly on scientific investigation and enquiry. At the time of the last inspection there was little evidence of the use of information and communication technology in science. This is still an area for development, recognised and identified in the school development plan for this year.
99. The school follows an appropriate curriculum that is generally sufficient to provide for continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The management of the subject is satisfactory and is having a positive impact on provision. Planning is monitored termly by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. She is clear about what needs to be done and has produced an action plan that identifies areas for development. There is, however, no secure planning to ensure that pupils in mixed aged classes do not repeat or miss areas of the curriculum as they move up through the school. New systems of assessment are in place, which provide a useful record of what children have learnt but there is not always sufficient detail in teachers' day-to-day assessment to plan the next steps for individual pupils. The quality of marking is variable and does not always address the objectives for the lesson. There are sufficient resources, which are available to all teachers.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

100. Too few lessons were seen and there was too little first-hand evidence for a full range of judgements to be made about teaching and learning. Limited evidence from work in other subjects and from scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that standards are below expectations overall although. There is good quality work in at least one Key Stage 1 class. Overall improvement in art since the last inspection, when progress was judged satisfactory at both key stages has been unsatisfactory. Development in this subject has been hampered by the extended absence through illness of the co-ordinator and overall school resources have been directed towards other subjects rather than improvements in art. There is an appropriate policy supporting an approach to the subject, which is largely seen as a cross-curricular activity. There are some examples of planning for art and design within topics, as for example with Islamic patterns, but this planning is not firmly embedded in teachers' approaches to topic work. There is very little use of information and communication technology as a tool for research or for developing pupils' awareness of form and colour.
101. The quality of the two displays in the corridors is good and the development of art diaries seen in Year 1 provides a useful means of assessing progress. The co-ordinator, who is very enthusiastic about her subject, has developed an appropriate action plan for implementation on her return to school. This includes the development of staff expertise through training, and the provision of art as an extra-curricular activity. At present, although there are examples of work by celebrated artists around the school, these are not used to promote pupils' understanding and awareness, and the subject makes an insufficient contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

102. Too few lessons were seen to make judgements about teaching and learning in design and technology. The subject is planned to ensure that there is a sufficient time spread over each key stage, usually related to cross-curricular topics. Records of work and artefacts made recently by pupils indicate that skills in making increase satisfactorily as pupils move through the school and are in line with expectations. Discussions with Year 6 pupils about their work indicates that design skills develop satisfactorily and are broadly in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This reflects the standards in the previous report.
103. Key Stage 1 pupils have made a range of stick puppets representing different characters and are designing and making a wheeled vehicle. They have had two food technology activities last term, making fruit salad and a chocolate cake. Year 3/4 pupils combined their ideas to design and make a junk model of the Iron Man, to illustrate the story they have been reading. By the end of the key stage, pupils design and make a variety of musical instruments using waste materials, which can be shaken, struck or strummed, and evaluate the outcome of their planning. They describe the process they have used, in particular, how their plans were revised during construction and show and explain their evaluation sheets. Design theory is effectively covered as when Year 2 pupils explore the story of *'Mrs Armitage on Wheels'*. Pupils show good skills in identifying solutions to design problems, recognising that while it is possible to adopt an incremental approach, building on a basic design as needs present themselves, there is a risk that the resulting complicated structure means that the original design brief is no longer met.

104. There has been good improvement in the provision for design and technology since the last inspection. At that time, arrangements were unsatisfactory, as there was no policy or scheme of work. These shortcomings have been remedied; the school follows a nationally recognised programme and assessment is appropriately linked to the National Curriculum. There are appropriate arrangements to moderate assessments at the end of each project. Planning is designed to provide an appropriate balance between focussed and open-ended tasks. Resources are sufficient for the current programme, but there are still limited opportunities for pupils to work with resistant materials. The subject is effectively managed by the co-ordinator who monitors the cross-curricular planning and draws on the information provided through the headteacher's observations to monitor teaching.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105. In geography, standards are satisfactory overall and broadly in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Achievement is better in acquiring knowledge and understanding than in the development of skills over time. The very recent adoption of a new national scheme of work is being trialled by staff. It has yet to have its full effect in terms of providing progress and continuity across year groups. This is particularly needed with mixed year group classes, where the groups do not remain the same from one year to the next, due to fluctuating numbers in year cohorts. Planning needs to ensure that pupils in mixed year group classes always build effectively on previous learning without repetition.

