

INSPECTION REPORT

SACRED HEART RC SCHOOL

Hindsford, Atherton, Manchester

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106499

Headteacher: Mrs Marie Stewart

Reporting inspector: Paula Allison
21420

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th March 2001

Inspection number: 234041

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Lodge Lane
Hindsford
Atherton
Manchester

Postcode: M46 9BN

Telephone number: 01942 883429

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Alan Charlton

Date of previous inspection: 15th September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21420	Paula Allison	Registered inspector	Science Art Design and technology Physical education Foundation stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19443	Nancy Walker	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21666	Andrew Margerison	Team inspector	English History Geography Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught?
1951	Yvonne Crizzle	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart is a small Catholic primary school, with 153 boys and girls on roll. Virtually all pupils are of white ethnic origin. The school serves the local community and parish, but also takes children from Catholic families who live further afield. Immediately surrounding the school is an area of mixed housing and families living in a range of socio-economic circumstances. There is a rising rate of unemployment and many families on low incomes. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average, as is the percentage of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs. However, results of assessments made as children enter the school indicate that attainment is usually below what is expected for children of this age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Pupils and parents are justly proud of their school. Sacred Heart is a caring and supportive Christian community in which pupils work hard and achieve well. Standards are high, pupils' attitudes are positive and their behaviour is very good. The quality of teaching is consistently good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and governors are very supportive and committed to the school. Hard work and determination on the part of all who are involved with the school have led to significant improvements being made in recent years. The school is very effective and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in National Curriculum tests are high and pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes, they want to learn and they work hard.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good; they are courteous and respect others.
- Pupils are well cared for; relationships are supportive.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and this ensures that pupils learn effectively.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership; governors are committed to the school and support it effectively.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported; they make very good progress.
- The school's links with parents are excellent; parents support the school very well; they are involved with the school and with their children's learning.

What could be improved

The school has no significant weaknesses, but staff and governors have plans to develop even further the quality of the provision.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Sacred Heart has developed positively since it came together on one site in 1996. Since the last inspection in September 1997 the school has made considerable improvement. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen significantly. The quality of the teaching and the curriculum has improved and this has led to much higher standards. The school responded positively to the issues from the last inspection and has tackled them effectively. There are now no significant weaknesses in any aspect of its work. However, the school is committed to further improvement and has clear plans for future development.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

A means that pupils' results are very high in comparison with the national average; the school's results are within the range of the top five per cent of schools across the country.*

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. In mathematics and science they are well above those achieved in similar schools. This is a considerable improvement on the standards found at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards have also improved and are now very high when compared with the national average and with similar schools. These high standards are the result of more focused teaching, improvements in the way assessment is used to set targets, and a determined effort on the part of teachers to ensure that pupils achieve the best they can.

Work seen during the inspection indicates that the high standards will be maintained in Key Stage 1, but may be lower this year in Key Stage 2. The school has set challenging targets, but there are a number of pupils with special educational needs in the oldest class, and it may be difficult for the school to reach the standards they hope to.

Standards in all other subjects are broadly in line with what is expected. Standards are higher than this in art and design and design and technology, subjects that are particularly well led and taught.

Children usually enter the school with attainment levels that are below what is expected for children of this age. They make good progress in the reception class and most enter Year 1 having achieved the expected levels in most areas of learning. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They are expected to work hard and are set targets, which gives them something to aim for. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make very good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are keen to learn and they work hard. They are interested in what they are doing and maintain concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils behave responsibly at all times. They are courteous and show respect for other people.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Relationships in school are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a major strength of the school and they have a clear impact on the progress pupils make.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. Most teaching was at least good (83 per cent); over a quarter was very good (28 per cent).

The quality of teaching in the school is consistently good. There are particular strengths in the teaching of basic skills, for example in literacy and numeracy lessons. These lessons are very carefully planned and pupils effectively acquire the skills they need. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they set them challenging targets. This inspires pupils to work hard and do their best. Teachers manage pupils very well, expecting them to behave sensibly and to concentrate on what they are doing. Relationships in classes are positive and supportive; pupils feel secure and are not afraid to try things out, even when they find the work difficult. Teachers are enthusiastic, which motivates pupils. The good quality of support staff makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make.

The quality of teaching is more consistent than it was at the last inspection; planning is better and lessons are more focused. The good quality of teaching and its impact on their children are recognised by all parents. The hard work and commitment of teachers have been major factors in the improvement in standards.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is rich and varied, and provides a range of learning opportunities for pupils. The implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has had a major impact on standards. But there are also strengths in investigative science and in art and design and design and technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. It is well managed and pupils are supported effectively by quality support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good; for pupils' cultural development it is good. The Christian ethos of the school provides a spiritual basis for its work and a clear framework for behaviour and social relationships.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils. Health and safety and other procedures are well established. Assessment procedures are very good.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school's links with parents are excellent. Parents are kept fully informed and involved. They are supportive of the school and of their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is an excellent leader. She provides clear direction for the work of the school and has the confidence of staff, governors, parents and pupils. A team approach to development has been effective in enabling all teachers to be involved in making improvement and taking the school forward.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed to the school and they work hard to support the headteacher and staff. They are closely involved with the work of the school and are now taking a more active role in monitoring the standards achieved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teachers analyse results of tests and assessments and use this information to help pupils to improve. There is a strong commitment to high standards and quality in all aspects of the school's work.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses available resources very well and takes care to look at what is offering best value. The recent improvements to the accommodation have had a major impact on the organisation and ethos of the school. The accommodation is very well cared for and maintained.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • Teaching is good • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. • Children make good progress. • Behaviour in the school is good. • Parents are involved with the school. • Communication with parents is very good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents feel that the range of activities outside lessons is not sufficient.

The inspection team fully endorses the positive views of parents.

Additional comment

There is a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons, with a good emphasis on sports. However, as with most schools, these are mainly only available to the older pupils in school.

OTHER INFORMATION

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection in 1997, although even by then standards were improving from what they had been in previous years. Pupils now consistently achieve at levels that are above and often well above both the national average and those achieved by similar schools. These high standards are the result of more focused teaching, improvements in the curriculum and the use of assessment, and a determined effort on the part of the headteacher and teachers to ensure that pupils achieve the best they can.
- 2 In last year's end of key stage tests, the attainment of seven year olds in reading, writing and mathematics was very high in comparison with all schools nationally, and in comparison with similar schools. The attainment of eleven year olds in English, mathematics and science was above the national average and compared very well with similar schools, being above similar schools in English and well above in mathematics and science.
- 3 Currently, attainment by the age of seven is above average. Most pupils are working at expected levels and many are working at levels above this. Attainment by the age of eleven is more variable, because there are a number of pupils with special educational needs in the oldest class and fewer pupils than usual likely to achieve above expected levels. However, the school has set challenging targets and is determined to reach them. The attainment of boys and girls is very similar, except in literacy, where sometimes boys do not achieve as well as girls do. This has been recognised by the school and there is currently a project developing with the aim of promoting an interest in literacy amongst boys throughout the school.
- 4 Standards in *speaking and listening* are good. By the age of seven, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and take part in discussions, making relevant and appropriate comments. By eleven, pupils are listening to each other, choosing their words carefully and communicating their ideas clearly. Standards in *reading* are also good. Seven year olds read simple texts fluently and accurately and have a good understanding of what they are reading. They read expressively when reading aloud to emphasise the meaning of the text. Eleven year olds read passages of prose, poetry or factual text fluently and with good expression. Throughout the school pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the books they like.
- 5 Standards in *writing* have improved considerably. By the age of seven, pupils use a joined script, spell most words correctly and have a good idea of how to use basic punctuation, such as full stops and capital letters. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils write for varied purposes and match the vocabulary they use to different audiences. *Literacy skills* are used well in other subjects. For example, pupils are set research tasks in design and technology and geography, which involve them in reading to locate information and making notes. In science, pupils are encouraged to talk about their findings and record their observations in their own words. A good example of this was in Year 2 when pupils described what changes they saw as ice melted and confidently recorded their observation on a chart.
- 6 Standards in *mathematics are good*. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate a good understanding of place value. They count in fives and tens and use skills with

multiplication and division to help them solve problems. By Year 6 pupils have further developed their understanding of place value and now deal confidently with large numbers. They double and halve numbers and use fractions and decimals accurately. They investigate numbers and look for patterns to help them solve problems. *Numeracy skills* are used to support other subjects. For example in science and geography pupils measure accurately in centimetres and use graphs of different kinds to record their findings.

