

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Pius X R.C. Primary School
Middlesborough

LEA area : Middlesborough

Unique Reference Number : 111718

Headteacher : Miss P Keeley

Reporting inspector : Stuart Dobson

Dates of inspection : 16 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707087

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Amersham Road Park End Middlesbrough TS3 7HD
Telephone number:	01642 314453
Fax number:	01642 314453
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Father D White
Date of previous inspection:	7th October 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Stuart Dobson, RgI	Science	Leadership and management Efficiency Teaching Attainment and Progress Equality of Opportunity Characteristics
M Manning, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, Behaviour and Personal Development Attendance Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare Partnership with Parents and the Community Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources
M Mann	History Art Music	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education
A Smithers	Mathematics Design Technology	Curriculum and Assessment Children under five
J Manning	English Geography Information and Communications Technology Physical Education	Special Educational Needs

The inspection contractor was:

Glenside Education
3 Middlefield Close
Weaverthorpe
Malton
North Yorkshire

01944 738266

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Supports good progress for the vast majority of pupils in English, mathematics and science.
- Supports pupils with special educational needs well, enabling them to reach their potential in many areas.
- Helps pupils to develop good attitudes to their work, their responsibilities, other people and importantly, helps them feel positive about themselves.
- Achieves a very good standard of behaviour and promotes very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils know that the adults in school have high expectation of them and they respond well.
- The teaching is of a consistently good standard with many lessons, especially in Key Stage 2, being very good.
- Makes very good provision for pupils' moral development and good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils learn right from wrong and base their good behaviour on this understanding.
- Has a good partnership with parents and the community including and beyond the Roman Catholic community of the area.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Insufficient emphasis is placed on pupils' spoken language, with the result that many of the pupils are not able to construct sentences well or speak fluently or persuasively about their ideas and feelings. The nursery provides too little adult intervention into child-led activities and in the reception class, too little emphasis is placed on discussion. In the rest of school, opportunities for structured discussion are often missed.
- The standards achieved in information and communications technology are lower than expected for pupils of this age. The school has very recently acquired the resources to improve this situation, but staff have not yet had the opportunity to develop good strategies to give pupils the best learning experiences. Teachers do not use all of the technology available.
- The current organisation of the school timetable leaves teachers with short time gaps to fill, often, but not always, at the beginning of the school day. Mathematics and English lessons are often unnecessarily extended to fill the time. Pupils make less progress when this happens.
- The outdoor area for children under five years old is not appropriately equipped to meet children's needs in all areas of learning.
- Written plans for school development are for one year only, though the headteacher and the Chair of Governors know generally how the school is to develop. The lack of formal planning beyond the current year means that there is no clear or shared view about the priorities of the school or the issues which are to be addressed.

The above five items will form the basis of the governor's action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of children at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress overall since the last inspection. Most of this progress has occurred since January of 1998, following an interim visit from the OFSTED improvement team.

The management structure of the school has undergone significant development. The subject co-ordinators have a clear view of how their role supports school improvement and mostly, they undertake their duties effectively. Their audit and review of their subjects contributes significantly to school development planning. The Governors role has also changed. They systematically monitor the quality of education. The role of the Headteacher has been clarified. Whilst progress on these issues has been good in the last two years, there a

good capacity to improve more rigorously and more rapidly.

Satisfactory progress has been made in developing a wider range of teaching strategies. The staff teach effectively following the guidance of the national strategies for both literacy and numeracy. They now offer many more opportunities for investigation and other practical work. However, they have not developed ways of encouraging and supporting discussion and this element remains a key issue for development.

Good progress has been made on developing a better-balanced curriculum. Pupils experience all of the subjects of the National Curriculum and mostly achieve appropriate levels in them. Creative and aesthetic learning is supported well through the art and music programmes which the school has developed. Personal and social education is now good.

Good match of work to individual pupil's needs in most of the classes has improved the quality of education for the higher attaining pupils. School results in national tests indicate that many more pupils are now achieving higher levels.

Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E
English	C	A		
Mathematics	D	B		
Science	C	A		

The school results in all three subjects are fairly consistent over the last four years. Despite many pupils beginning school with levels lower than expected, each year the school manages to get most pupils to the nationally expected levels. In the last year, closer attention to the needs of the higher attaining pupils has raised the number of pupils reaching higher levels in all three subjects. The fall in the overall numbers of pupils reaching nationally expected levels in mathematics was unusual in 1999 and is something which the school is now working to address. Standards in information and communications technology are below those expected nationally.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good
Science	Not reported	Good	Good
Information technology	Not reported	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Religious education	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
Other subjects	Good	Good	Good

There is some variation in the overall quality of teaching between the various parts of the school. The teaching of children under five years old is a mixture of satisfactory and good but is good overall. The quality of teaching is good overall at Key Stage 1, and a mixture of satisfactory, good and very good in Key Stage 2 but judged good overall. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour is consistently very good. The staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the pupils do them credit in class and in less closely supervised situations at break and lunch times. Within their capabilities, pupils with behavioural difficulties behave well as they are closely monitored.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. The main concern is with pupils arriving shortly after the start of the school day. This interrupts lessons for all pupils and slows the progress of those who come late. Similarly, parent arriving too early to collect children from the nursery interrupt the learning of all children.
Ethos*	The ethos is good. Pupils understand that they come to school to work but they also enjoy learning.
Leadership and management	Leadership and management are satisfactory. The issues of the last report have been addressed. Good management systems have been introduced to improve the quality of education. In particular, the role of the co-ordinators has been developed and is becoming increasingly effective. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have a good awareness of school issues and have styles of leadership which complement one another.
Curriculum	A broad curriculum is provided covering all of the subjects of the National Curriculum. In the last two years, the school has produced a better balanced curriculum from which pupils now benefit. There is only a limited range of extra-curricular activities.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons and in the withdrawal sessions which are organised for them. Teachers have a good understanding of the support needed for pupils in their classes.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision is good overall. Very good moral education is provided and this has a very significant impact on pupils' behaviour and general demeanour. The provision for social, cultural and spiritual education is good. Pupils learn a lot about their own culture, but opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures are not fully developed.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school is resourced well for most of the subjects, including Information and Communications Technology, though most of the hardware is very new. There are ample teaching spaces. The outdoor area for children under five years old is not well resourced.
Value for money	A comparison of standards on entry to the achievement of the pupils on leaving, indicates that the school gives good value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils with special educational needs are helped greatly.• Parents feel encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school• Most parents think their children like coming to school.• Almost all parents feel that the school supports positive values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A number of parents are disappointed that the school does not encourage pupils to get involved in more than their daily lessons.

The inspection team can endorse the predominantly positive views of the parents. The school does offer some extra curricular activities from time to time and when these occur they are well supported. At the current time, the range of activities to involve children in more than their lessons is very limited.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve standards further, the headteacher and governing body should:

1. Raise attainment in pupils' speaking skills by;
 - a) providing more structured opportunities for children in the nursery to talk about their activities with adults (*paragraphs 37, 83 and 86*)
 - b) providing even more chances for children to use their growing vocabulary during activities in the reception class (*paragraph 86*)
 - c) providing many more opportunities for pupils to engage in collaborative group work, structured debate and role-play throughout the school. (*paragraphs 38 and 100*)
2. Raise standards in information and communications technology by;
 - a) using a wider range of organisational strategies for large groups (*paragraph 129*)
 - b) using the full range of technology available (*paragraphs 125 and 127*)

so that pupils spend more time using equipment and programs and less time listening to instructions.
3. Improve the use made of the curriculum time by reorganising the school timetable to give classes and teachers more useful blocks of time. (*paragraph 39*)
4. Improve the quality of the curriculum for pupils under five by making the outdoor area more stimulating and supportive of all areas of learning. (*paragraphs 37 and 92*)
5. Improve strategic management of the school by creating a school development plan which extends beyond the current financial year. (*paragraph 66*)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 The school is situated in an urban area of Middlesbrough and the majority of pupils come from an area of predominantly rented and some private housing in the surrounding estates. The school serves the Roman Catholic population of the area and currently has falling numbers of pupils. Many children come from single parent households and there is significant unemployment in the area. The number of pupils admitted to the school has recently been reviewed and the intake number lowered. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups.

2 Children are admitted to the nursery class in the term following their third birthday and they are admitted to the reception class in the September or January prior to their fifth birthday. The results of assessments carried out when children join the nursery and when they start school in the reception classes show that children do not generally reach the levels typical of the age group, particularly in their use of language.

3 There are 201 pupils on roll. There are 43 (21 percent) pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Of these pupils, 20 are at Stage 1, 3 are at Stage 2 and 20 are at Stage 3 and have individual education plans. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need. Ninety pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. There is a single nursery class and a single reception class, two Year 1 classes and one class for Year 2. There is one class for each year group in Key Stage 2

4 The school's mission is to support pupils in reaching their potential, to help them develop within the Catholic faith and to help them to care for and respect others. The current school development plan indicates that the school is trying to provide a broader and better balanced curriculum and raise the attainment of the higher achieving pupils. The school is now a part of an education action zone which is supporting the school with some new initiatives such as the mathematics project.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	16	16	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	13	14	12
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	27	28	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	84 (85)	87 (88)	84 (91)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	13	13	11
	Girls	14	15	14
	Total	27	28	25
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	84 (88)	87 (91)	78 (91)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	23	17	40

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	17	15	20
	Girls	11	9	12
	Total	28	24	32
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	70 (69)	60 (64)	80 (81)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	16	15	16
	Girls	11	11	14
	Total	27	26	30
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	68 (75)	65 (61)	76 (75)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)
missed through absence for the
latest complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.73
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.27
	National comparative data	0.5

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	22
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

5 Attainment on entry to the school at the age of 3 and above is generally below that expected, particularly in the development of language skills. Many of the pupils also have underdeveloped personal and social and mathematical skills. They have limited knowledge of the world including of their own local area. Many of the children spend up to six terms in the nursery. They make good progress in developing mathematical, personal and social and fine physical control. They make good progress in developing creative skills and they significantly broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make satisfactory progress in language skills, making good progress in writing and early reading skills but unsatisfactory progress in speaking skills.

6 By the time they reach five years old in the reception class, most of the children attain the levels indicated in the *Desirable Learning Outcomes for children on entry to compulsory education in every area of learning except for the crucial area of spoken English. Their generally good progress continues in the reception class. The good progress that children make overall, noted in the last inspection report, has been maintained. There is no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls.

7 At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils attain the levels expected of their age in almost all subjects, the only exceptions being higher levels in art, but below expectations for their age in information and communications technology. This picture is repeated at Key Stage 2, though there are some minor variations annually in national test results.

8 In English tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, pupils' attainment is similar to the national average, but with few pupils reaching the higher levels in reading or writing. This has been a consistent picture over four years. When compared with similar schools, the number of pupils reaching the expected level is above average. In tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the number of pupils reaching the expected and the higher levels is similar to the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools.