106. Pupils in Year 1 learn about the school locality by discussing in pairs their route from home to school and extend their knowledge beyond the locality in Year 2 by following Barnaby Bear on his travels to Spain, with maps showing his route from Stockport. They increase their geographic understanding by identifying natural as opposed to people-made features of the village Tocuaro in Mexico. They increase their awareness of different environments by drawing comparisons between Tocuaro and Brinnington. In the Year 3/4 class, pupils draw further comparisons between their locality and village life, in India. They learn about the human features effectively by role playing the life of a young person in the contrasting environments. Years 4 and 5 pupils use appropriate methods to collate and record information of a survey of pupils' modes of transport, but there is little evidence of the teaching of geographical skills. In Year 5/6 the majority of pupils understand the water cycle and use some appropriate terms such as condensation, while a minority find it difficult to explain and look to their peers for support. Pupils' books show a wide range of writing and diagrams about water, including graphs and bar charts (done independently) of the average rainfall in England and Wales, a concept map of what the pupils know about the use of water, a map of the water supply round the school, about clean and dirty water and the consequences. Pupils are keen to talk about geography and what they have found out and learnt.

107. Teaching in geography is good overall ranging from satisfactory to very good. This is an improvement at Key Stage 1, where it was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Where teaching is good or better, teachers create and maintain a high level of interest in the subject and make good use of available resources. Planning and preparation are good, as is presentation by teachers. Pupils participate well, for example, when debating the merits or otherwise of walking versus using transport. Teachers make good use of the plenary at the end of the lesson to reinforce the learning that has taken place and prepare pupils for the next step. Where teaching is not as effective, the pace of the lesson slows, the objectives of the lesson are

limited or pupils spend a long time listening. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, for example, in the Year 4/5 class, when pupils follow guided instructions about how to collect waste in school and report back to the class.

108. There is an effective scheme of work in place that all teachers follow. The school is trialling a new national scheme that staff will review later in the school year. Management of the subject is good overall. The recently appointed co-ordinator has audited the resources in light of the topics in the new scheme and has identified areas of shortage. This was a shortcoming at the time of the previous inspection. There is no central storage space for geography, but cupboards in classrooms are sufficient. The school recognises the need for additional resources, and has allocated an additional budget for this year. New resources, such as the large photos of Tocuaro village in Mexico, add greatly to learning opportunities for pupils in Year 2 and increase their enjoyment. The co-ordinator is purchasing atlases and Ordnance Survey workbooks for use in Key Stage 2 that will improve the opportunities to develop pupils' geographical enquiry skills.

## **HISTORY**

109. In history, pupils achieve satisfactory standards both in knowledge and understanding and in the development of skills over time. This is consistent with the findings of the previous inspection. As in geography, the very recent adoption of a new national scheme of work has yet to have its full effect in terms of providing progress and continuity across year groups and planning does not ensure that pupils in mixed year group classes always build effectively on previous learning without repetition.
110. By the age of seven pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of events in the past by looking at them through the eyes of famous people living at the time. For example, when learning about the Great Fire of London, they find out about the concerns of the diarist Samuel Pepys. The majority of pupils then write their own appropriate account as Samuel Pepys, planning to escape the fire. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their understanding of the past and the changes that take place over time when they compare aspects of life in the time of the Anglo Saxons and the present in Years 3 and 4. This is extended in Years 5/6 when pupils discuss the changes that have taken place in religion, climate, population and political systems in Ancient Egypt and present day Egypt. They use their research skills well to discover facts and figures about Egypt, such as the Aswan Dam, irrigation, Tutankhamun, farming and food, which they put to good use in the class discussion of the changes. The majority use historical vocabulary appropriately, such as the terms BC and AD, primary and secondary sources, several pupils describing the distinction between the latter as 'first hand and replica'. Pupils' opportunities to investigate different interpretations of the same event are underdeveloped.
111. Teaching in history is good. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection where it was found to be satisfactory. Where teaching is most effective teachers probe pupils' understanding and successfully elicit expanded answers. They use any opportunity to reinforce pupils' learning and extend their historical understanding, and use existing resources well to create interest. They share objectives for the lesson with pupils and check if they have achieved them at the end of the lesson so pupils are clear about teachers' expectations. Where teaching is not as effective, the demands of the activity are not sufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils, and the pictorial sources not of sufficient quality and clarity, so concentration and pace, hence

learning, suffers. In one lesson the success of the activity is hindered by the lack of sufficient resources, which limits pupils' opportunities to find out more. There are good cross-curricular links with literacy in particular, with pupils having opportunities to develop their research skills, for example on Roman artefacts, and write newspaper reports, for instance on the dissolution of the monasteries when studying the Tudors.