- 7 Standards in *science* are good. Seven year olds have begun to acquire a range of knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the subject, for example they know about the properties of different materials and they talk about changes that occur. Eleven year olds demonstrate a very good level of knowledge and understanding of aspects of science, for example they know about forces, such as gravity, and processes such as how shadows are formed. A major strength of the subject is the confidence with which investigative skills are being developed and used throughout the school.
- 8 Standards in all other subjects have improved since the last inspection and are now at least in line with what is expected. Standards are higher than this in art and design and design and technology, subjects that are particularly well led and taught. Provision for information and communication technology has improved considerably after a change in co-ordinator and this has brought about much better standards. There are still some weaknesses in some aspects of the subject, but these are rapidly being dealt with. The limited amount of physical education observed during the inspection indicates that standards are broadly in line with what is expected and the new co-ordinator has ensured that the curriculum is now better organised. However the subject does suffer from some lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of teachers.
- 9 Pupils achieve well through the school. They are challenged by the precise teaching and they work hard and make good progress. Information from assessments carried out in the reception class indicates that attainment on entry is usually below what is expected for children of this age, although this can vary from year to year. Children make good progress in the reception class and most leave the foundation year achieving at the levels expected in all areas of learning.
- 10 Pupils then make good progress through the school. They gain skills and develop their knowledge and understanding. They work hard and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs often make very good progress as their needs are carefully identified and they are supported effectively. They make very good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they achieve much better than their performance in the Key Stage 1 tests would suggest. For example, of the number of pupils in Year 6 on the register of special educational needs, three-quarters are likely to achieve the expected level in English, although at the age of seven they were below that point.
- 11 Higher attaining pupils achieve well, as results demonstrate. There is a much higher percentage of pupils achieving at above average levels than might be expected. This is as a result of the teachers' high expectations and the climate of the school that encourages good achievement. Changes in the curriculum, for example the emphasis on investigation in mathematics and science and on research in other subjects, has meant that higher attaining pupils are well challenged and can work independently.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 12 Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour both in and out of school, and their personal development, are all very good and this is a strong feature of the school. Parents are particularly pleased with the values that are promoted by the school and the way in which in which their own children are encouraged to work hard and respect others. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and in some aspects such as personal development there have been improvements even on that. The very good attitudes and behaviour have a positive effect on the standards that are achieved.
- 13 Attitudes are very good. Pupils are keen to come to school. Attendance is very good and pupils arrive in good time in the mornings. After breaks and lunch times they show no disappointment at having to resume lessons and they settle very quickly. Pupils listen carefully to what is being said and they follow instructions promptly and without any fuss. They concentrate throughout their lessons. They are enthusiastic and well motivated. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson pupils were interested in an investigation into how quickly ice melted. They kept up the interest throughout the day and were found to be enthusiastically talking about what had happened just before they went home in the afternoon.
- 14 Pupils behave very well in lessons, around the school, at playtimes, and on visits out of school. An example of this very good behaviour was seen when Year 4 pupils walked to their swimming lesson at a local pool. Similarly, when Year 3 pupils went to study the site of their old school building as part of their geography work on the environment, their behaviour was faultless. It is not surprising that there have been no exclusions over at least the past six years and that the school receives many complimentary letters about pupils' behaviour out of school.
- 15 Relationships throughout the school, between the pupils themselves and between pupils and teachers and other adults, are excellent. Pupils often show an appreciation of each other's work and achievements. This was seen in many lessons during the inspection, including an art lesson where Year 5 and 6 pupils genuinely appreciated what others had done and could evaluate it constructively. Another example of these positive relationships was seen during an afternoon break time when a group of girls were practising their netball shooting skills. The amount of encouragement and support they gave to one another, and the sense of fair-play which they showed, was a delight to observe.
- 16 Pupils present themselves very well, they are polite and they take a pride in their own appearance and that of the school. For instance, the attractive and interesting displays of pupils' work throughout the school are not tampered with or spoiled in any way and there is no litter whatsoever on the floor either inside or outside in the grounds.
- 17 Pupils are entrusted with many jobs and play a full part in the general administration tasks around the school. For example, pupils select the equipment they need in lessons, they return registers to the office and they deliver the milk and toast snack at morning break. They organise charity events and collection of money. The school council plays a full part in suggesting and implementing new ideas and improvements on the behalf of all pupils throughout the school. The way in which pupils carry out these duties is a credit to them. They go about their business in a sensible and mature way; so much so that it is often hardly noticeable.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 18 Teaching is consistently good with many strengths. All of the teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory; in 83 per cent of the lessons the teaching was at least good and in 28 per cent of lessons the teaching was very good. Since the last

inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching; in particular there is now no unsatisfactory teaching, a higher proportion of very good teaching and teaching is more consistent across the school. The strengths in the teaching identified in the last inspection have been maintained, notably the very good management and organisation of pupils, but teachers have worked hard since the last inspection to improve those areas identified as key issues. The quality of teaching is recognised by parents and has a positive impact on standards. Teachers and support staff work very well together, and between them they provide a good range of teaching approaches for all pupils, regardless of age and ability.

- 19 Teaching for the foundation stage is good. The teacher is sensitive to the needs of young children and has established a secure environment in which children grow in confidence. The teaching of basic skills is good and there is an effective emphasis on personal and social development.
- 20 Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 has many strengths. Lessons are consistently of a very good pace, resources and support staff used very well to support pupils with special educational needs or groups within lessons, and teaching methods challenge pupils of all abilities. Pupils are very interested and enthusiastic, and the very consistent management and the brisk pace of most lessons ensure that pupils' attention and concentration is well maintained. Consequently, they make good gains in the skills, knowledge and understanding.
- 21 Teachers throughout the school are very good at teaching and reinforcing pupils' basic skills in language and mathematics. For example, in many lessons teachers take any opportunities that arise to remind pupils of basic punctuation or to involve pupils in reading out loud. In a Year 1 information and communication technology lesson, the teacher checked pupils' ability to read a word bank as part of the introduction before moving on to the main activity. Pupils are expected to record for themselves, to write notes and reports in their own words and to research specific topics. For example, in Year 4, pupils had to investigate one aspect of life in Ancient Egypt using a range of sources of information.
- 22 Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and they plan lessons effectively, which leads to secure learning. This aspect of teaching that has improved very well since the last inspection. In most classes there are now clear learning targets for lessons so teachers know what they expect pupils to learn. Teachers and support staff know pupils very well and take their needs into account when planning lessons. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson looking at light and shadow, the detailed planning meant that the teacher organised practical activities that challenged all pupils and enabled them to develop a much more secure understanding. By the end of the lesson most had a sound understanding of how the distance of an object from a light source affects the size of its shadow.
- 23 Teaching in art and design and design and technology is particularly good throughout the school. The co-ordinator has had a positive impact on standards achieved and she supports teachers well in planning their lessons. Teachers are enthusiastic about these subjects and they have a good level of knowledge and understanding. This is evident in their planning and in the high standards they set pupils. They encourage pupils to evaluate their work and improve it. Occasionally teachers lack the confidence and in-depth subject knowledge to fully extend and develop pupils' skills. This was particularly noticeable in physical education lessons.
- 24 The improvement in planning since the last inspection is also reflected in the improvement in the use of ongoing assessment. Marking is helpful and informative,

particularly in English and science, although it is weaker in mathematics, where comments give less help to pupils about how they can improve. Open-ended questions are generally used effectively to check pupils' understanding during class discussion.