9 In mathematics tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, pupils' attainment is similar to the national average, and the number of pupils reaching the higher levels also similar to the national average. This has been a consistent picture over four years. When compared with similar schools, the number of pupils reaching the expected level is above average. In tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the number of pupils reaching the expected level was below the national average, though this year's results were not typical of the school. Over the last four years, the number of pupils reaching the nationally expected level has been in line with the national average. Despite the dip this year, when compared with similar schools, the results indicate an above average performance. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels is similar to the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools.

10 In science, teachers' assessment in Key Stage 1, indicates that an average number of pupils reach the nationally expected standard but none achieve higher levels. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests in science the schools performance is very similar to the national average at both the expected

and the higher levels and this is well above the performance of similar schools.

11 Inspection evidence indicates a similar performance to that described above. These levels of achievement have been maintained over at least four years. From a relatively low starting point in the nursery, this indicates overall good progress in these three subjects.

12 In information and communications technology, attainment by the end of both key stages is below expectations and progress is variable but mostly unsatisfactory. In reception and other Key Stage 1 classes, pupils' progress is restricted by their lack of dexterity with the mouse control because they do not have enough practice on the computers. In Key Stage 2 there is good progress in control technology by younger pupils. Most have a very clear understanding of how a floor robot works and they are able to program it with the teacher's help. Higher attaining pupils can devise new ways to direct it and can speculate what might happen.

13 Older pupils in Key Stage 2 use computers for word-processing more than for other operations. Their keyboard skills are slow and they rarely draft work onto the screen. Most of the work they do is copying poems and stories for printing. Little evidence was seen of pupils using a wide range of information and communications technology. Their general knowledge of computer applications in the world at large is limited largely to the Internet and games. Pupils' make slow progress because of their restricted range of information technology work.

14 Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all other subjects at both key stages. They make good progress in art and achieve levels above those expected nationally. They also make good progress in some elements of history but they have little knowledge of history from sources outside the school and by the end of Key Stage 2 they attain the levels expected for their age.

15 Teachers have successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy and the work during the Literacy Hour is having a positive effect on standards in English and in other subjects. Writing and reading skills are developed, for example, when pupils describe their science work in their own words or keep diaries of events. Pupils are expected to read to gather information in both history and geography.

16 The school is in the process of adopting a numeracy strategy in line with the national guidance and is following an Education Action Zone funded project in the reception and Year 1 classes. The schools' numeracy strategy is supporting the development of mental arithmetic but too often, the lessons go on for too long with a resulting lack of pace. When this happens, pupils do not make the maximum progress possible.

17 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons and in the short withdrawal sessions which are organised for them. This is largely because of the clear targets set in phonics and other literacy work. They integrate well into lessons because teachers and support assistants collaborate effectively. Some have been taken off the register having made good progress and these pupils achieve well.

18 No significant variations exist in the attainment and progress rates of boys and girls or between pupils of differing abilities. Higher attaining pupils make similar progress to others with the result that they reach higher levels by the end of units of work.

19 Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained in English, mathematics and science. The introduction of a broader and better balanced curriculum at both key stages has

brought about improvements to standards in art and music.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

20 Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They concentrate well and show interest. They are able to work independently as seen in a Year 1 Literacy Hour where the teacher demonstrated complete trust in a group to get on with their work while she was helping another group of pupils. These pupils were then confident to talk about what they had written to the whole class and in mathematics also were keen to show what they know. Pupils take pride in their work throughout the school and make sure it is neatly presented such as the Year 2 diaries which were interesting to read. They try hard to learn from each other as when Year 3 pupils watched how others moved about the gym in a physical education lesson. They can concentrate well in physical education also as shown when Year 5 pupils made a very good effort for the full hour on small team games. Older pupils show good research skills either in lessons or as part of their homework when they use dictionaries and other books. Pupils with behavioural difficulties contribute positively in most lessons. When they do cause problems they are well managed and they are very clear about what is acceptable. By the end of the week many who were problematic earlier had improved their behaviour and attitudes. In an information technology lesson two boys had written extensively and were keen to read out their efforts, showing typically good concentration for an extended period.

21 Behaviour in school is very good. Pupils are very polite and friendly towards visitors in school and hold open doors for them thoughtfully. They mostly move around the school very sensibly and are orderly when gathered together in large groups, such as in assemblies. At lunchtime they eat together sociably and show good manners. They play well together in the playground and line up promptly when the bell goes for them to come in. The majority of parents are very happy with the standard of behaviour achieved in the school. Bullying is not a problem and there has been no cause to exclude any pupils from school.

22 The quality of relationships is very good. Pupils play together very well in large groups at lunchtime and playtime, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6 when they are keen to play football. They co-operate very well in whole class activities, as seen in a Year 6 music lesson when each pupil in the class sang in turn, greeting the next pupil who then took over the song. Even if they are not quite sure what they are doing, they co-operate well with each other in pairs as when Year 3 pupils were working on evaporation in science. Pupils from different year groups support each other, although they do not know each other well, for example, when mixed groups of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were interviewed by the inspectors. They have very good relationships with teachers and non-teaching staff.

23 Pupils respond to opportunities to take responsibility well although they are still fairly dependent on adults for instruction about what they can do. This was also noted at the last inspection. They do show increasing maturity as they move up through the school. The tuck shop at playtime is run very efficiently by some Year 6 pupils without adult help. Older pupils enjoy looking after younger ones in the playground, organising games for them and, when the weather is bad, happily helping the supervisors look after them in the classrooms at lunchtime. They are aware of the value of supporting charities such as Cafod and the RNIB.

Attendance

24 Attendance at school is satisfactory as it was at the time of the last inspection. It is broadly in line with that of similar schools nationally. There is little unauthorised absence. Lateness in arriving at school is something of a problem for some pupils but the majority are punctual. Registration itself is taken fairly efficiently but the morning period is often extended so that lessons don't always get off to a prompt start.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

25 The quality of teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection when teaching was described as satisfactory or better in two-thirds of lessons and unsatisfactory in almost a third. By sharp contrast, teaching is now satisfactory in 33 per cent of lessons, good in a further 42 per cent and very good and occasionally excellent in 22 per cent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs in only 3 per cent of lessons.

26 In the last two years the school has focused on improving teaching in a variety of ways; through monitoring to identify weaknesses, staff development to meet needs and the development of a broader and better balanced curriculum which has required teachers to adopt alternative approaches to teaching.

27 There is some variation in the overall quality of teaching between the various parts of the school. The teaching of children under five years old is an even mixture of satisfactory and good and is good overall. Classes are well organised and teachers' expectations of children are appropriately high, especially their expectations of children's personal and social development. Teachers make clear what they want children to do and pupils respond well.

28 Teachers have generally good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and provide suitable activities in the nursery and reception classrooms. These activities are well-resourced and they support children in all areas of their learning. By contrast, teachers plan and deliver direct teaching sessions which are less successful as the content is not well matched to children's learning needs and the children contribute little to the lessons. This is particularly a feature of the nursery class where such sessions often interrupt good quality learning experiences. Teachers provide too few learning experiences in the outdoors.

29 The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages. It is a mixture of satisfactory, good and very good in Key Stage 2 with 43 per cent of teaching being very good or better. Teachers at both key stages have a satisfactory knowledge of the National Curriculum in all subjects. They have good knowledge and understanding of English, mathematics and science where curriculum guidance is very good. Throughout the school, teachers plan well; this is an improvement since the last inspection. They manage pupils very well and assess pupils' successes in order to get to know them well. Homework is used well at Key Stage 2 and satisfactorily at Key Stage 1.

30 When teaching is excellent or very good, teachers have a very clear understanding of what they want the pupils to learn and they relay this clearly to the class. The difference between these lessons and others of lesser quality is that opportunities are provided in these lessons for pupils to discuss and interrogate the activities which they are doing. In science, this was particularly noticeable when pupils were asked to investigate electrical circuits or in an English class when they discussed an excerpt from 'War of the Worlds' with the teacher and then turned their thought to a

personal adventure. Teachers' very skilled questioning adds to the challenge for these pupils and adds to their learning.

31 Much of the teaching is good; lessons are well planned, they are introduced well and targets are indicated. In good lessons, for example in English, pupils are given a lively introduction, set meaningful tasks and during the lesson are taught to use a thesaurus. Pupils are helped to make good progress in these lessons.

32 Satisfactory lessons have most of the features above, but the content is less well selected and does not interest pupils so well. Many of these lessons lack opportunities for pupils to discuss their work either with the teacher or with each other and they make only limited advances in their thinking.

33 All of the teachers plan appropriately for pupils with special educational needs who are supported well in lessons. The classroom assistants plan the work carefully with the teachers and provide structured tasks for pupils. The phonic activities are often backed up by interesting word games to help to reinforce pupils' understanding. In geography there are clearly matched tasks for pupils with special educational needs and the more able and talented are set challenging extension tasks on some occasions. In information technology and physical education lessons in Key Stage 2, teachers often extend pupils' thinking with open-ended questions. The same occurs in some lessons in Key Stage 1 when pupils are given time to think about how to use punctuation in poetry.

34 Teachers in some classes appropriately encourage their pupils to work independently but there is considerable scope for all staff to extend this, by providing more opportunities for pupils to set targets for themselves and research independently.

The curriculum and assessment

35 This aspect of the school's work has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum structure provides a framework to support the school aims. It is balanced and broadly based and prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. It meets the statutory requirements and appropriate attention is given to health and sex education. Currently, the school makes effective provision for pupils' creative and aesthetic learning, and their personal and social development is good. These aspects were described as underrepresented in the curriculum in the previous report. The curriculum is suitably extended beyond the minimum requirements with a range of visits to places of interest and visitors who make valuable contributions to pupils' understanding of the world around them.

36 The school provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The quality of education for pupils' supported through the special needs register has a positive effect on the work of all pupils. Work is well matched to the needs of pupils in almost all subjects.

37 The curriculum provided for children who are less than five years old is sound. In the nursery and reception classes, the curriculum is based on the areas of learning and promotes attainment in the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. There is appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy within the reception year. The provision for the development of reading skills is a strength but speaking skills are insufficiently promoted particularly in the nursery. The organisation of the nursery provides a range of practical activities but there is insufficient emphasis on provision for children to learn through outdoor play.

38 The long-term curriculum planning for English and mathematics follows national guidance. The school implemented the National Literacy strategy successfully last year. It is now in a position to adapt it further to include more opportunities for pupils to improve their speaking skills; by providing opportunities for them to engage in collaborative group work, structured debate, and role play throughout the school. It has introduced the National Numeracy strategy during the current year and younger pupils are following a mathematics enhancement programme, which compliments the national guidance. Long term planning for science is good. The school has recently adopted national guidance to support schemes of work, for example in information and communication technology, history, geography and design technology, but these developments are recent and are only just beginning to have an effect as they are not fully embedded into practice. Medium and short term planning is thorough and effective.