112. The school is trialling a new national scheme this year and is delivering the topics chronologically. Staff will review the scheme and this arrangement later in the school year. Management of the subject is effective and improving. The recently appointed co-ordinator has audited the resources in light of the topics in the new scheme and has identified areas of shortage. At the moment, lack of appropriate and sufficient resources and artefacts for the new schemes of work reduce opportunities for learning, as in Year 5/6 lesson when learning about life in Roman times with limited artefacts and secondary sources of evidence. There is no central storage space for history. Resources are kept in cupboards in classrooms. The school recognises the need for additional resources to deliver the history curriculum effectively, and has allocated an additional budget for this year. The co-ordinator is purchasing artefacts for the Victorian period and Greek and Roman Britain, which will improve the opportunities for pupils to develop their historical skills in these topics.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

113. There was no teaching of information and communication technology during the inspection and very little first-hand evidence to allow a judgement to be made on the quality of teaching throughout the school. The absence of teaching and limited work across the curriculum contribute significantly to the unsatisfactory standards in the subject. Key stage 1 pupils use the computer for simple ordering and classifying activities and there is increasing use of word-processing to present work as pupils move through the school. There are limited opportunities for control although the basis for programming the movement of a 'turtle' is effectively taught as part of a mathematics lesson in Year 2. Pupils use simple data-handling programs in mathematics and geography to present the results of surveys and other data they have collected. From observations of these activities and scrutiny of finished work, pupils are attaining below the levels expected.
114. Discussions with staff and children reveal that those pupils who have expertise in the subject have mostly developed this at home rather than at school. Even these pupils have low attainment in terms of National Curriculum criteria. Since the last inspection there have been no improvements in attainment and progress. However, access to computers is beginning to improve significantly with the recent installation of the computer suite and appropriate software.
115. Management of the subject is satisfactory and improving. There has been a significant delay in implementing planned curriculum improvements partly because the information and communication technology suite has only recently been completed and partly while staff await the training which is offered to all schools. The co-ordinator has identified the staff's training needs and has organised a programme of training to develop individual teacher's skills and subject knowledge. He has also begun to develop a useful portfolio of levelled work for assessment purposes. As pupils' skills improve through the school, a nationally recognised scheme of work will be fully introduced. In the near future, each pupil will have an e-mail address and plans include curriculum links with all subjects and use of the Internet. The school is now well placed to make the planned

improvements and the subject has been identified as a priority for development in this year's school improvement plan.

## MUSIC

116. There has been significant improvement in the provision for music, described as 'under-developed' at the time of the previous inspection, when there was insufficient evidence to judge teaching or standards. There is now an appropriate scheme of work, and pupils receive teaching that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Much of this improvement is recent, however, and the effects have not worked through the school. As a result, while pupils in Key Stage 1 are attaining in line with expectations, there are still significant gaps in the knowledge and skills of Key Stage 2 pupils so that, overall, they are attaining below national expectations. The current programme, therefore, is based on ensuring that pupils are enabled to build on secure foundations across the full range of the subject by following a similar programme in each year, adapted to provide challenge and extension for older pupils.
117. This term's programme centres on the musical elements of rhythm, pulse, dynamic and pitch. Year 1 pupils clap the rhythm of their names and pantomime titles. They repeat short patterns, identifying simple repeated patterns and have learned that different pulses are appropriate to represent different activities. They use their voices in different ways to express moods and feelings, following simple musical instructions and discuss ways in which instruments could be used.
118. Year 3/4 pupils extend their knowledge as they divide into three groups to clap an ostinato against the pulse and rhythm of the song *'I'm A Magician With A Cat In My Hat'*. They learn to recognise standard notation, clap the rhythm from crotchets and quavers and indicate how the names of famous people would be recorded. When singing unaccompanied, they have good regard for pitch. They listen to and appraise the pulse of Brubeck's *'Unsquare Dance'*, identify the instruments used and comment on the mood of the music, giving reasons for their views. When listening to Dionne Warwick's *'Walk on by'*, they identify the rhythm and show how the stressed words relate to it.
119. By the end of the key stage, pupils are familiar with the names of the musical elements and use these to describe a piece of music. They learn the term 'syncopation' and recognise it in music. They repeat unaccompanied singing with good accuracy and secure pitch, with figures of increasing length as in *'The carnival is here'*, accompanying their singing with rhythmic hand movements. They identify the rhythm associated with each word and record it on the board, clapping the rhythm of the song without actually singing it. In the work actually seen, pupils were attaining at an appropriate level for their age.
120. Pupils respond very well in music lessons. They enter into activities with great enthusiasm but show an appropriate self-discipline in responding to instructions. They are willing to attempt new challenges and are supportive of each other's individual efforts. They listen carefully to the music they are offered and concentrate well on identifying and isolating the aspect that they are examining. Behaviour is very good and this contributes significantly to the very good pace of learning in lessons, which in turn has a very positive impact on standards.