- 25 Teachers and support staff use a wide range of methods in lessons. They challenge pupils to think and encourage them to work hard. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are expected to work on tasks independently, but support staff generally have a clear understanding of their role so they can prompt them, rephrase questions and guide them appropriately. As a result of the practical approaches used in many lessons and the very good relationships between staff and pupils, pupils learn essential skills, such as investigative science and mathematics observation and recording, very well. In a few lessons, such as in information and communication technology lesson in Year 1, introductory sessions go on too long so the pace of the lesson slows and pupils are not sufficiently involved in activities.
- 26 Although teachers do not very often share the objectives of the lessons with pupils, clear explanations and explicit instructions reflect the high expectations the majority of teachers have in most lessons, so pupils know what is expected of them. When teachers explain the purpose of a lesson, pupils respond very well trying very hard to do activities to the best of their ability. For example, the teacher carefully explained the aim of a geography field visit to the site of the old school so pupils knew exactly what they were looking for and they drew sketches and took photographs to record what they saw.
- 27 Very good use is made of resources to illustrate points and to provide a focus for discussions. For example, in the introduction to a Year 2 history lesson on how life has changed since Victorian times the teacher had some different teapots and loose tea in a caddy. The pupils' were amazed when they realised the loose tea was the same as in teabags. The use of information and communication technology is much improved from the last inspection. In many of the lessons seen during the inspection teachers made sure that some pupils worked on the computers. Information and communication technology is used extensively in most subjects to record their work, such as to word process their work in English or to record measurements on charts in science. In geography, pupils use the computers to find illustrations to include in project work on mountains and present their work well using word processing and spreadsheets.
- 28 Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well. They make very good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils, who are withdrawn from class to work with classroom support staff or specialist teachers, benefit from work that is tightly structured and focused upon developing specific basic skills. For example, the two pupils in Year 6 withdrawn for work with a specialist teacher for literacy work are encouraged to work intensively upon basic skills. For pupils with difficulties such as visual impairment or specific speech and language, classroom support staff use the advice and learning programmes provided by external specialist staff well to plan activities. In class lessons, support staff are generally used effectively to prompt and help pupils during whole class discussions and to work with groups. The planning takes account into account the needs of pupils with learning difficulties by ensuring that independent work matches their ability.
- 29 Homework is well used to support and extend the work in class. Reading diaries are used throughout the school by teachers, support staff and parents as an effective means of recording work done at home. The expectation that pupils will do some work at home each night, either research, writing or reading, prepares the oldest pupils very

well for moving on to secondary school.

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

- 30 The quality and range of learning opportunities throughout the school are good and is much improved from the last inspection. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, although there are some aspects of information and communication technology are not yet fully taught. In the previous inspection, there were a number of key issues relating to the curriculum. The school has addressed these and the improved planning and support for teachers has had a positive impact on standards achieved.
- 31 In the foundation stage the curriculum is good. All areas of learning are provided for and there is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and personal and social development. The curriculum for pupils from the age of five to eleven has been thoroughly revised to include all subjects, with an appropriate allocation of time for each subject per year group. The school has produced a detailed curriculum outline. There are well-planned links with literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum and some subjects are usefully linked together, which enables teachers to teach essential skills systematically. This benefits pupils well as they apply their learning from one subject to another. For example, in music they draw on their literacy skills to write about their feelings when they listen to a piece of music.
- 32 The school has made good use of new national guidance and the national literacy and numeracy strategies to provide an interesting and relevant curriculum for all pupils, which meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum. There are well-defined plans to review the curriculum, the allocation of time to subjects, and the effectiveness of the cross-curricular links after a 12 month period. Medium term plans are detailed and daily lesson plans have clearly identified and appropriate learning objectives. The curriculum for literacy and numeracy is particularly detailed and provide good models for developing other subjects.
- 33 All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school monitors progress to ensure that all pupils are achieving as expected. The detailed analysis of test results undertaken by the school has helped them to identify the need to raise standards in boys' reading. Consequently, the school is making sure that there are suitable books of sufficient interest to encourage boys to become better readers. Pupils are provided with support and opportunities to work individually and in small groups outside the classroom. This is very beneficial, but these pupils miss whole or parts of lessons. They are not always given the opportunity to catch up with the work they have missed when they return to class.
- 34 Since the school was last inspected the provision for pupils with special educational needs has continued to improve so it is now very good. The school has established a comprehensive policy that is reflected in the everyday provision and complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice. There are individual education plans for each pupil on the register of special educational needs with targets that are specific and measurable. The education plans are reviewed at least termly and parents and any other adults involved are invited. They provide very good guidance to class teachers and are used well to plan individual work for pupils when they are working with the support staff in the classroom or in withdrawal sessions.

- 35 The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. There is a scheme of work for each year group. The school makes good use of the school nurse and local initiatives which include the police, the health and drug education teams to support their oldest pupils in learning about drug misuse and sex education. There are plans to target the Year 6 pupils and deliver a programme to support them as they move into Year 7 in their secondary school. The Life Education Caravan visits the school for a week every 18 months and provides useful information and guidance to support the developing child.
- 36 There are very good links with the parish and community. There is a good sense of community underpinned by a strong and appropriate Catholic ethos. This contributes to pupils' learning very well. Pupils are taken to places of historic and topical interest, linked to schoolwork and to broaden their knowledge of the world generally. The school arranges visits for pupils out of school and welcomes visitors into school, and emphasises the educational value of both. The school has begun to incorporate citizenship in the curriculum for its older pupils, and to draw on the many features of school, home and community life that impact on growth and development. There are links with neighbouring schools. For example, pupils visit their new school for two days before they transfer to it and teachers from the high school come to observe literacy and numeracy lessons.
- 37 The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of its pupils. Provision for cultural development is good. This is good improvement in most aspects since the previous inspection. The school's mission statement and aims are firmly established and are active in all aspects of school life. This provides a positive foundation for pupils' personal development.
- 38 The Christian ethos of the school gives the school a strong spiritual basis for its work. The attention that is paid to pupils' spiritual development is apparent in the supportive relationships in the school, which encourage pupils to respect the feelings of others. The care with which they are treated encourages pupils to treat others with the same kind of care. This was apparent in the reception class when the teacher had created an ethos of trust so that in a game children laughed at their own mistakes and joined in the fun. The enthusiasm of teachers for their subjects often creates situations in which pupils feel a sense of wonder. For example, the appearance of artefacts, such as designer chairs in a Year 4 lesson and masks in a Year 5/6 lesson, captured pupils' imagination.
- 39 Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils are clear about what is right and wrong. This starts well in the reception class, where expectations are very clear and children soon learn what is acceptable behaviour. Later in school pupils begin to take responsibility for their own behaviour and are aware of how what they do affects others. Class rules are clearly posted in classrooms along with consequences so pupils know exactly what to expect if they are responsible for unacceptable behaviour. The consistent approach supports all pupils well in their moral development.
- 40 Visitors to school and teachers talk to pupils about real life situations at home and further afield and help pupils develop a sense of moral values. Adults approach this sensitively and nurture in pupils a developing interest in people and the circumstances in which they find themselves. There is a concern for how people cope in situations that are very uncomfortable or disturbing. This developing empathy is particularly evident amongst younger children who begin to ask sensible questions and relate how

they would feel in similar circumstances. For example, when Year 1 pupils heard about a tragedy in a school in China, they were helped to think about the families and friends of those children who died. In an assembly, pupils learnt about people who live in difficult and lonely circumstances, for example, sleeping in streets and using newspapers for blankets. Once again, the emphasis was on developing empathy.

- 41 Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils have many opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility, self-confidence, self-esteem and to show initiative. These include helping in class to give out and collect books, collecting and delivering registers, operating the overhead projector and taking part in the school council. In some lessons, pupils have opportunity to work with partners or within a group and they develop useful social and collaborative skills in this way.
- 42 The school positively supports pupils in relating well to one another and to teachers and visitors to the school. The supportive way in which teachers work with each other gives pupils a positive model on which to base their own relationships with others. Pupils also develop a wider awareness of people in difficult circumstances through an understanding of the value and importance of helping, giving and prayer.
- 43 Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. There are strong cultural links through the church and the local community. There are many opportunities provided for pupils to appreciate their local community, for example in taking part in fund raising events or listening to local people when they come in to talk. The many visits and visitors used to enhance the curriculum provide a breadth of experience for pupils and they gain an appreciation of their own cultural traditions. There are some efforts made to provide pupils with an understanding of other cultural traditions, for example through the books and pictures and artefacts which teachers select. However, this is a developing area and does not yet fully ensure that pupils are prepared for living in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 44 The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils. It is even better than it was at the last inspection. Parents are confident in the level of care the school provides for their children. The school places emphasis on care for the individual and this gives a very good basis for how the school looks after pupils.
- 45 The headteacher, staff and governors provide a school where pupils can feel safe and secure. The school caretaker works hard to ensure the building and grounds are kept clean and free from any hazards. Health and safety inspections are regularly carried out in school, and before pupils are taken on out of school visits, teachers consider any possible dangers and do what they can to limit those dangers. The school is meticulous in the way it carries out its responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for child protection and has a clear understanding of her duty. There are very clear reporting and recording systems, which all staff follow and they are vigilant in ensuring that all pupils receive the care that they are entitled to both in and out of school.
- 46 All adults in the school are very good role models for pupils to respect and look up to and relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils are praised rather than criticised. As a result, pupils feel secure and comfortable in coming to school. They are confident about asking and answering questions in lessons, and are willing to try something without fear of humiliation should they get it wrong.