39 Whilst curriculum time is sufficient for all subjects, it is not always best used, for example when lessons planned for 45 minutes are allowed to fill a one hour twenty minute period. This is most noticeable at the beginning of the school day when the time following registration is not always well used.

40 The arts are now effectively promoted. There is a good scheme of work for art, and there is a new initiative using a specialist teacher to support the music curriculum. The curriculum has been enhanced by the visit of a poet and also an autoharpist this term. The pupils enjoy visits to concerts and the theatre. A project to celebrate the millennium has involved pupils designing and painting colourful, large scale murals. The curriculum is enriched through visits and visitors related to the theme or topic that pupils are studying, for example a visit to a power station while studying electricity.

41 There is an adequate range of 'third session' activities supported by the Education Action

Zone, which the school promotes. These are short courses and while effective do not allow pupils' to build up interests and skills over time. The school's provision for extra curricular activities within the school is unsatisfactory.

42 The school has effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' achievements in English mathematics and science and these are having a direct impact on raising standards. An analysis of this data and that from national tests is used to provide staff with an overview of pupils' performance and to identify pupils requiring additional support. It is used less well to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum provision and to set individual targets for pupils. The assessment procedures that ensure each unit of work is assessed are effective and increasingly the school is using specific learning objectives as identified within their planning, as a key to assessing pupils' progress. This is not yet consistent across all classes.

43 The use of assessment to inform future curriculum planning is satisfactory. There is regular evaluation of all planning but this is generally about what went well rather than what the pupils learnt. Day to day assessment to inform short term planning is evident from the work within the core subjects of English, mathematics and science which is matched to pupils' needs.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

44 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with very good provision for pupils' moral development.

45 The school promotes an ethos which is warm, friendly and caring. Pupils feel secure and happy, which enables them to work well. The spiritual development of the pupils is fostered throughout all areas of the curriculum. The religious education programme positively supports pupils' spiritual development and there are many opportunities for quiet reflection during prayer times at the beginning and end of the day and in the collective acts of worship. For example, pupils empathise with the family of a boy who has been killed in a traffic accident, identifying closely with the family's feelings in thought and prayer. In their religious education lessons, pupils consider the effects that the values and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church can have on the quality of their lives. Through learning about other major religions, for example Hinduism and Judaism, they appreciate the need to be open and sensitive to values that are different from their own.

46 Pupils have opportunities to listen to, reflect on and respond to music. For example, in a Key Stage 1 assembly, pupils listened sensitively to Mendelssohn's violin concerto. Pupils in a Year 1 history lesson handle artefacts with care and delight, showing great excitement when discovering what the objects actually are and how they were used. In physical education, reception pupils experience a sense of wonder through the imaginative exploration of the quality of bright stars in space, whilst Key Stage 2 pupils positively applaud the journey of floor robot in an information and communications technology lesson. The impressive displays of the pupils' own prayers, art and poetry help pupils to value each other's ideas and enhance their spiritual development.

47 The provision for moral development is very good. The school has few rules, but these are known and respected by both pupils and parents. Pupils behave well, fully understanding what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They are encouraged to care for each other and the environment. Resources are treated with respect. Staff provide very good role models and manage pupils with sensitivity and fairness. Inappropriate behaviour is rarely observed. A 'Good Deed

'Tree' in the entrance hall supports and celebrates good behaviour and pupils enjoy recording their kind and helpful deeds. Ancillary staff also contribute to pupils' moral development, involving them in the care of their school and the environment, for example, at lunch times and in the millennium mural project. There is an absence of litter in and around the school. The atmosphere in the school is caring, calm and purposeful.

48 The provision for social development is good. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop social skills. For example, pupils work collaboratively in lessons and co-operate well in efforts to support the school house system which promotes team work. The school effectively fosters pupils' self-esteem. This is evidenced in the classrooms, where teachers use praise effectively and ensure that all pupils, including those with special needs, are appreciated. Within all aspects of school life, pupils are encouraged to care for and respect others. These attitudes are reflected in the whole school's involvement in raising funds for the Catholic Association for Overseas Development and the support it gives to other charitable causes, for example, the Remembrance Appeal and the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

49 Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative in the day to day functioning of the school; for example, Year 6 pupils organise break time snacks very efficiently and without staff input. They show care and consideration in their dealings with the younger pupils. Visitors into school, including the police, charity representatives and musicians, help pupils to gain a better understanding of the wider community and encourage a sense of citizenship. The residential course for Year 5 pupils at the Carlton Outdoor Centre gives pupils an opportunity to work together in a different environment and the photographs of the various activities with captions such as "togetherness", "team work" and "co-operation", show how the course supports pupils' social development and their developing understanding of living in a community. The pupils' experiences are epitomised in the opening lines of one pupil's poem, "Carlton, Carlton is the best, an adventurous and exciting place to be!"

50 The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Through some areas in the curriculum, for example art, music, history and religious education, pupils are given opportunities to learn about their own culture and are introduced to the cultures of other people and other lands. For example, cross-curricular work in art and history embrace Ancient Greece and Rome. The study of Lowry, supports pupils' understanding of their own cultural traditions whereas the work of Seurat and Picasso gives pupils knowledge of the artistic styles and traditions of artists from other countries. The art workshop, funded by the Education Action Zone with two visiting artists working with pupils, produced an effective millennium mural which enhances pupils' appreciation of past and present cultural pursuits and traditions. The Year 6 panel records the pupils' own way of life and the cultural activities of 1999. Pupils are, justifiably, proud of their efforts.

51 Pupils are involved in and celebrate their own religious culture within the Roman Catholic Church in school time. This is supported by effective quiet religious corners in each classroom and worship in their own local church. They also study other major religions which helps them to appreciate the similarities and differences of special times in other people's religions as well as in their own, for example, the festivals of Diwali and Christmas. Projects, such as Year 4's participation in the local area's Christmas celebrations in the cathedral, enhance pupils' cultural as well as their spiritual development. An effective display, depicting the school's involvement with the raising of funds for Africa, enables pupils to study artefacts and read books about another country and culture. There is a good range of multi-cultural books in the school and many attractive bays and display corners support pupils' cultural development. Positive steps to show that racism is not tolerated is evidenced in such posters as "Show racism the red card". Although

there are some opportunities for pupils to explore the diverse cultural traditions in history, music, art and literature, more opportunities could be realised throughout all areas of the curriculum, for example, in maths, science and technology. However, there has been an improvement in the provision for pupils to explore the diversity and richness of other cultures which was an area of weakness in the last inspection in 1996.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

52 Overall provision for pupils' support, guidance and welfare is good and generally makes a good contribution to the standards which pupils achieve.

53 The procedures which the school has for monitoring pupils' personal development and academic work are satisfactory. Pupils' reports tell parents what they can do, particularly in English, mathematics and science, although not much is said, generally, about what pupils need to do in order to improve. Where pupils have difficulties, good guidance is given, for example where there are specific problems with behaviour. The school regularly monitors what pupils achieve within classes in fairly broad categories but the findings are not sufficiently used to plan what pupils need to learn next. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into classes. They are supported by their classmates, often spontaneously in lessons. The individual education plans provide a good structured basis for their learning targets. Teachers and classroom assistants act in a consistent manner, following school procedures, to ensure that pupils' needs are met appropriately. The school has helped to raise older pupils' self-esteem by sending them on course sponsored by Middlesbrough Football Club.

54 Pupils' behaviour is monitored and promoted very well. Pupils are very well supervised when not in lessons by the lunchtime supervisors, each class being looked after by a dedicated person who knows the pupils well. Good behaviour and attitudes are recognised in the classroom and when pupils are playing outside or in the dining hall. Teachers award house points and the supervisors award yellow slips and these awards accumulate towards certificates presented in assemblies. The rules for proper behaviour are clearly displayed throughout the school. Sanctions which are made for poor behaviour are up to the individual teacher but they are most likely to mean that pupils have to miss playtime. Appropriate steps are taken to inform parents if behaviour is less than satisfactory. Issues such as bullying are discussed with pupils in the personal, social and health education programme and bullying is not a problem in school.

55 The monitoring of attendance is good. Teachers monitor reasons for absence and any action they have taken in addition to keeping the registers. The educational social worker comes in regularly and works with the home-school liaison teacher. Certificates are awarded to the classes with the best attendance each week and also every half term. Individuals with 100% attendance during a year are recognised and given an award in assembly. The school makes careful records of the pupils who come late but could do more to encourage parents to bring their children punctually.

56 The arrangements the school makes for promoting pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. Child protection is particularly good in school and staff know who to talk to should they have any concerns about particular pupils. Care is taken to make sure that there is adequate first aid and there are trained first-aiders on site. Lunchtime supervisors carry a small pack with them all the time to deal with minor accidents, should they occur in the playground. Proper care is taken to make sure pupils are aware of the dangers of substance abuse and personal safety and they have

suitable guidance on sex education from the school nurse when they are in Year 6. The school supports children well when they transfer at different stages of their education. The homes of children entering the nursery are visited by the home-school liaison teacher to help them to settle down well when they start. A parents' evening in the autumn term is also used to check how pupils are settling down and there are appropriate arrangements for transfer to secondary school, both pastoral and curricular. Any weaknesses reported at the last inspection have been effectively dealt with.

Partnership with parents and the community

57 The school provides very good quality information for parents. There are very good formal opportunities for teachers and parents to meet and the documentation sent out to parents in the form of the school prospectus and the annual governors' report is comprehensive. Parents and teachers can meet informally at the beginning and end of the day if there is anything of immediate concern or just to chat. They feel welcome in school. A home-school liaison teacher is available one day a week to work with pupils and contact their parents, giving them support and putting them in touch with agencies, should they need help. The school has arranged meetings to let parents know about changes in education such as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and has also sent out leaflets to them. Parents say they have a clear idea about what is taught, although not many attend such meetings. They feel that the reports they receive at the end of the year are honest and reflect their child. Parents receive regular communications about pupils' progress on the special educational needs register. They are invited to reviews and some are helping their children to meet their reading targets.

58 The school works hard to involve parents in their child's education. Few parents currently help in school but those who do make a good contribution in the classroom, nursery and escorting pupils to the swimming baths. Pupils take their reading books home regularly and also books from the home loan scheme and some parents write comments in the reading diaries. Class teachers set their own homework timetable and pupils at Key Stage 2 now have homework diaries which strengthen home-school communication. Some parents are taking advantage of courses running on school premises, such as on numeracy, to help them to work with their children at home. There is a Friends of School Association which helps to raise funds and runs social events such as discos. The home-school agreements which have just been introduced in all schools, have been completed by parents after consultation.