121. Teaching is always very good; much of it is undertaken by a peripatetic specialist musician who has an excellent understanding of the subject and a very good rapport with pupils. This enables her to take pupils to a high pitch of excitement and bring them down again simply through the use of musical language without use of any other control language. There are well established routines which pupils enjoy and are very familiar with; the use of such consistent rhythmic phrases as 'Listen to the rhythm of the words' is very effective in underlining the emphasis on and relative length of sounds. During lessons, oral assessment and feedback are well used to keep pupils moving forward.
122. There is now a policy and an appropriate scheme of work for music that aims to address previous shortcomings as rapidly as possible. Assessment structures are still being developed, but there is as yet no recorded evidence, for example of audio tapes or written scores of composition. Pupils in Year 6 have made musical instruments in a design and technology project, but these are not actually used. Co-ordination arrangements are relatively recent and are effective. Resources are sufficient; there is a good range of tuned and untuned percussion including instruments representing other cultural traditions.
123. Pupils have the opportunity to sing in assembly, which they generally do with enthusiasm, but there are few other structured opportunities for them to develop or display skills outside lessons. At various times in the year a choir is formed to perform sacred music, but there is no school choir as such, nor do pupils have the opportunity to learn an instrument such as the recorder or guitar. Good use is made of recordings of classical music to promote a reflective ethos in the school vestibule, and at the beginning of assembly, but there is no planning to ensure that pupils' attention is drawn to the music itself or the wide range of composers represented. While pupils in Year 6 have experienced Indian music as part of their exploration of the celebration of Divali, there is insufficient use of music to promote cultural development including their knowledge and appreciation of a range of cultural traditions.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

124. There has been significant improvement in important areas of physical education, which was identified as a weak area in the previous report. Although progress was satisfactory, there was no policy or scheme of work and National Curriculum requirements were not met in terms of dance or outdoor pursuits. In addition, there was unsatisfactory teaching and learning largely as a result of unsatisfactory listening skills and a failure to challenge unsatisfactory behaviour. These shortcomings have been comprehensively addressed so that the subject is now making an effective contribution to the curriculum of the school. At the end of each key stage, pupils attain in line with expectations and in swimming, many pupils attain above these. Boys and girls achieve equally well and teaching promotes this equality well. The previous inspection found insufficient evidence to judge standards at the end of Key Stage 2, but standards were in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1.
125. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in dance lessons as they follow instructions well and move appropriately to the beat of the music. They find space, demonstrate changes of pace and develop individual movements. They evaluate their own and others' performances and build on each other's ideas well. They work together in a group and show confidence in demonstrating their work.

126. Key Stage 2 pupils develop a range of skills for use in team games as they practise ways of travelling with a ball, keeping control and distributing it accurately. They take the warm-up activities seriously and demonstrate a good knowledge of the reasons why it is necessary to ensure that muscles remain warm as well as explaining the effect that exercise has on the human body. They work together in small groups developing and improving passing skills and translate these skills into simple relay games. They are aware of the targets for each lesson and focus appropriately on them. When playing games they show an awareness of the need for rules and accept the need to obey them.
127. Pupils enjoy their lessons in this subject and take the trouble to dress appropriately. They listen well to instructions and try hard to carry them out. Higher-attaining pupils offer support and advice to those members of their group who find the tasks more difficult. In groups, pupils show varying degrees of independence and leadership skills but their problem solving and organisational skills are low. They behave well and move quickly from one activity to another so that a good pace is maintained.
128. Teaching in physical education is good overall; it is always at least good and very good at times. This is an improvement in Key Stage 1 over that found by the previous inspection where, although it was satisfactory overall, some unsatisfactory teaching was found. No judgement was previously made of teaching in Key Stage 2. Teachers have a secure understanding of what they wish to achieve and present short and medium term targets consistently throughout lessons. They model skills well for pupils to copy and use praise and positive approaches to class management very effectively. Lessons are well planned to develop skills progressively and to employ these in an end purpose such as a competitive team game. Oral assessment and feedback are very well used to enhance the performance of higher-attaining pupils and to support those with special educational needs.
129. The curriculum is well planned within an overall scheme and takes good account of attainment levels and the resources available. All aspects of the National Curriculum are addressed and there is a sensible structure for assessing pupils' progress through recording major developments. The subject is effectively co-ordinated and the skills and knowledge of class teachers are monitored so that in-service training can be appropriately targeted. Although the school does not have any large fixed apparatus, resources, including those ordered and awaited are sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Physical education is well supported through extra-curricular activities which include regular football and netball training, basketball coaching, involving a member of the 'Manchester Giants' and Irish dancing.