- 47 There are very effective measures to promote good behaviour both through the Catholic principles of care and consideration for others, as well as through the school systems such as the 'Cosmic Award Scheme'. This is a system of rules, rewards and sanctions, which is consistently and fairly applied in all classes throughout the school. Even though incidents of bullying or harassment are very rare, the school council which is run by pupils from each class supported by the headteacher, is currently looking at ways of ensuring that children are supported in every way. They are considering the possibility of introducing a 'worry box' for pupils to post their concerns into, and 'playground buddies' for others to turn to if they are upset in any way.
- 48 Attendance is also similarly well promoted through class and individual awards and through the very high priority that the headteacher gives to it in newsletters and through discussions with parents. These measures have resulted in a very high level of attendance, which has had a significant impact on pupils' progress.
- 49 The impact of support on pupils with special educational needs in the classroom is very positive. The support staff have very good relationships with pupils and use this effectively to encourage, guide and support their academic and personal development. They have a very good awareness of the personal as well as the academic needs of their pupils, helping to create a safe and secure environment for them.
- 50 As part of the action plan following the last inspection, the school had to develop a whole school approach to assessment and to identify assessment opportunities within planning. The school has made very good progress in this area so the procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils attainment are now very good. The main focus has, quite rightly, been English, mathematics and science, but some of the foundation subjects such as geography and history have a system where pieces of pupils' work are used to check their progress. In addition, the school is developing the assessments in the national subject guidelines to provide a secure framework.
- 51 Since the last inspection, the school has introduced the government devised tests into Years 3, 4 and 5 to supplement the statutory assessments for pupils aged seven and eleven, has introduced a further test in Year 1 and established a system of assessing the youngest children in the foundation stage. The school carefully analyses this information to evaluate the progress of individual pupils, and this gives teachers a good basis up on which to plan lessons and group pupils. Recently, the school has introduced a process of tracking four pupils in each year using portfolios of work to support the end of year tests. This information is used to involve pupils in setting their own targets.
- 52 The school also uses the tests, including the assessments of the youngest children at the foundation stage, to identify pupils who have special educational needs. The very effective and thorough use of the information means that pupils are identified early so that have good access to any specific help they need. This awareness contributes to the very good progress pupils with special educational needs make. Additional support and assessment information is gained from external support staff, whose advice is well used to produce individual learning programmes for pupils. Pupils with statements of special educational needs get excellent support because the school ensures that all the requirements of the statement are provided.
- 53 The school does not have formal procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development, but all adults know pupils very well and are fully aware of their needs so they are able to make sure that they are very well supported. This is helped by the adults throughout the school having consistent expectations of behaviour in classrooms and around the school. They are very aware of pupils who may need extra

help in lessons or in other aspects of the school. This caring and supportive structure is a product of the community nature of the school where the contribution of all adults and pupils are valued

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 54 The school does all it can to involve its parents in a partnership concerning the education of children. This is a strong feature of the school and one which has improved since the last inspection. Parents hold the school in high regard and have very positive views of all aspects of its provision.
- 55 The school's links with parents are excellent. Parents are kept very well informed of the daily life and events of the school through detailed and interesting weekly newsletters. They are provided with a booklet at the start of each school year detailing what will be taught in every subject and setting out numeracy and literacy targets. They are given clear guidance on how to help their child at home with reading, mathematics, and other homework tasks, and they are kept fully informed of what homework will be given and when.
- 56 The home/school reading records are particularly well used and much appreciated by parents as a method of on-going communication between parents and teachers. They successfully encourage parents to continue to support their child's learning at home. The individual progress reports provided for parents at the end of the year are very good and give parents a clear idea of what progress their children are making. They include targets for the future and suggestions for ways in which parents can help their children.
- 57 A number of parents provide valuable help on a voluntary basis in lessons, around the school, and on visits. Parents take a keen interest in their child's progress; they hear their children read regularly at home, and there is almost 100 per cent attendance at parents' meetings with teachers. There is a very active parent/teacher association known as 'The Friends of Sacred Heart School' and with support from parents, friends, and members of the Parish, raise large sums of money every year. These efforts have enabled the school to invest in improvements to the building and in resources to support pupils' learning.
- 58 The involvement of parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are invited to each review meetings, kept fully informed of what is being done in school to help their child and, on occasions, have particular roles to play in the individual education plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 59 The school has clear aims and values based on the Christian faith, which are reflected in all aspects of the school's work. They are apparent in the value put on the individual, the care and respect people hold for each other and the pride pupils and parents have in their school. The school ensures that all pupils have access to an appropriate curriculum and have the opportunity to achieve.
- 60 The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She has brought a school together and built a positive team who have a common aim of moving the school forward. She has effectively developed and continues to promote the ethos of the school and has gained the confidence of staff, governors, parents and pupils. She provides clear direction for the work of the school, setting high standards and insisting on quality in all aspects of

the school's work. Under her strong leadership the school has brought about considerable improvements and is now providing a high standard of education for its pupils.

- 61 The deputy headteacher fulfils an effective pastoral role in the school and he has good relationships with pupils and parents. However, he is not sufficiently aware of the long term strategic planning for development. Neither does he currently take on a sufficiently strong managerial role. Other members of staff with promoted posts are more clearly aware of the stage of development of the school and have been fully involved in evaluating standards and bringing about improvements. They make a strong team with a commitment to high standards and quality of provision.
- 62 The team-focused approach to school development has been supportive and successful and has been a major factor in the school making improvements and raising standards. Subject co-ordinators have worked hard to achieve a structured curriculum and high standards in their subjects. They have had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and develop more effective ways of working. This has recently been particularly effective in English, science and information and communication technology.
- 63 Since the last inspection the special needs co-ordinator has given a very clear direction to the development of the provision. There is a very good policy that meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and clearly outlines the processes involved for all staff. Day to day management of the school's provision and the comprehensive administrative procedures are very good
- 64 Governors are closely involved with the school. They are committed and loyal members of the school community. They work effectively in committees, where they use a range of expertise and interests to ensure that they fulfil their statutory responsibilities and support the school in its development. They are well informed about what goes on in the school and are beginning to be more involved with monitoring standards and quality of provision and helping to shape its direction.
- 65 The school responded positively to the issues highlighted in the last inspection and has tackled them all effectively. The school set itself challenging targets and used all its resources to ensure that they reached them. Monitoring of performance is a key feature of the school's success. Results of tests and assessments are closely analysed and weaknesses are addressed. Appropriate priorities are identified and plans for action are carefully outlined. Targets are set and progress towards them is monitored.
- 66 There is a sufficient number of experienced teachers in the school. They are all loyal members of the school community and have worked well together as a team to bring about the current quality of provision and high standards. The school employs a good level of experienced and well qualified support staff. They work well with the teachers and provide very good support for pupils.
- 67 The quality and sufficiency of the accommodation and grounds have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. This is due very much to the hard work and determination of the staff, governors and parents. There is now an adequate amount of classroom space for the current number of pupils, and there is a good and pleasant library. The two hard-surfaced playgrounds, bordered by seating and paved areas, with trees, shrubs, bulbs and plants, now provide a very pleasant area for staff and pupils to enjoy. The school building is well-maintained and it is kept

impeccably clean and tidy. That, together with the interesting and stimulating displays of pupils' work all around school, provides a very pleasant, welcoming, and interesting place in which pupils can learn.