59 The school makes good links with community which contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development. The contribution of the local parish is good in supporting many aspects of school life and pupils represent the school at the diocesan educational mass. Pupils are taken on a good range of visits which extend the work they do in the curriculum. For example, Year 1 and Year 2 classes have visited an ecology park, the Year 6 class has visited a power station and last summer visited a local newspaper. Occasionally there are sporting events which involve other schools though there are no regular fixtures. Visitors come into school such as an author and poet who has read his work and then held workshops for the older pupils. Artists funded by the Educational Action Zone project have worked with older pupils after school on the spectacular millennium murals which now decorate the hall.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

60 Since the time of the last inspection in 1996 and the review visit by OFSTED in January 1998, the quality of management has improved considerably and management overall is now sound. The Headteacher works well with the staff team, quietly and effectively leading and supporting their efforts to improve the curriculum and improve pupils standards, whilst maintaining a strong commitment and dedication to the pastoral care of all the pupils. The strong curriculum leadership of the deputy headteacher very ably supports the headteacher. In the last two years there has been a complete review of the roles and the responsibilities of the whole staff and job descriptions are now clear and effective. One shortcoming in the leadership is the lack of regular management team meetings which could process and develop issues more rapidly and effectively.

61 All staff work effectively towards school improvement. The role of the curriculum co-ordinator is clearly defined and effectively implemented by all the staff with subject responsibilities. They monitor the curriculum through reviewing their colleagues' planning, sampling pupils' work and visiting classrooms to see the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Through activities such as these, the co-ordinators are able to judge standards in their subject, spot any weaknesses and plan improvements with their colleagues. They are generous in sharing their considerable expertise, for example, the science co-ordinator has produced excellent subject guidance to help colleagues and to raise standards.

62 The school manages procedures for pupils with special educational needs well. Governors and the special educational needs co-ordinator have a good overview of provision and pupils' progress. All statutory requirements are fully met.

63 The governing body is increasingly effective in their role as managers of the school. They are wholly supportive of the efforts of the school and constantly seek to improve standards for the families in the community. Governors not only gather information from the staff, but they also gather their own information through monitoring visits to the school. The governors attend training and bring back useful information and guidance which is helpful to the school in raising standards, most recently with regard to issues of funding to support pupils with special educational needs. The governors have a good understanding of finance and of the constraints within which the school operates, and they make an effective contribution to school development planning.

64 For the last two years there has been effective curriculum monitoring by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the subject co-ordinators and the governors and this has supported the school in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection report. Because of this monitoring, the school has clear information on what needs to be done and is now well established in tackling the issues in each subject. The school has set a timetable to continue and extend this monitoring.

65 The work of all the staff and the governors reflects and supports the schools aims especially to attempt to provide the best education for each pupil and to support each pupil's spiritual and moral development and their developing Catholicism. There is a good ethos in the school; pupils and staff work hard and there is a genuine concern for the well being of others. The school team works effectively towards its goals.

66 The school development planning is clearer in the last two years than previously and is

therefore more effective in informing staff and governors about intended changes. The targets in the plan are relevant. There is a good mechanism for all the staff to contribute to the plan and therefore they are committed to its delivery. The headteacher has a clear view of the issues which the school faces and the on-going need to plan forward but the school has not yet produced a school development plan beyond the current year. This is needed to support clear planning for the future and in particular, the governors' involvement in this.

67 Since the last inspection and the 1998 visit from inspectors, there have been many changes to management and the whole staff is now much more clearly involved in the improvement of the school. The leadership of the school is effective, it is now clearly working on improvements to the curriculum in particular whilst maintaining and improving standards across the curriculum. Whilst the interim report indicated that progress was unsatisfactory, the overall progress on the issues indicated in the 1996 report has been good. Almost all of the issues have been addressed and the school is now well placed to make a range of further improvements much more rapidly and rigorously than it has in the past. This is essential for the school to sustain and improve upon the current its achievements so far.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

68 The number, qualifications and experience of staff are appropriate to teach the curriculum to primary aged pupils. Staff have appropriate job descriptions and all are competent to teach the age range of pupils in their classes. There is one newly qualified teacher who is supported well by the school. Appraisals take the form of monitoring teachers during lessons with feedback and this takes place regularly. There is a good number of well-qualified support staff and they are appropriately used in the classes with the largest numbers of pupils or where there are behavioural problems.

69 The teaching staff have attended a wide range of training courses although these have not been systematically planned as part of school development. However, all teaching staff have undergone training for the Literacy Hour and for Numeracy. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that all teachers are aware of the needs of pupils identified on the special educational needs register. The co-ordinator communicates ideas and strategies to them orally but there have been no recent in-service training courses for new staff members. Non-teaching staff have been well supported in their training needs which in some cases exceed those required for their job descriptions. The secretary has had training on child protection. Most lunchtime supervisors have taken up opportunities to be trained on behaviour management so that they can become more involved in the work of the school.

70 Because of falling numbers of pupils the school has been able to use the space made available to good effect. The hall is now a good space for physical education, as well as assemblies and music lessons. A redundant classroom is now used to store resources which used to take up valuable space. Good use is made of bays which run off the corridors for reading areas, for art work and for small groups, such as pupils with special educational needs. There is an information and control technology suite which fairly large groups of pupils use. There is plenty of hard play space which is divided into areas for lively games with older pupils or quieter areas for more general play. These are divided from the grassed areas by attractively planted raised beds. The enclosed outdoor play area for the children under five is dull and uninteresting, although there is plenty of space and also well kept hard and grassed surfaces. The accommodation is well maintained by the caretaker and there are attractive displays of art work around the school.

71 The resources in school are good. They are sufficient in number, are well-maintained and accessible to teachers. Resources available for music and design technology are adequate but in all other subject areas they are good. The library areas are well stocked and they are used well by the pupils and this makes a significant contribution to learning. Children under five, similarly have good resources available with the exception of the outdoor play equipment which does not include any large-scale wheeled toys for them to push and pedal. The school makes good use of the local swimming pool and a residential outdoor pursuits centre as well as the educational facilities, for example, of local sports club, a local newspaper and an ecology centre. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are good.

The efficiency of the school

72 The quality of financial planning is satisfactory. The annual budget is set accurately and governors are involved well through the finance committee. The school has successfully sought additional funding to support developments and this money is used well to raise the quality of education. Whilst the headteacher and the governors understand the budget trends, they do not plan far enough into the future to be able to provide for, or anticipate changes. Money available for staff development is used effectively to help raise the standard of teaching. The school has identified a need to monitor the finances available to support special educational needs, more accurately.

73 Good use is made of the teaching and support staff time. There are a good number of adults to help pupils with their work and all adults work hard at this. Unfortunately, in lessons, the potential of adults to talk with pupils about their work is not fully exploited. Parents collecting children from the nursery before the end of the session interrupt learning and the use of teaching time is less effective.

74 Learning resources and the accommodation are used well. The staff have created many resource areas, mostly with books, and pupils use these well to support their reading. The resources available for staff are easily accessible and this encourages regular use. The accommodation is spacious; otherwise empty spaces have been used well, for example as a computer room or a resources area.

75 The outdoor area for pupils under five years old is less well used. Despite improvements being planned for some years, little has been done to improve the area and it remains dull and uninteresting. It is only used for very short periods.

76 The day to day organisation of the school is efficient. Good use is made of the time of the secretarial and support staff. The school is well cared for by all ancillary staff. The financial control is satisfactory, mostly the systems are secure, but there is a need for a more detailed school inventory and purchasing procedures need to be tightened.

77 Whilst at the school, pupils make good progress in many areas of their development and in particular in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and they make good progress in their personal and social development. The cost for each pupil attending this school is below the national average and therefore the school gives good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

78 Children attend the Nursery on a part time basis, 24 children attending in the morning and the same number in the afternoon. Due to the low number of children requiring a nursery place, many children enter nursery education soon after their third birthday and experience five to six terms of the provision before entering the reception year. Children are admitted to the reception class twice a year, in September and January, prior to their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection 12 of the 15 children in the reception class were under five years old.

79 Attainment on entry into the nursery is below that which would be expected nationally. Pupils have poor speaking skills, they are below average in their mathematical understanding and many have under developed personal and social skills. Children have a relatively long period in the nursery and reception classes and progress for children under five is good overall. By the time they leave reception, children are achieving most of the targets specified in the Desirable Learning Outcomes for entry into school. Children with special educational needs make sound progress.

80 The good progress that children make overall, that was noted in the last inspection report, has been maintained. However, the report stated that the school intended to improve the provision for outdoor activities and this has not occurred. Therefore, progress in this area since the last report is unsatisfactory. There has been an improvement in the provision for children in the reception class.

81 Children make good progress in their personal and social development and achieve the expected levels by the age of five. All children behave very well in both the nursery and reception class. They co-operate with one another in small groups while playing with construction kits in the nursery and interact well while engaged in role-play in the reception class. They recognise daily routines, particularly in the reception class where they all co-operate in an ethos of orderly calm at the start of the day. They take responsibility for themselves, fastening coats and washing their hands. Mostly they keep equipment tidy and ready for the next person to use but, for example in the nursery, they do not clean up after painting because the low sink is not available for them to use for this purpose.

82 Good provision helps children to become independent learners for example when the younger children make choices of both task and resources. Progress is unsatisfactory when these individual activities are interrupted for direct teaching sessions which are not related to the tasks the children were working on. In the reception class the provision of a quiet and spiritual start to both the morning and afternoon sessions is good. Members of staff show care and concern for children and are appropriate role models for them. Expectations of behaviour are good.

83 Children enter nursery with poor speaking skills and although they make steady progress through both nursery and reception the majority do not achieve the targets expected by the age of five. They make good progress and learn to listen well. Children in the nursery have conversations between themselves while playing in the role-play area and using construction toys to make buses or lorries. Overall however, a significant number are less articulate while talking informally among themselves and to adults. They listen carefully, but sometimes passively, to instructions. In the reception class, children join in with suggestions and ideas while making up a story about messy monsters, particularly when it is well supported by the class teacher. They enjoy listening to stories when they are read with good expression.

84 Children make good progress in the early stages of reading and attainment is above that which would be expected nationally. By the time they are five, they know all the sounds of the alphabet and can read a good range of high frequency words. Many can read simple text.

85 Children make satisfactory progress in the early stages of writing. Nursery children recognise pictures and symbols and that some of these have meanings. Many children in nursery recognise their own name in print and higher attainers make good attempts at writing the letters. However, there is not an expectation that children write their own name on all pieces of work and they do not automatically find resources, such as name cards, to support their attempts. Reception children express their ideas through emergent writing, which has a number of correctly formed symbols. The majority can copy over or under words but fine motor control skills are not well developed.

86 Provision for the development of language and literacy is sound overall. In the nursery, staff do not create sufficient opportunities for children to engage in purposeful talk with adults by interacting with them during practical activities and joining in with imaginative play. The support staff talk with children asking relevant questions and supporting their learning, but for the majority of the time, the class teacher engages in direct teaching strategies which are separate from the practical activities that interest and absorb the children. The library area is well organised and there is a good range of books for children to enjoy. The practice of allowing children to be withdrawn from story time so that their parents can collect them does not promote an interest in, and a love of, stories. The development of letter/sound understanding is given high priority and older children are given a sound basis on which to build up these skills. However there is insufficient differentiation in the provision for the youngest and oldest children. The development of language and literacy skills is given appropriately high priority in the reception class and is good, though not every opportunity is taken for children to engage in talk with adults. The planning is based on the national guidance. Provision for the shared reading work is good and supports learning well. Children are given opportunities to talk with staff and engage in imaginary and real scenarios within role-play and practical tasks, but sometimes children are expected to sit for too long and their interest wanes. There are suitable opportunities for children to develop writing skills and mostly there is good modelling of expectations through whole class writing sessions where the teacher acts as scribe.

87 Overall progress in mathematics is good and the majority of children achieve the expected levels by the age of five. Children are familiar with number rhymes. They play counting games when assisted by an adult. In the nursery children increase their vocabulary of numbers and can, for example, identify a set of six and name the numeral, but few can talk about what makes six. In reception, many children can identify numbers to ten. Higher attaining children can add small single digit numbers together. They are beginning to develop a knowledge and use of mathematical language to describe shape, position, size and quantity.

88 The provision for the development of mathematical understanding is sound. In the nursery, direct teaching enables all children to develop an increasing vocabulary of numbers using an appropriate range of colourful resources; there are opportunities for children to learn about shape and size. In the reception class the planning follows national guidance for children of this age and is a balance of activities, including singing games to ten, using number cards to respond to questioning, undertaking a practical related activity and finally reinforcing the learning objective at the end of the lesson. Computers are used effectively to support this area of learning.

89 Children make good progress gaining a knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Their experiences are limited when entering the nursery and by the age of five they are attaining what would be expected for their age. Nursery children talk about their environment after a visit to a local park. They explore and recognise features of living things, objects and events that they find in the park and its environs, and look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. They talk about past and present events in their own lives discussing their families, particularly their brothers and sisters. Children in the reception class know that dark is an absence of light, and can name some sources of light such as torches and candles. They are developing their vocabulary learning about shadows. They can sort objects that use light in terms of whether it is used indoors, outside or can be used in both places. They follow route maps learning their way around the school. Children in both nursery and reception classes, explore and select materials and equipment and use skills such as cutting and joining. They use construction kits imaginatively. Reception children use technology to support their mathematical and literacy skills.

90 The provision which promotes children's knowledge and understanding of the world is sound. Nursery children use the local environment when they go for a walk. There is a good range of practical tasks available in the classroom and children regularly make choices in these areas, about the equipment and resources they will use. The outdoor area specifically designated to the nursery is under utilised. Reception children follow a well-planned scheme of work, which is based on practical activities. The tasks are based on ideas, which interest and absorb the children, but sometimes, the direct teaching introduces concepts that are too complex.

91 Children have good gross motor skills on entry into the nursery and can run and climb. They move confidently. Their fine motor skills are less well developed. Progress is sound. They become more aware of space and the need to respect the space of others. They learn to use a broader range of equipment, and handle tools and objects. They use construction kits successfully and mould malleable materials.

92 In the nursery, the provision for developing children's physical skills of climbing, balancing and learning to co-ordinate their movements while using two and three wheeled toys, is unsatisfactory. The designated outdoor area is under utilised and there are insufficient resources for this or any other area of learning. Opportunities are provided to develop fine motor skills, but these are not given the high priority this being clearly identified as a need. Reception children do not have access to an outside area in a planned programme. The provision includes playing with older children Key Stage 1 children and using the school hall.

93 Children enjoy developing their creative skills and although their abilities are limited on entry they make good progress and achieve the expected levels by the age of five. They explore colour through painting. They use a range of materials of different textures to create imaginative pictures and respond with their senses, for example, a reception child remarks that the chrysanthemum that they are drawing from life 'smells gorgeous, doesn't it?'

94 The provision which enables children to develop their creative skills is sound. A good range of opportunities is available in the nursery. There is good direct teaching in the reception class, which broadens their knowledge of shades and encourages children to draw what they can see. The direct teaching which develops musical skills is less satisfactory when the ideas being developed are too complex, for example, young children find it difficult to hold all but a simple, regular beat.

95 Children enjoy their time in both the nursery and reception class. They participate fully in

all the practical activities and stay on task for increasing periods of time when their interest is engaged through suitable activity. They take responsibility for looking after many of the resources and children in the reception class are confident and can take the register to the school office. Behaviour is very good.

96 The quality of teaching in the nursery is sound in fifty-five per cent of the sessions and good in the remainder. The quality of teaching in reception is good in two thirds of lessons, unsatisfactory in 10 per cent, and very good in 10 percent of lessons. Planning relates to the areas of learning, it includes reference to national guidance in the reception and prepares children for the next stage in their education. Assessment procedures are sound and include assessment on entry and baseline assessment in the reception class. Records of children's achievements are kept. The use of assessment to inform planning is less effective. Although there is an attempt to match work to children's capabilities, particularly in language and literacy and mathematics, this is sometimes insufficient to address the very different needs of the wide age range. Staff work well together and the teacher in the nursery provides suitable support for the nursery nurse. Guidance is given to the student currently on a placement in the school. The school keeps parents informed and the arrangements for children when they start school enable them to settle quickly to their new environment. A few parents help regularly with a variety of tasks and this makes a positive contribution to children's learning.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

97 Attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 1 was in line with the national averages in 1999 and well above the results of similar schools. The same was true at the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils leave the school having made good progress. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels at both key stages is below the national average but again is above similar schools. Over the last three years the performance of pupils has steadily improved, mirroring the national trend. In Key Stage 1, boys are nearer to the national average than girls who fall just below. In Key Stage 2 girls have improved in the last three years whereas the performance of boys has dipped slightly. There is no significant difference between the performances of boys and girls in tests, however.

98 Observation of work in lessons and in books reflects the standards seen in test results in both key stages. Pupils are good listeners but their speaking skills are fairly limited. They can answer direct questions simply but with little elaboration except for a small number of higher attaining pupils in year 3 and in years 5 and 6. Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils have good phonic skills and they use a range of effective strategies to work out meanings in their books and other reading material. Spelling is fairly accurate and handwriting is neatly presented in all classes even from those just learning to write. There is evidence of good extended writing in most classes, and pupils often write with flair and energy, especially in their personal narrative.

99 Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress over time from a fairly low base when they enter the school. In lessons also, many pupils make good progress and produce lively written work which they read aloud with fluency. Pupils with special educational needs improve their reading skills because of the structured support given in class and in withdrawal sessions from teachers and classroom assistants. Their individual education plans often have precise literacy targets and many show improvement in these over time.

100 Pupils enjoy English and show a good response in lessons. They talk with enthusiasm about their reading. Young pupils are generally well motivated in class and read with commitment. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils are keen to relate the work they had done on Macbeth and have understood the main story of the play. In Year 5 they are able to discuss dialect in books and can express an opinion about their preferences with clarity, describing why they prefer non-fiction. Most pupils have a good sense of how to skim and scan quickly for meaning. They regularly go to dictionaries and thesauruses for help with their writing and are generally adept at looking up words from an early age. Although pupils listen well for long periods, the biggest weakness that most experience is the inability to speak formally and at length. They prefer answering in short sentences. This is an area for improvement.

101 The quality of teaching is often good in Key Stage 1. It is mostly good and occasionally has excellent features in Key Stage 2. This is a big improvement on the last inspection. The well-organised teaching accounts for the good progress that most pupils make in reading and writing. The literacy time is carefully planned and the sentence level work is particularly effective. The best teachers phrase questions carefully to make pupils think for themselves; as in a lesson in Key Stage 1 when pupils had to explain why a knowledge of punctuation was necessary to enable them to read poetry sensibly. All teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to enthuse pupils by sharing their enjoyment of literature with them in dramatic ways. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, for example, a reading of 'War of the Worlds' resulted in some excellent planning for pupils' own stories as they discussed how to build up characters.

102 The rare lapses in teaching occur when teachers do not consider carefully enough how to introduce new material that may be unfamiliar to pupils. This results in some confusion and lack of focus from the lower attaining pupils. However, teachers have the skills to retrieve the situation during the course of the topic.

103 Teachers have successfully introduced the literacy strategy but the timetable gives too long for the session. As a result, occasional lessons lose their effectiveness in the last ten minutes. Some teachers have structured their work to allow for more variety within the lesson so that the pace is maintained. They often use the plenary session to stimulate fresh ideas that can be carried forward to the next day. The work during the Literacy Hour is having a positive effect on standards in other subjects. The diaries kept by pupils in Key Stage 1 are neatly and interestingly written. In science in Key Stage 2, pupils write very imaginatively about photosynthesis, and much sensitive writing occurs in religious education about modern-day saints. Homework is set regularly for pupils to read and to learn spellings related to the topic. This is helping them with key words in geography and other subjects. Some effective drafting occurs in English and history but not enough is done by pupils using the word processor to develop their drafting skills further.

104 English is well managed and well organised. Resources, especially book resources, are good and support pupils' learning. Since the last inspection the school has maintained its strengths in reading and good presentation. The library areas are well stocked and are used well by the pupils. They make a significant contribution to pupils' progress in reading. Improvements have occurred in pupils' knowledge of authors and in their drafting skills in Key Stage 2. There still remains a weakness in the lack of collaborative oral work and this is a key issue for the school to address.

Mathematics

105 The 1999 National Curriculum tests show that pupils' attainment in mathematics at the age of seven is in line with the national average and above average when compared to schools with a similar socio-economic background. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 has improved and is now 25 per cent of the cohort. At the age of eleven years pupils' attainment is below average when compared to national data and above average when compared to similar schools. This is not typical of performance in the last four years. Pupils' attainment is usually in line with national averages. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 has improved and is now above the national average and well above the average for similar schools.

106 There has been a small improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels in both key stages from 1998 to 1999. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in either key stage. The school is aware of the unsatisfactory levels of attainment in shape, space and measure at Key Stage 1 in the 1998 tests and are taking positive steps to address the balance of the curriculum.

107 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations and attainment in number is the main strength. There is an increasing emphasis on mental arithmetic and pupils can explain the strategies they use to calculate number bonds to ten, including identifying missing digits. During the whole class sessions they add and subtract numbers to twenty mainly concentrating on larger numbers. For example, they are able to use the knowledge that; 10 take away 7 is three, to calculate 20 subtract 7 is 13. The majority of pupils are aware of the value of two digit numbers. They recognise and name regular 2-D and 3-D shapes and discuss some of their properties using correct mathematical language. They measure using non-standard measure. They are beginning to understand that time passes and can be measured in different units of time. They are able to sort and classify a set of objects in a variety of ways. They use and apply their knowledge in a variety of everyday contexts such as shopping.