- 68 Financial planning is good. The finance committee of the governing body keeps a close watch on the budget and ensures that financial planning supports educational priorities. The school works hard to ensure that developments are properly funded and money from outside agencies is spent well. A good example has been the recent refurbishment of the school, which has had a profound effect on the ethos of the school and the quality of provision. The day to day administration of the school is efficient.
- 69 The cost of educating each pupil is broadly in line with the national average, although the school makes a lot of effort to supplement this with funding from parents, the community and other agencies. The school uses all available resources effectively. Everyone involved with the school has worked very hard to improve standards and the quality of provision. Taking these factors into account, and bearing in mind the high standards of pupils' academic and personal achievement, the school is currently providing very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70 The school has no significant weaknesses and therefore there are no key issues, which the governors need to address. They should however continue with planned developments, in order to further improve standards and quality of provision. In particular they could consider the following issues:

- improve the classroom layout and level of resources for the reception class so that children have more opportunities to explore and experiment and learn to work independently on their own chosen activities.
- provide professional development for teachers in order to improve their knowledge and understanding of the teaching of physical education.
- review the roles and responsibilities of members of the senior management team to ensure that all have an equal share of the managerial responsibility.
- continue to develop an assessment system for information and communication technology, so that pupils' achievements can be tracked through the school.
- review the teaching and co-ordination of music to ensure that class teachers are able to develop their skills in this area.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	28	55	17	-	-	-

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	153
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	28

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	14	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	12
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	96 (91)	93 (82)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	14
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (88)	93 (85)	100 (94)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	11	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	10
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	23	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (88)	90 (82)	97 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	10
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	24	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (76)	83 (82)	97 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	152
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	-
Total aggregate hours worked per week	-

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
	£
Total income	302,725
Total expenditure	311,829
Expenditure per pupil	1,962
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,425
Balance carried forward to next year	28,321

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	150
Number of questionnaires returned	110

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	34	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	27	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	39	4	1	2
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	38	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	23	1	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	43	2	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	86	13	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	29	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	47	8	1	3

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 71 Provision for children in the foundation stage is good and has a positive impact on children's learning. Information from assessments made as children enter the reception class indicate that attainment on entry is usually below what is expected for children of this age. Children's language and numeracy skills are often limited. This year, however, attainment is broadly in line with what is expected. This is largely due to the fact that more children have had pre-school educational experience through the newly-developed starter group in the school.
- 72 The quality of teaching and of relationships in the reception class ensures that children make good progress in all areas of learning. They gain skills and grow in confidence. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1, most children are well on the way to achieving the expected levels in all areas of learning.
- 73 The quality of teaching in the reception class is consistently good. There are strengths in the teaching of basic skills; children gain the skills they need and are given opportunities to use them. There are also strengths in the provision for children's personal and social development. The secure environment and very good relationships in the class encourage children to develop confidence and participate in activities. The classroom assistants provide sensitive support and make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching in the class. The quality of the interaction of all adults with children has a major impact on their learning, particularly in the development of language skills.
- 74 There have been considerable improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection. Lessons are now carefully planned and learning objectives are clear. The teacher knows what she wants children to learn and plans tasks that will help them to achieve appropriately. The curriculum covers all areas of learning and continually provides children with new experiences and opportunities. However, there are still some limitations, both in the way in which the classroom itself is organised and in the quality and level of resources. The result is that children do not have enough opportunities for making their own choices and learning to work independently. This has been recognised by the school and is reflected in the development plans for the foundation stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 75 Children make good progress in their personal development. There is a strong emphasis on this in the reception class and the impact on attitudes and behaviour is noticeable throughout the school. By the time children enter Year 1, they reach the expected goals in this area. Children know what is acceptable behaviour and they are beginning to take other people's feelings into account. Adults have clear expectations of children and a consistent approach to encouraging good behaviour. For example, in a physical education lesson the few children who found it difficult to listen were reminded to do so and soon realised that this was what they needed to do in order to take part in the lesson. The kindly way in which the teacher talks to them, encourages children to listen and respond. They listen attentively and maintain concentration. They are keen to learn and settle to tasks well.
- 76 The secure environment and the quality of relationships have a positive impact on

children's social development. They share jokes with the teacher and listen to each other as they talk about what has happened to them. They learn to share and take turns, for example when groups of children used weighing equipment together. The teacher goes out of her way to encourage co-operation. In a physical education lesson she asked pairs of children to decide between them what kind of a ball they wanted to use in an activity. Adults provide good role models for the children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to children forming positive relationships with adults and with each other.

Communication, language and literacy

- 77 Children are encouraged in all aspects of communication, language and literacy. Teaching is good and often very good and children develop a wide range of skills and understanding. By the time they enter Year 1 they are well on the way to achieving the levels expected. The teacher provides good opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills. In class sessions she encourages them to talk about their experiences and share their ideas, for example after the theme of an assembly had interested them. They listen well and sustain concentration. They are beginning to respond to others and take part in conversations.
- 78 The basis skills of reading and writing are taught very well. Literacy lessons are carefully planned and in the secure environment children are confident enough to try things out and are not afraid of making mistakes. The teacher supports and yet challenges children. For example, when set the task of thinking of words beginning with a specific sound, she allowed children to 'borrow someone else's word' but at the same time encouraged them to think of 'one of your own'. Most children hold a pencil correctly and are learning to form recognisable letters. Some begin to use their knowledge of sounds and letters in the words they try to write. They know how writing is used and attempt to write for different purposes, for example in replying to letters sent to them and making non-fiction books about food. However, the development of independent writing is sometimes limited by the layout of the classroom; there are not enough opportunities for children to choose to use writing in play situations.
- 79 Children make very good progress in reading. They begin to link sounds and letters and use this to help them read words. They recognise familiar words and many are able to read a simple text. But most importantly, children are learning to respond to and enjoy books. When the class reads texts together they learn about authors and illustrators and how books are organised. They enthusiastically 'put the teacher right' when she makes 'mistakes' in her reading of a text. In guided reading sessions, adults interact effectively with children, encouraging them to talk about the books and the characters. Parents support children's reading very well by sharing books at home and communicating with the teacher about how their children are doing. In this way children approach their reading with interest and enjoyment and are making very secure foundations for their future learning.

Mathematical development

- 80 Mathematical skills are also taught well. Planning for numeracy lessons has clear learning objectives and tasks that ensure that children develop their skills. Many children reach the levels expected of them by the end of the foundation year. They count reliably to ten and use number names and numerals confidently. They sequence numbers to ten. In a class session many coped with counting on from a given number. During this session the classroom assistant provided very effective support for the lower attainers as she showed them how to find the answer and gave them the

confidence to take part in the class activity.

- 81 Children learn to use mathematical language in practical situations. For example, they use 'heavy' and 'light' to describe how objects feel. After a good introduction to weighing, during which children were encouraged to watch and describe what happened when two objects were put in a balance, children began to understand how objects could be compared by weight. By the end of the lesson, many were confidently using 'heavier' and 'lighter' to compare objects and some were able to order a few objects by weight. The well planned practical activities and the good interventions of adults encouraged children to use the language and develop their understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 82 Children are provided with many opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world and by the time they reach the end of the foundation year they are achieving the expected levels. They have looked at materials and found out how things are made from different ones. They have talked about days of the week and what they do on particular days. They know about different foods and decided what their favourite foods are. In one lesson they were looking at bulbs and seeds and recognising that they grow into plants of different kinds. They looked and touched and talked about what they observed and felt. They were interested and keen to learn. They listened and watched with concentration and responded well to questions.
- 83 They use computers regularly and are gaining confidence with them. Computers are used well to support children's learning, for example in playing counting games or composing music. Their work in information and communication technology is effectively assessed. For example, children were set a task and the teacher checked how independently they could use the keys such as the 'space bar'. Children have opportunities to build and create models using different construction toys, although sometimes this work is limited by the lack of space in the classroom.