108 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 6 are competent in the four functions of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division using up to six digit numbers. All pupils know simple fraction - decimal equivalence; for example that two and a half is the same as 2.5. The majority of pupils can convert fractions and decimals into percentages. Pupils use and interpret co-ordinates and can identify symmetries of 2D shapes around axes. They can use a range of metric measures of length. They use time in problem solving situations and identify a need for data collection and select the most appropriate method of presentation.

109 Progress in Key Stage 1 is sound. In Year 1, pupils are following a mathematics enhancement programme. This places emphasis on developing a depth of understanding about a mathematical concept while working initially with simple numbers. Pupils explore all the relationships within the number and are able to calculate omissions in a number sentence. They recognise that a symbol can be used to represent a number and use a good range of strategies to calculate a missing number. They can use number patterns to count, and they recognise odd and even numbers. They are able to handle 2-D shapes such as a circle, a square, and a triangle, and describe them using mathematical vocabulary such as, edges, corners and sides. Pupils can make direct comparisons between different measures, for example describing the longer of two objects, and the tallest and widest of more than two objects. They are becoming aware of the use of measure and have explored the length of familiar objects using non standard measure. They use appropriate vocabulary to talk about daily events.

110 Progress in Key Stage 2 is good. In Year 3 pupils develop good mental agility using very

quick rhythmic counting strategies. They can apply addition and subtraction to a variety of problems involving money purchases. The majority of pupils can calculate multiples of the purchase, for example three books and a pencil and higher attainers calculate within three shopping items more than one of which is a multiple. They use a floor robot confidently and understand how many moves it takes to reach a given point. Pupils in Year 4 have mental strategies to multiply and divide by ten using up to five digit numbers. They understand place value of each of the five digits and explore number patterns and explain rules in words in order to predict. By Year 5 pupils understand negative numbers in the context of a continuing pattern. They recognise parallel lines. They learn to calculate and investigate perimeters, for example the smallest and largest perimeter that can be found by combining multiples of nine squares. They record their work systematically in the form of a table and they are able to explain the pattern that emerges from their results.

111 Pupils' attitudes are positive; they respond well to questions and are keen to participate in mental arithmetic and to offer suggestions for strategies that they have used. Sometimes, the older boys are more confident orally but girls complete recording work quickly and more accurately. They listen attentively to explanations and ask relevant questions to support their learning. Behaviour is good and there is a recognition and acceptance of established routines. Through the good interaction provided by class teachers pupils learn from their mistakes and try hard to improve their work. Pupils' motivation in the majority of classes is good but some sessions are slightly noisy during the recording part of the lesson and in others there is a disparity in the rate of their application to work.

112 The quality of teaching is a mixture of sound and good but good overall at Key Stage 1 and very good in 75 per cent of lessons at Key Stage 2. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, and their expectations, are good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Planning is thorough and very effective at both key stages. Teachers are following the national guidance for teaching numeracy and there is a good balance between, mental strategies, direct teaching, and pupils recording their work, in most sessions. However, curriculum time is not always best used for example when lessons planned for 45 minutes are allowed to expand to fill a longer time slot. Also, in some lessons there is insufficient rigor in the quantity of work completed in the time available. The management of pupils is very good throughout the school. Teachers use questioning effectively to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and homework is used effectively at Key Stage 2.

113 The co-ordinator has clear ideas for the development of mathematics throughout the school. There has been a review of the policy in the light of the introduction of the new national guidance. The school is in the process of adopting a numeracy strategy in line with this guidance and is following an Education Action Zone funded project in the reception and Year 1 classes. The schools' numeracy strategy is supporting the development of mental arithmetic but too often, the lessons go on for too long with a resulting lack of pace. When this happens, pupils do not make the maximum progress possible.

114 Teachers' plans and assessments, and pupils' work are monitored regularly and there is a programme to monitor teaching planned for later in the year. Test results are analysed, but currently this information is not best used to identify weaknesses in curriculum coverage and targets for individual pupils.

Science

115 At the end of Key Stage 1, the number of pupils assessed by teachers as achieving the nationally expected level is similar to the national average, though the number reaching the higher levels is well below the national average. This has been a consistent picture over the past four years and the accuracy of this is supported by the findings of the inspection. Most of the pupils work at but not beyond expected levels in all of the aspects of science including experimental and investigative science.

116 In national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the number of pupils achieving the expected level, is very close to the national average and the number of pupils reaching the higher levels is similarly close to the national average. The number of pupils who achieve expected levels is well above average when compared with schools of a similar background. There has been little change in the number of pupils achieving the nationally expected levels, but there has recently been a significant improvement in the number of pupils reaching the higher levels.

117 It is most noticeable that pupils attain the above levels across the whole of the science curriculum. Most of the lessons and topics are based on practical, investigative activity and pupils develop a good range of practical skills. They handle equipment such as batteries, motor and bulbs carefully and safely and when undertaking experiments, they observe carefully and record and interpret their findings accurately. They are equally knowledgeable about life and living things, the properties of materials and physical processes.

118 Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1. They build on the activities which they have experienced in the nursery and reception classes, becoming more systematic in their approach to work. In a lesson on electricity, pupils had little idea of how to make a bulb light using standard circuit equipment. Through some good questioning which prompted their thinking, many managed to make the bulb light, learning that the power travels along a wire. They do not systematically try alternative ways of making a circuit but they make satisfactory gains in learning and using scientific vocabulary. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress. Their approach to science is much more logical, they have learnt to check out a range of possibilities and approach the task of checking the effect of polarity in a circuit, logically. By the end of the key stage, pupils have also made good gains in knowledge and they find it relatively easy to predict from their prior knowledge, what might happen in a test situation.

119 The differing rates of progress are very closely linked to the quality of teaching, especially the teacher's confidence in supporting practical activities. In turn, the quality of teaching is supported by the very good scheme of work which the co-ordinator has produced. This scheme is very thorough, identifies clear learning targets and suggests a good range of activities and resources which the teachers can use. This gives all of the teachers confidence.

120 Teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory but is mostly good and very good. It is good overall at both key stages but is a mixture of satisfactory and good at Key Stage 1 and a mixture of good, very good and excellent at Key Stage 2. In an excellent lesson about evaporation in lower Key Stage 2, the teacher introduced the lesson by referring to prior learning and posed interesting and challenging questions. The practical lesson was extremely well organised, but the teacher insisted that the pupils make their own decisions about how to carry out the investigation. Similarly in a lesson in upper Key Stage 2 on electrical conductors and insulators, the teacher built very well on pupils' prior learning, gave excellent explanations of what may be happening and posed further questions for the pupils to investigate. In lessons of this type the pupils are highly motivated, eager to get to the work and find out the answers, but nevertheless take care to be accurate. Pupils make

rapid progress.

121 Most of the teachers put great emphasis on equipping the pupils with appropriate vocabulary; there are vocabulary lists in many of the classrooms and because of this, the pupils are able to express their ideas appropriately and accurately. In all the lessons seen, teacher made good provision for pupils of different abilities, offering more supportive tasks to some pupils and harder challenges to others. All teaching in science is at least satisfactory. The main shortcoming in satisfactory lessons is that activities and recording tend to be too closely prescribed and pupils make slower progress because they do not think for themselves.

122 Pupils respond well in science lessons, in direct response to the enthusiasm of the teachers. Pupils listen well and, by Key Stage 2, are willing contributors to class discussion when encouraged by the teacher. They work well in groups, sharing tasks and responsibilities. They are very good at taking turns appropriately.

123 The school is well resourced for science and this means that in many of the lessons, pairs of pupils have their own set of equipment and therefore are very involved with what they are learning. When the teacher demonstrates the main point of a lesson, most pupils listen with interest, but there is markedly less enthusiasm.

124 The scheme of work is generally interpreted well and gives very good guidance. Teachers assess much of their science work, but do not always evaluate their findings and use this as a basis for further planning. Whilst there is generally good progress in Key Stage 2, the systematic development of skills is not assured by individual teacher's planning.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information and Communications Technology

125 Attainment by the end of both key stages is below expectations and progress is variable but mostly unsatisfactory. In reception and Key Stage 1 classes, pupils use simulation programs to design faces and to put clothes on a teddy bear. Most show reasonable facility with these activities. They also label the parts on a frog. There was little evidence that pupils use computers regularly although a few were observed working on number recognition games and initial sounds of words. Half of one class was using art programs to experiment with colours and designs for their representations of Monet. Pupils' progress is restricted by their lack of dexterity with the mouse control because they do not have enough practice on the computers.

126 In Key Stage 2 there is good progress in control technology by younger pupils. Most have a very clear understanding of how a floor robot works and they are able to program it with the teacher's help. Higher attaining pupils can devise new ways to direct what might happen. Most can tell the teacher how to transcribe the symbols for programming onto paper. They also understand the importance of correctly programming other modern appliances such as the video player and washing machine.

127 Older pupils in Key Stage 2 use computers for word-processing more than for other operations. Their keyboarding skills are slow and they rarely draft work onto the screen. Most of the work they do is copying poems and stories for printing. Older pupils have learned how to produce tables, and higher attaining pupils can cope with this activity. Some pupils have designed

attractive newspaper front pages during a visit to the local newspaper offices. Little evidence was seen of pupils using a wide range of information and communications technology. Their general knowledge of computer applications in the world at large is limited largely to the Internet and games. Pupils' make slow progress because of their restricted range of information technology work.

128 Most pupils are enthusiastic about working in the new computer room. However they quickly become frustrated at the limited access they have to the machines. Although they cooperate well in pairs there is not enough opportunity for them individually to gain experience of using programs and applications. Those who have their own computers gain little extra knowledge because they work at the same activities as those whose experience is limited.

129 The quality of teaching varies with some aspects being satisfactory and others less so. Overall it is unsatisfactory at both key stages. Teachers are generally competent computer users but they have few strategies to organise classes so that all pupils have the maximum opportunities to learn. There is insufficient use of assessment to plan lessons for individual pupils. There is some very good teaching in Key Stage 2 where the teacher's well-devised questions lead to most of the class quickly grasping what control technology is. The thoughtful deployment of classroom assistants creates good opportunities for smaller groups to plan programs for the floor robot and to practise their art-work on screen. Most teachers try to apply information technology across the curriculum but they provide pupils with too few chances to work independently on computers during the day.

130 Teachers' interpretation of information and communications technology is rather narrow and they ignore other possible resources such as tape-recorders, overhead projectors and video-players. This lack of variety means that not enough pupils gain first hand experience of a wide range of technology.

131 There has been no marked improvement since the last inspection but the recently acquired resources present the school with an opportunity to move forward more quickly now. As information technology is a core subject this a key area for development.

Design Technology

132 Pupils' levels of attainment at the end of each key stage are typical of what would be seen nationally and pupils make sound progress through both key stages. There is a well structured scheme of work which incorporates the recently published national guidelines and the subject is taught through a series of projects, each becoming more challenging and building on pupils knowledge and understanding.

133 By the age of seven pupils are able to create clear, simple designs in which the different materials used are identified. They observe real objects closely as a stimulus for their own designs, for example, pupils in Year 1 construct houses after looking carefully at the different features of a house. They are able to select materials suitable for the different parts and construct their own models. They apply suitable finishing techniques such as painting and adding collage. They are able to cut, shape and join a variety of materials using appropriate tools and evaluate the finished product in simple terms.

134 By the age of eleven pupils produce more detailed designs which include labelled diagrams

and they can explain what they have been doing and why. For example Year 3 pupils look at packaging and realise that it serves a variety of purposes. They disassemble boxes and consider their shape for strength and suitability. Year 4 pupils look at a collection of purses as money containers and investigate the structure for suitability of fastenings before learning the techniques required to make strong seams. They complete the process by making and evaluating their own. Year 5 pupils learn about processes in food technology while making bread. They learn to follow instructions, to weigh and measure. They learn about the importance of hygiene and safety while handling food. They learn to measure, cut and shape card while using their imagination in creating a 3-D picture in the style of one of Picasso's famous paintings. Year 6 pupils make slippers using paper patterns of their own making. They consider the relative merits of different materials and the benefits of gluing and stitching.

135 Pupils throughout the school enjoy designing and making things. They use tools and resources with care and attention to safety. They listen attentively and follow instructions. They sustain an appropriate level of concentration while undertaking the task. They work co-operatively when given the opportunity.

136 No teaching was seen at Key Stage 1 and evidence is drawn from teachers' planning, scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is sound. Teachers follow the scheme of work, which provides a structure to their planning and it is clear what pupils will be expected to learn. Expectations are appropriate and there is a balance of whole class direct teaching and practical group tasks. Strategies for promoting good order and behaviour are very effective. In a minority of lessons insufficient use is made of co-operative group work to enable competent pupils help those still learning skills.

137 The co-ordinator is effective. The scheme of work is new and not fully embedded into practice although it provides very useful guidance for teachers. It is currently being evaluated. Its organisation into topics of appropriate unit lengths is less secure so that during some projects the plans cannot be completed in the way that they are planned. End of unit assessment is inconsistent with some teachers interpreting it as an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the topic in generic terms and others correctly assessing the key skills that the pupils have achieved. The subject makes a contribution to pupils' cultural development when the different types of bread eaten around the world are sampled and evaluated.

Art

138 Judgements are based on the observation of a few lessons, the examination of a large sample of pupils' work and discussions with the co-ordinator, staff and pupils.

139 By the end of both key stages, pupils attain levels which are above the national expectation for their age groups. By the age of seven, pupils are gaining a good knowledge and understanding of the different approaches to art and are able to express their ideas and feelings through a wide range of media. Key Stage 1 pupils learn about famous artists such as Paul Gauguin, Monet and Seurat and produce very good paintings in the style of the artist, incorporating the colours specific to the artist's work. Observational drawing is developing. A display of Year 2 self-portraits shows the understanding and use of pencil and charcoal. Large scale and three-dimensional work is well represented and carefully and imaginatively displayed; for example, the Rainforest and Noah's Ark. Art is appropriately integrated with other subjects and there are many examples of cross-curricular work in both key stages, for example, with science in the life cycle display.

140 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can select well and use a wide range of materials and stimuli to produce well observed and purposeful work. Pupils' knowledge and experience of hot and cold colours, tone, line and observational drawings are further developed and Year 3 pupils produce recognisable drawings of objects from everyday life, for example, a plant pot, a shoe, a bottle and a notice board. Links continue to be made with other subjects, for example, with religious education in creating paintings of signs and symbols and with science in the very good three-dimensional collage of pond life. Modelling skills, including sculpture, and the printing of patterns using blocks, sponges and recycled materials are developing well. The in-depth study of artists and their paintings at Key Stage 2 enables pupils to express their ideas and opinions, and increases their vocabulary relating to art.

141 Pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress throughout the school. Long term planning ensures pupils have a balanced and broad programme of activities and gain experience in drawing, painting, print making, collage, textile, 3D modelling and constructing. Sketchbooks are used in some classes. This is good practice which could be extended to other classes to give a more complete record of pupils' developing skills. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils' progress in understanding the work of Seurat was seen in the good pictures of houses they produced in his style and in their obvious increasing knowledge of the artist's work. There is abundant evidence of various types of art from all age groups around the school, which show good progress from year to year. Pupils' skills are further developed when illustrating work in the other subjects of the curriculum.

142 Pupils' attitudes in both key stages, including those with special needs, are good. They work with enthusiasm and confidence. Key Stage 1 pupils respond well and imaginatively when studying an artist's picture, using expressions such as "the waves are coming and flooding the houses", "I can see a little man in the water". They enjoy looking at each other's work and show pleasure in their friends' achievements. Key Stage 2 pupils share ideas well. They enjoy talking about their own work and can talk about the work of famous artists very knowledgeably, naming paintings and describing styles. For example, when discussing Picasso, pupils were able to express their likes and dislikes in terms such as, "his pictures have muddled up faces", "the little girl looks alright until you look at her ears!" The involvement of visiting artists collaborating with pupils on the millennium project has had a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to the subject and has enhanced the school environment.

143 The teaching observed and evidence from the scrutiny of work and planning, plus discussions, show the teaching to be good. Lessons are well planned and both attainment targets are covered appropriately. There is a separate display policy which aims to make displays around the school "stimulating, informative, of high quality and illustrating children's progress". These aims are fulfilled. Teachers display pupils' work effectively and attractively, supplementing it in display areas with books, plants, artefacts and well executed notices and explanations, often on attractively covered tables. The high standard of display and presentation permeates the whole school and creates a bright, warm and colourful environment for the pupils in sharp contrast to the starkness of the school's exterior. Teachers have a good and increasing knowledge of the subject. There is planning for the appropriate amount of direct teaching in lessons and teachers continually extend pupils' vocabulary in lessons with effective questions such as "Why do you think that?" and "What would you call it?" They value pupils' ideas and opinions and use praise well. Art contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

144 The co-ordinator has a very good knowledge of the subject and she has attended art

courses. The policy and long term planning is in place and implemented throughout the school. Teachers' medium term planning is good with particular units of work planned for each term, for example, the focus this term is on painting, drawing and sculpture. Assessment is ongoing and informs future planning. Collections of photographs of previous work, plus some examples demonstrate pupils' levels of attainment, but a full school portfolio is not yet in place. An art portfolio will provide further and complete evidence of pupils' levels of attainment right across the key stages. Written annual reports inform parents of their children's progress in art. There are opportunities for pupils to visit art galleries and museums but multicultural aspects of visits are incidental rather than specifically planned for.

145 The previous report found pupils' attainment in art below national expectations, teaching to be generally unsatisfactory and that pupils' personal, social and cultural development was not enhanced by the subject. These findings have been addressed and there has been a great improvement in the attainment of pupils, in teaching and in the provision of art in the curriculum and life of the school.

Geography

146 Most of the evidence for geography was obtained by discussing work with teachers and pupils and by scrutinising past work. Little teaching took place during the inspection. Pupils' progress is at least satisfactory in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound understanding of their own environment learned by drawing maps of the school and by taking part in local field studies. They can describe their journey to school giving directions. Many pupils are able to look at a bird's eye view of the school and pick out certain key features. Even younger pupils understand about different weather conditions. They can follow simple symbols and match them to the right type of weather condition. Information technology is used in reception and pupils can choose suitable clothing for wet and cold days.

147 In Key Stage 2 pupils develop a broader understanding of the world they live in. They compare different countries and their lifestyle and investigate reasons for the differences. By the end of the key stage they have a good grasp of how to locate places on a globe and in an atlas. They can trace the route from Middlesborough to Sydney but have no real concept of distance. Most need help to use the scale indicator on the map. Higher attaining pupils showed a quick and detailed knowledge of the water cycle and wrote an imaginative, accurate and dramatic account of the progress of a rain droplet to explain the process. Lower attaining pupils know which way rivers flow. Some graphical work was observed with pupils showing that they understood the changing populations of major cities by drawing graphs and charts. There was little evidence of pupils using information technology at this key stage.

148 Pupils talked with enthusiasm about their geography studies. They were able to find different sources to locate countries. They could use indexes and follow grid references but had less understanding of the key to maps. They had enjoyed working on the computer but did not have enough opportunity yet to do this.

149 Teachers have planned good coverage of the curriculum following the available schemes of work. They have adequate resources to ensure that the topics can be studied effectively. Some higher attaining pupils have produced interesting extension work in their geography folders. In the teaching that was observed some very good features occurred such as ensuring pupils had a clear understanding of technical terms. Good visual resources were brought in to help pupils to see how

water condenses. The questions were both challenging to the more able pupils and were also followed up with carefully planned work for those with special educational needs. The resulting written work showed that all the class understood the topic.

150 There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection particularly in the pace of work for pupils in Key Stage 2. There is still too little use of information technology and not enough opportunities are taken to develop pupils' awareness of multi-cultural issues.

History

151 Pupils' attainment throughout the school is in line with national expectation. Evidence has been drawn from observing lessons, examining pupils' work and by talking to the co-ordinator, staff and pupils. During this term, Years 2 and 6 study geography. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn about the past and changes over time. For example, pupils compare the similarities and differences between homes today and those in the past. They can describe the features of some buildings and the style of home life in the past. They are able to discuss the characteristics of a household object from long ago, for example, a stone hot water bottle or a flat iron, and suggest uses for them. They are beginning to find answers about the past from such sources of information and are increasing their historical vocabulary. By the end of the key stage, pupils are developing an awareness of the past and a sense of chronology and can record their findings effectively.

152 During Key Stage 2, pupils study the Romans, Vikings and the Ancient Greeks. Year 3 pupils are able to discover why the Romans built straight roads and recognise the importance of the roads to specific groups; for example, soldiers, tradesmen and messengers. They can differentiate between fact and opinion; for example, one pupil wrote "If the Romans took over my house, I would feel sad, I would fight them!" As they progress through the key stage, pupils are able to sift information from a range of secondary sources. For example, when studying Viking transport, pupils use books discriminately, accessing information, and explore the contents and index pages with ease. They carefully check the accuracy of what they have discovered. Year 5 pupils can discuss the differences between Athens and Sparta and give informed opinions. For example, they describe Athens as being "civilised" and, on balance, decide they would prefer to live in Athens, despite Sparta having a "stronger army". Pupils learn about all these particular areas in depth and, by the end of Key Stage 2, can make links between events and aspects of former periods. Effective displays, for example, Roman Mosaics and Life in Athens and Sparta, plus accounts in work books, consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding of the period they are studying.