Physical development

- 84 Physical education lessons are very well organised and children learn skills effectively. The teacher manages the children well to ensure that they listen and follow instructions. She gives children opportunities to try out their skills and then helps them to develop them further. For example, children experimented with throwing and catching a ball and then she showed them by demonstration how they could improve their accuracy. By the end of the lesson most had developed their skills and were throwing and catching with more control.
- 85 Children move confidently and are developing an appropriate level of control and co-ordination. However, there is limited opportunity for them to explore large-scale movements, such as climbing, balancing or riding, as there is no safe, easily accessible indoor or outdoor area, which can be used on a regular basis. Appropriate large apparatus is also limited.

Creative development

- 86 Careful teaching develops children's creative skills and children have the chance to use different media and materials. They use paint and crayons skilfully. In one lesson, children were learning to look carefully and draw what they saw. They used a range of media, such as paint, crayons and pastels to draw spring leaves, buds and flowers.

They drew with concentration and were being encouraged to evaluate their work and improve it. The result was work of a high standard. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to explore and experiment with different materials and media and make their own choices. This is mainly as a result of limitations in the layout of the classroom and some lack of resources.

- 87 Children listen to music and take part in class and large group singing sessions. They try out musical instruments and 'compose' music. They listen to stories and rhymes and use their imagination in role play. They enjoy these activities and respond well to such challenges.

ENGLISH

- 88 In the national tests for eleven year olds in 2000, pupils' results were above the national average and they were well above those achieved by similar schools. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher than expected levels of achievement was also above the national average and above that achieved by pupils at similar schools. Taking the 1996 to 2000 results together, the performance of pupils is above the national average. Although, girls tend to achieve slightly better than boys, these variations are not significant, except in reading.
- 89 In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year olds, the school's results in reading and writing were well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher than expected levels in reading was well above the national average and close to the national average in writing. These results were well above average in both reading and writing, when compared to similar schools. The trend since 1996 has been one of improvement.
- 90 The results continue the rising trend since the last inspection in both key stages. Then standards were considered to be in line with national average, but the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was slightly below average. The school has made significant improvements in the consistency of teaching, the use of assessment information to set targets for pupils and in subject co-ordination since the last inspection and pupils' now achieve well.
- 91 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in English. They make substantial gains in reading and writing skills. For example, assessment evidence indicates that of the pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 class, at least three-quarters will achieve the expected levels in the national tests. This is due to the very effective and focused teaching in lessons and withdrawal sessions. Specific programmes are designed to tackle pupils' specific difficulties and are rewarded by pupils effort, perseverance and improving achievement.
- 92 Standards in speaking and listening are high. Pupils make good progress in reaching the expected levels and above. The youngest pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other. They take part in discussions and make relevant and appropriate comments. This reflects the high priority placed by the school on the development of speaking and listening skills in literacy lessons and across other subjects. This has a significant impact upon pupils' personal development. The oldest pupils choose their words carefully and can communicate their ideas clearly. As they move through the school, pupils learn to take an effective part in discussions and to respect the views of others.

- 93 Pupils' attainment in reading is above average by the age of seven. The youngest pupils enjoy reading and have a well-developed interest in books. They know what the author and illustrator of a book do. They read a simple text fluently and have a good understanding of the story. Lower attaining pupils are less fluent, but all pupils have developed a basic sight vocabulary and have a secure understanding of how to use letter and word sounds and illustrations to work out unfamiliar words. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils use the index and contents in non-fiction books to find specific topics. They read fluently and many pupils are beginning to use expression effectively to add interest and emphasis when reading aloud.
- 94 These basic skills are continually developed as pupils move through the school, so that by the time they are eleven, pupils' standards in reading are above average. Pupils have a good range of strategies to decipher meaning from print and they are all able to break words into syllables efficiently. The majority of pupils read passages of prose, poetry or factual text fluently and with good expression. Lower attaining pupils are slightly more hesitant, but have well-developed phonic skills, so they are quickly able to work out a new word without unduly interrupting the flow of the reading. In lessons, they have many opportunities to use dictionaries, thesaurus and other non-fiction books, so their ability to use index, contents and search tools on computers is well developed.
- 95 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in writing is above average. They write in a joined up style, spell most words correctly and use full stops and capital letters correctly. Higher attaining pupils use other punctuation, such as question marks, correctly in their own writing. Their stories have a clear beginning, middle and end and pupils develop their ideas well. Higher attaining pupils use their extensive vocabulary to add interest, description and characterisation to their stories, but the majority of pupils have a good range of vocabulary so most of their work is well structured and informative. The writing of pupils with special educational needs is printed, but neat and legible.
- 96 As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their skills well so that by the age of eleven, most pupils, including many with special educational needs, are achieving the nationally expected standards in writing. The writing is cursive and most pupils are developing their own style. They can write for different purposes and match the vocabulary they use to different audiences. For example, pupils in Year 3 can write letters in different styles of address depending on who they are writing to. They use the devices and conventions they learnt in the literacy lessons, such as connectives, adjectives and similes, in their writing to add interest and vitality to their work. Most pupils spell accurately and use punctuation appropriately.
- 97 Pupils' literacy skills are well developed throughout the curriculum. For example, in geography pupils produced their work on mountains as a research project book. Teachers use commercial worksheets sparingly in most subjects to encourage pupils to write in their own words, to express their ideas and to record their results in science investigations. Where worksheets or instructions are provided, pupils are expected to read them and try to interpret them for themselves. Since the last inspection, teachers have developed the use of information and communication technology in English as a way of presenting work and to develop basic skills, such as spelling in the younger classes.
- 98 The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The National Literacy Strategy is effectively used as the basis for planning so lessons have clear objectives, and are brisk and interesting. During the inspection, many lessons were very good and reflected

teachers' secure subject knowledge. This is particularly apparent in the very effective teaching of basic skills of reading and writing. For example, the approach to the teaching of reading is good and has a strong impact on the high standards pupils achieve. In most classes, the books are well matched to pupils' ability and generate their interest and enthusiasm.

- 99 Overall, pupils of all attainment levels make good gains in reading. The security of their understanding and ability to use these skills are reflected in the high standards the school achieves. For example, pupils work independently and read instructions accurately. Reading diaries are used well to record what pupils have read at home and in school, and to communicate with parents. The positive involvement parents have with their children's reading at home has an impact on motivation and the progress pupils make.
- 100 Teachers have high expectations of pupils so activities challenge pupils' skills and understanding. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, the teacher frequently asked pupils to find definitions of words from the dictionary. Pupils were enthusiastic and very keen to be one of the first three to achieve this feat. Management and organisation of pupils and lessons are very good. Explicit instructions and explanations ensure that pupils know exactly what they have to do and little time is wasted waiting for extra help or further explanation. The whole class parts of literacy lessons are used effectively by teachers to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. The links made between the text being used and the tasks pupils are given are good and this ensures that pupils consolidate their skills.
- 101 Pupils listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other, so their response to questions is very good. Pupils know that they are expected to listen carefully and to work on their own when the class teacher is doing group activities during literacy lessons, so throughout the school pupils' behaviour is very good. However, support staff are consistently well placed to provide any necessary support. They are skilled, experienced and have a clear understanding of their role in the whole class and to specific individual pupils. Their work has a significant impact on pupils with special educational needs, who learn very well in lessons and make very good progress over time through the programmes followed in withdrawal sessions.
- 102 The co-ordination of the subject has improved very significantly since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of the strengths of the teaching and pupils' work and, with the support of the headteacher and other members of the staff, has established a clear direction to the development of the subject. The action taken to address issues from the last inspection has been very effective. For example, there is now subject planning framework based on the national literacy strategy that ensures progression and balance in the curriculum and a systematic approach to monitoring pupils' progress so specific targets can be set for each pupil. The school is continually looking to further develop the quality of the work and standards in the subject. For example, plans are in hand to develop the school library areas and the school is about to launch an initiative to improve the standards of boys' writing.

MATHEMATICS

- 103 Standards of attainment in mathematics by the age of seven and eleven are above the national average. The results of the National Curriculum tests 2000, showed that by the age of eleven pupils attained standards that were above the national average and high when compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the

higher levels was above the national average. The results for pupils at the age of seven were well above the national average and high when compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels was well above the national average. Standards have risen in recent years and exceed the national average. The school attributes this to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, teacher training and improved assessment. The National Curriculum Tests in 2000 show that teachers' assessments matched the results and this suggests good practice.