153 All pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress in both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop a sense of historical changes by considering the similarities and differences of artefacts such as irons and lamps from the past and the present. At Key Stage 2, visits to places of interest connected with pupils' work, for example role play at Margrove Park, support pupils' developing understanding and knowledge of the past. Listening, speaking, drawing and extended writing skills are developed and enhanced through pupils' work in history.

154 Pupils' attitudes and responses to learning are good. They listen attentively to the teachers' explanations of historical information and respond well to questioning. Younger pupils co-operate and take turns with resources, handling artefacts with care. Pupils work collaboratively and enjoy talking about the past and the differences between life now and then. For example, a group of Year 1 pupils, when trying to discover what a certain artefact was once used for, volunteered sensible questions such as, "Is the missing part long?", "What comes out of the holes?", "Is it used in the

kitchen?" Pupils in Key Stage 2 show initiative, particularly when explaining or demonstrating work and objects on display. They take a pride in their work which is neatly presented. They are quick to applaud their peers' good work and show real enjoyment of the subject.

155 Teaching throughout both key stages is good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good and planning is focused and effective. The pace of work is appropriate and tasks are well matched to pupils' attainment. There are many cross-curricular links with art and geography. Perceptive, open-ended questions give pupils opportunities to develop investigative and reasoning skills and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past. For example, when investigating objects from the past, pupils are able to find out what they are through such questions as "When do you think it was used?", "Was it used in a special place, on a special day?", "Was it used outside or inside?" Teachers have a good rapport with pupils and are supportive and encouraging.

156 Resources are good and easily accessible. There is a wide range of interesting and informative books for research and a good collection of artefacts and videos. More resources can be obtained from the Library Resource Service. The co-ordinator is keenly interested in promoting the subject and the policy was reviewed in 1999. The school has recently adopted the nationally promoted DFEE scheme and will be reviewing it next year. Assessments at the end of each topic or unit of work, in addition to ongoing assessment, inform future planning. Assessments are recorded in pupils' books and in pupils' annual reports to parents.

157 At present there is no provision for the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching in the classroom. The co-ordinator has attended a curriculum course, but there has been no recent staff development in the subject. More opportunities for pupils to visit museums and places of interest plus more visitors to talk to the pupils in school would be beneficial and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

158 The previous report found attainment in history to be satisfactory, but that pupils did not gain understanding in moral, social and cultural education through history. This issue has now been addressed and history contributes well to pupils' social and moral education.

Music

159 Music is taught every other week to each class by a music specialist. Class teachers follow up this work with their individual classes during the intervening week. Pupils in both key stages follow The Voices Foundation Scheme which aims to develop not only musical skills, but the whole child, through singing. All staff are involved in the scheme. In addition, there is provision from the Education Action Zone for classes in guitar and a school recorder group. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2.

160 Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with standards expected of pupils of their age. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to pitch replies to phrases sung by the teacher and sing their names in the correct rhythm. They can clap and stamp in time to the pulse or rhythm of a piece and Year 2 pupils are able to divide into two groups with one group clapping the pulse and the other group, the rhythm or pattern of the piece. They have a growing understanding of tempo and dynamics evidenced in their singing of "What does the clock in the hall say?" In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to clap more complicated rhythms and in the singing game "Cherry Pie" can beat the pulse effectively whilst singing the rhythm. They are able to distinguish between pulse and

rhythm and have a developing sense of pitch. They respond well to hand signs and sing in response, thus laying the foundation for learning sol fah. As they progress through the key stage, they are able to repeat more complicated sequences with their voices and listen attentively. By the end of the key stage, pupils can continue with the rhythm of a piece through "silent" passages and have a good understanding of pitch, rhythm and pulse. They listen to each other's "compositions" and perform unselfconsciously.

161 The implementation of the new scheme and the appointment of the music specialist earlier this year, have had a positive impact on pupils' learning. The introduction of the scheme to all classes simultaneously, makes it impossible to judge precisely the progression throughout the key stages but, already there is evidence that the older, more mature pupils are covering the elements faster than the younger ones. Within the many lessons observed across both key stages, pupils made at least satisfactory and often good progress. For example, Year 1 pupils were able to learn a new song "Joiner Joiner" and make good progress in recognising the rhythm and pulse. Year 3 pupils learn to co-ordinate body movements with rhythms and to handle and play new instruments effectively. Pupils are making progress in appraising each other's performances and in starting and finishing a piece at the correct time by watching the conductor.

162 Pupils enjoy the lessons and participate enthusiastically. They listen attentively and perform confidently. Key Stage 1 pupils show delight in singing games, such as "Hickety, tickety, bumble bee. They wait excitedly for the object being passed round to stop so that the "lucky" person can sing his or her name back accurately! Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy playing "Simple Simon" during which they create different rhythms and sing joyfully. They are keen to recognise intervals and hand signs, for example, thirds, "soh me" and going up in steps, "doh ray me", leading eventually to their own compositions.

163 The teaching of the music specialist, supported by class teachers, is good. The music teacher has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic and energetic. A very good pace is maintained throughout the lessons. The teacher's commitment to the Voices Foundation programme ensures that pupils develop their singing voices and the singing within the lessons is good. The programme has not been in operation very long and the pupils have not yet transferred their singing skills to the hymn singing in assemblies. The use of a recorder, guitar or support by the first note of the hymns being played on the piano, would help pupils to pitch hymns correctly and so benefit the pupils' singing and worship. In lessons and activities involving music, where teachers' knowledge is less good, teaching is not as rigorous. There are no opportunities, as yet, for the more gifted musicians to perform together, for example in a choir or an instrumental group. A whole staff training session to implement the scheme has taken place with follow up in-class support from the advisory teacher.

164 Resources are good. There is a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and a good selection of music books, cassettes and discs. Information technology has not yet been incorporated into the teaching of music. Visiting musicians, for example an autoharpist and an expert on classical music, plus opportunities for pupils to participate in Christmas celebrations at the cathedral and the school's Christmas celebrations, enhance pupils' music making and their knowledge of composers and styles of music.

165 The previous inspection indicated that the music curriculum was fragmented and that the whole curriculum should be developed to make "appropriate provision for pupils' creative and aesthetic learning". The new music initiative and the reviewing of the music policy, together with teachers' planning are addressing these issues. Music in the school is contributing to pupils'

creative and aesthetic learning and the vision of the Voices Foundation scheme that, "music can have a vast impact on the lives of individuals and their communities" is beginning to be implemented.

Physical Education

166 Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in both key stages in physical education. The progress of several pupils in gymnastics in the younger classes in Key Stage 2 and in swimming is good, however. In Key Stage 1 pupils show some imagination in devising journeys across a mat. Most are gaining independence of thought but they work well together when carrying small equipment. They are aware of the technical terms for some of the apparatus. Some pupils show grace and control in simple movements but they have less co-ordination when they try to put together a sequence of activities or try to follow what others are doing. Few have developed a sense of finding space and they need more practice in working in pairs and groups.

167 In Key Stage 2 pupils run quickly from place to place with good control. They stopped quickly when asked. They showed understanding of health and safety rules. Most pupils make sound progress when they listen carefully. Younger classes in this key stage are ready to try to refine their actions and good teaching helps them to progress well in gymnastics. In football, older boys and girls learn new skills and by the end of the lesson can trap the ball, pass with accuracy and run into space. Most apply the techniques to good effect in the small games that follow.

168 Response to physical education is usually good or very good in Key Stage 2 and at least satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Some pupils are a little slow to settle when they warm up but they all thoroughly enjoy football. There are not many regular opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and build on their great enthusiasm in clubs and teams. Many boys and girls play with vigour every break time under adult supervision in the playground

169 The teaching of physical education is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and often good in Key Stage 2. Good teaching emphasises the importance of listening to ensure safety and control. Groups in games are briskly organised and pupils know what is expected of them. In gymnastics there was some very good questioning of pupils to make them think about how to achieve good quality performances in their sequence work. This was accompanied by demonstrations of good practice by some pupils. Less successful teaching missed some opportunities to have pupils themselves explain what was good in a performance. Consequently they were not always sure what they had to do to improve.

170 Since the last inspection the school has maintained its good standards in games and improved the gymnastics in Key Stage 2. There is still room for improvement in dance and gymnastics in Key Stage 1.

Swimming

171 The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming which is reported below.

172 There is good provision of swimming. All pupils in Key Stage 2 have swimming lessons. The vast majority attains the standard set for the end of the key stage and a substantial proportion

exceeds it. In lessons they make good progress on the breaststroke developing correct skills and techniques to propel them at reasonable speed. There are very few non-swimmers; over 90 per cent of the pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres. The school has no additional provision for pupils who cannot swim during Year 6.

173 Most pupils have good attitudes to swimming. They try hard and listen carefully to instructions. Most are confident in the water. Those who find swimming difficult are provided with suitable support and they also try their best.

174 The teaching of swimming is satisfactory with some good features. Activities are planned carefully and instructions and demonstrations are clear. Teachers make pupils aware of safety in the pool. Swimming provision is good although the time taken up by travelling reduces the time available for other subjects on some days. Each group has a full 30 minutes of swimming time per week.

175 Swimming is an integral part of the curriculum and is timetabled for pupils from the summer term of Year 3 to the spring term of Year 6.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

176 A team of 5 inspectors carried out the inspection over a period of 4.5 days. The team:

- observed 66 lessons or parts of lessons;
- listened to pupils in each year group read;
- scrutinised samples of pupils' work;
- examined the school's register of special educational needs;
- discussed aspects of their work and school life with the pupils;
- attended school assemblies which included collective worship;
- examined the current school development plan and school policy documents;
- studied teachers' planning and pupils' records;
- interviewed the headteacher, staff and members of the governing body;
- analysed the school's budget;
- held a meeting for parents prior to the inspection;
- analysed the responses in 55 completed questionnaires returned by parents;
- checked the attendance registers and observed the daily registration of children;
- examined the school's Annual Reports to Parents.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	201	0	43	90
Nursery Unit	24	0	0	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

10.1

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

29

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff

4

Total aggregate hours worked each week

105

Qualified teachers (Nursery unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

1

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

24

Education support staff (Nursery unit)

Total number of education support staff

1

Total aggregate hours worked each week

30

Average class size:

25

Financial data

Financial year:

1998-1999

£

Total Income	340,681
Total Expenditure	344,435
Expenditure per pupil	1,504
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,237
Balance carried forward to next year	12,483

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

150

Number of questionnaires returned:

55

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	53	47	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	50	50	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	29	57	6	8	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	37	54	6	4	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	40	51	2	7	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	44	53	2	2	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	35	54	10	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	33	54	7	4	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	40	56	4	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	36	58	2	4	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	55	44	2	0	0