- 104 In the previous inspection, standards in mathematics for pupils at the age of seven were below the national average and no pupil reached the higher levels. This was well below average. Pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Standards for pupils at the age of eleven were below the national average in some aspects of the subject and the rate of progress was constrained by limited opportunities to engage in mathematical investigations. Raising standards in mathematics was a key issue. These weaknesses have been addressed and there has been very good improvement.
- 105 Pupils in Year 1 count accurately from 0 to 20 and beyond. They recognise, read, write and order these numbers correctly. They count in twos, add up to 20, have a developing understanding of doubles and halves, and use 'less than' and 'more than' when comparing numbers. They recognise simple shapes, draw them with developing accuracy and label them reasonably well. Pupils gain a good understanding of the order of events as they sequence pictures to tell a story. Pupils collect information about party foods and use a tally chart with good understanding. They learn to prepare a block graph and show good understanding of terms, such as, 'the same height', 'smaller than' and 'bigger than', as they ask and answer questions about their work.
- 106 In Year 2, pupils continue to develop their understanding of place value. They count in fives, have a knowledge of odd and even numbers, and work multiplication and division sums well, applying skills appropriately to solve problems. They apply their literacy skills well when they write down the words and figures for a number, and are clear about the need to check their work for accuracy.
- 107 In Year 3, pupils build on their previous learning well as they use appropriate number operations and calculation methods to solve real life problems. They know multiplication tables and use them with increasing accuracy to solve problems quickly. A few pupils use 'add on' methods and are accurate, but it takes them slightly longer to reach the correct answer. Many pupils read the problem and solve it almost instantly, but have some difficulty using the number line to show method of calculation. Pupils using the 'Play Train' mathematical software, apply their learning of place value and multiplication reasonably successfully and with developing confidence as they use the computer. Most pupils are very clear about halves and doubles and successfully use a program on the computer that tests their skills.
- 108 Older pupils learn about fractions, building on what they already know, and develop understanding of equivalent fractions well. They quickly learn and use appropriate vocabulary, such as, numerator and denominator when they explain their work. Some pupils use doubles and pattern to create many more equivalent fractions and, because they are enthused by this, they continue to find more and more. In Year 6 pupils continue to add to their understanding of place value when they work with millions. They double and halve numbers, using fractions and decimals with accuracy. They learn about angles and show a good understanding of the terms and use of straight line, acute and obtuse. They calculate angles in a triangle well, making good sense of how to tackle the problem. Pupils investigate 3-digit numbers and solve problems well and quickly as they look for pattern.

- 109 Pupils' workbooks and the work on display show a good range of skills, knowledge and understanding developing systematically from year to year. Pupils make good progress but their presentation skills are not as good as could be expected of them, although this improves towards Year 6. In most instances homework is better presented than the work in class. Throughout the school pupils who have special educational needs make equally good progress and contribute usefully to lessons.
- 110 Pupils enjoy mathematics. They have a good attitude to the work and a keen interest in doing their best. They make good use of opportunities to work collaboratively which supports them well in developing responsibility and maturity. Some pupils have a little difficulty sharing resources and taking turns but are generally helped to do the right thing because they want to be involved and the other pupils show them consideration. All pupils develop important social skills.
- 111 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers manage pupils well. They plan and organise lessons well planned and use resources appropriately. Basic skills are taught well and in most lessons the level of challenge is appropriate and becomes greater within lessons as pupils develop understanding and seek greater challenges themselves. Good use is made of computer software to support learning in most lessons. There is however a weakness in the quality and usefulness of marking. It does not support pupils well. Marking does not draw attention to the need to improve presentation or to errors that are usually concerned with presentation rather than mathematical accuracy.
- 112 The curriculum is well planned to cover all aspects of the subject and the close adherence to the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive impact on raising standards in teaching and learning. Pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects and many good examples are in books and on display. These include graphs and pie charts linked to information and communication technology and measuring in science work. This cross-curricular approach is a valuable way for pupils to apply their skills.
- 113 Assessment is used well to support pupils in identifying how well they have learnt and what they need to know next. Results from tests and assessments are carefully analysed and realistic and appropriately challenging targets are set. Progress towards these targets is carefully monitored. Weaknesses are identified and the curriculum is adapted to address these. There has been a determined effort in the school to improve standards and this has been very successful. Colleagues have supported the co-ordinator in this process. Currently the co-ordinator himself does not take sufficient responsibility for the subject through the school; he needs to develop his role further.

SCIENCE

- 114 At the time of the last inspection in September 1998 standards in science were in line with expectations at both key stages. Pupils were making sound progress overall, but progress in investigative science was limited by the lack of opportunity for pupils to carry out their own investigations. There has been considerable improvement in recent years. Standards are much higher and achievement in all aspects of the subject is good. This is as a result of a determined effort to improve standards in the school as a whole, and the work of the co-ordinator in developing the curriculum and supporting teachers.
- 115 Standards have improved dramatically since 1996 and the school has maintained them at a high level since then. In the most recent end of key stage teacher assessments,

every seven year old achieved the expected level and nearly half of them achieved above this. This performance was very high in comparison with the national average and when compared to results in similar schools. In the last end of key stage tests for eleven year olds, virtually all pupils achieved the expected level, and again nearly half of them achieved above this. This was above the national average and well above standards in similar schools. The school has set challenging targets for this year. Although they are lower than those achieved last year, they are realistic in view of the number of pupils with special educational needs in the oldest class.

- 116 Standards in the current Year 2 are above average. Most pupils have gained a knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science. For example, they know about the growth of plants and can label a flowering plant correctly. They group materials according to attributes such as 'hard' and 'soft'. They have investigated how materials can be changed by such actions as twisting and stretching. They are currently learning about how changes such as heating and cooling affect materials.
- 117 At the same time pupils have been developing their skills in scientific enquiry. In an investigation about how ice melts they demonstrated confidence with many of these skills. They responded to suggestions about how to find things out. They had a good idea of how to make a test fair; for example they knew that it would not be fair to put one of the boxes outside as it would be colder than the others. They observed and recorded their observations. They talked about what they had found out.
- 118 Currently there are fewer Year 6 pupils achieving at higher than expected levels than there have been in the past. However, most of them are working at expected levels and this is quite an achievement for some of them. Pupils have gained an appropriate knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science. For example, they know about processes such as dissolving and evaporation, and have tried some investigations involving separating mixtures. They understand some physical processes, such as forces and can identify the direction they are working in. They show a good understanding of how shadows are formed.
- 119 Currently pupils are developing their investigative skills. In carrying out an investigation into shadows they demonstrated skills such as selecting equipment, making accurate measurements and recording their observations. They showed that they can reflect on their findings and find patterns. Some are beginning to make generalisations; for example they explain that the further away an object is from a light source the smaller the shadow.
- 120 Achievement throughout the school is good. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding and develop confidence in their investigative skills. In Year 1 pupils learn about the properties of materials and can describe these properties, using for example terms such as 'smooth' and 'flexible'. In Year 3 pupils have been learning about healthy eating. They know about different foods and they understand that diet can affect health. Year 4 pupils make very good progress in developing their investigative skills. In carrying out an investigation into what surface gives the best grip for a trainer, they show that they can confidently carry out an investigation, make predictions, measure accurately and record and talk about their findings. They have a good understanding about how forces affect movement. Year 5 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of materials, as they discover how sound travels through different materials.
- 121 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They are effectively supported in lessons in several ways. They may have extra adult support to help them keep

focused. This worked well in a Year 6 lesson when a support assistant worked alongside a group as they carried out their investigation. It also worked well in the Year 1 class, where the support assistant spent some focused time helping pupils to develop the scientific language they needed. In other lessons, teachers make an effort to ensure that the recording sheets they use are adapted for the lower attainers, or they spend time providing extra explanations and helping pupils to understand the concepts involved.

- 122 Higher attaining pupils are very well challenged and are able to achieve well. In investigative science they are given many opportunities to apply their skills and work independently. The good pace in most lessons and the way in which teachers encourage pupils to talk about their science help the higher attaining pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding and make good progress. All pupils have very good attitudes towards their work in science. They are interested and keen to find things out. They attend well and always know what they have to do. They work with concentration and can co-operate as appropriate.
- 123 In the last inspection there were weaknesses in the teaching of science. These were mainly to do with planning and confidence in investigative science. The co-ordinator has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and it is now usually good and often very good. Teachers plan meticulously and are very clear about what they want pupils to learn. Only occasionally do tasks not match these objectives, as in a Year 1 lesson where pupils spent so long constructing a chart that they did not have enough time to use it for recording their observations. In most lessons the imaginative use of recording sheets helps pupils to concentrate on the actual science involved in a particular activity rather than on laborious recording of it.
- 124 Confidence in teaching investigative science has improved considerably and is now a major strength. Pupils are taught skills and then given opportunities to use them. Teachers help them to develop their own skills, sometimes in quite subtle ways. For example, the Year 2 teacher deliberately allowed pupils to realise that they needed to label the boxes of ice so that they could record their observations accurately. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their findings and this is an important feature of most lessons. Lessons usually have a good pace and pupils are kept fully involved and interested. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the planning, preparation and organisation were so effective that not a moment was wasted and a lot of work was done. The enthusiasm of this particular teacher also helped to keep pupils motivated.
- 125 The improvements in the teaching of science are largely due to the efforts of the co-ordinator. Her role has developed well since the time of the last inspection and she has been successful in raising standards considerably. She has had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning and as a result of this has addressed weaknesses effectively. She has supported the teaching of investigative science, by for example showing teachers how to use a planning board. Weaknesses in planning have been tackled and there is now a secure framework for the science curriculum. Links with other subjects are appropriate and information technology is used effectively to support science learning.
- 126 With the Year 2 teacher working alongside her, the co-ordinator has analysed the results of tests and assessments, set targets for improvement and monitored progress towards these targets. The two teachers have been working towards raising the profile of science in the school, by for example organising a science week. This was very successful and demonstrated the kind of determination, enthusiasm and commitment that has been behind the considerable improvements in standards and quality.

ART AND DESIGN

- 127 The school achieves high standards in art and design. The quality of displays around the school provides evidence of this, and is also indicative of the value teachers place on the work of pupils. Standards are above what is expected at both key stages and pupils achieve well throughout the school. There are particular strengths in drawing skills and in pupils' responses to the work of artists. The high standards are largely a result of the enthusiasm and expertise of the co-ordinator and of the quality of teaching throughout the school. A secure scheme of work and the positive support of the co-ordinator have ensured that what is offered to pupils is now more consistent than it was at the time of the last inspection and standards have improved in all classes.
- 128 Seven year olds confidently explore ideas, using for example photographs and paintings of other artists, and are encouraged to use these ideas in their own work. They record from first hand observation, for example when drawing parts of the school building using a viewfinder to help them focus. They evaluate their work and are beginning to suggest ways of improving it. They explore pattern and experiment with different tools and materials.
- 129 Eleven year olds have developed a mature approach to their work. They continue to explore ideas using a range of different starting points, such as natural and man made objects, the work of other artists and their own experiences. They select what will be useful to them and try out ideas. For example, they looked carefully at masks brought in by the teacher, and then experimented with what had been suggested to them, until they came up with an idea that they liked and could use in creating their own mask based on a character from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They confidently use a range of media, for example in creating texture collages from design ideas developed from looking at rocks. They draw skilfully and paint with a good level of control. Their finished work is of a very high standard. Pupils evaluate their work and suggest how it could be improved.
- 130 Pupils achieve well throughout the schools. They develop skills, try out an ever-widening range of materials and processes, and gain the confidence to communicate their ideas and feelings. Year 3 pupils sketched people from life and then developed the sketches to make a large drawing. They experimented with the colours they would need and talked about how their work was progressing. They had already investigated portraits, looking at paintings and photographs to see how relationships between people were portrayed. Year 4 pupils were using ideas from their research work on chairs to help them in their own work of designing a chair for a character from a book. They had compared methods, approaches and materials and were using this to help them as they tried out ideas of their own. They talked about their ideas and described how they wanted to develop them. They chose materials very carefully, in order to get an idea of how a collage might be created.
- 131 Pupils' attitudes to art and design are very good. They take their art work seriously and work with interest and concentration. They are confident enough to be able to share their work with others, they respect what others have achieved and the older pupils can offer positive evaluations of the work of their peers. Pupils with special educational needs are able to participate fully in art lessons and teachers often ensure that their work, if of a good standard, is particularly highlighted in the class. This can be a huge boost for pupils' self esteem.

- 132 The quality of teaching is good and often very good. The co-ordinator sets very high standards for teaching and learning. Her expertise and enthusiasm inspires other teachers and she supports their work effectively. Teachers are particularly good at using artefacts, pictures, photographs and other resources to give pupils starting points for their own ideas. They create in their classrooms a secure environment in which pupils feel confident. No pupil ever feels that they 'can't draw'. Teachers prepare lessons well, ensuring that art is taken seriously and is never used simply as an adjunct of another subject. They sensitively support during lessons, knowing when to offer help if a pupil is stuck or when to encourage if ideas are wanted.
- 133 Teachers have good support for their planning. A carefully drafted scheme of work takes the best from what the school was already succeeding with and blends this with national guidelines to give a comprehensive scheme on which teachers can base their lessons. There is an appropriate emphasis on the design element of the subject in line with the revised National Curriculum and an encouragement for pupils to look at the work of others and become 'artists' themselves. There is good use made of a range of resources, including borrowed artefacts and visits to galleries. Such visits have inspired work of a particularly high standard.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 134 There were no lessons in design and technology taking place during the period of the inspection, but evidence from pupils' work indicates that a good curriculum is in place and pupils are achieving high standards. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are at least in line with what is expected and by the end of Key Stage 2 are above what is expected. The co-ordinator has a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, sets high standards for teaching and learning and has supported teachers well. There is more confidence in teaching the subject than there was at the time of the last inspection and as a result standards throughout the school have improved.
- 135 Seven year olds have made glove puppets. They show that they understand how to use a template to make pieces the same and have found ways of joining the pieces together. They learnt to prepare fruit to make a fruit salad and in doing so were able to evaluate which tools were the most effective and the easiest to use.
- 136 Eleven year olds have carried out many projects and demonstrate skills in generating designs, making realistic plans, using sources of information and working from a detailed plan to make a finished product. They have evaluated their work and suggested ways of improving it or making it in a different way. For example, they designed an apron, made a mock up in newspaper, measured themselves and adjusted the prototype to fit before making a pattern. They have recently carried out a project on designing a trainer. They did some extensive research into what makes the ideal trainer and experimented with designs before creating their own logo.
- 137 Achievement is good throughout the school. Pupils develop skills, in research, designing and making. In Year 3 pupils designed and made a healthy sandwich. In Year 4 pupils designed and made a torch. This linked appropriately with work in science on electricity. Pupils showed they could try out ideas, draw a detailed diagram with labels and use a range of different making skills.
- 138 There is a wide-ranging curriculum in place. A carefully drafted scheme of work effectively supports teachers' planning. There is a careful and appropriate emphasis on process in the subject. Pupils learn to combine practical skills with an

understanding of making things for a purpose and evaluating whether they 'work' when they are finished. Work is carefully and appropriately linked to other subjects, such as science and this has a positive impact on both subjects. Teachers are beginning to use information and communication technology to support the subject and some good design work on computer was seen during the inspection.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

- 139 Since the last inspection, standards of attainment in geography have improved, so they are now in line with national expectations at both seven and eleven years of age in both subjects. As they move up the school, all pupils, including those with special needs, make sound gains in the knowledge and understanding of the two subjects, but they also develop subject skills such as basic research and observation. This reflects the emphasis placed by teachers upon developing pupils' basic subject skills and independence through the extensive opportunities to use and extend their information technology, literacy and numeracy skills within lessons and homework.
- 140 By the age of seven, pupils have a secure sense of chronology and understand that places and people change over time. They learn about the lives of some famous people and begin to use artefacts to understand how people's lives change over time. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were asked to look at everyday objects such as teapots and pictures of a Victorian kitchen and to compare them with their own experiences. Higher attaining pupils are able to explain their ideas, referring to what they can see and using appropriate vocabulary. In geography, pupils are able to draw maps of their route to school, using pictures to show particular places such as the playground on the maps. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand how to use keys and symbols to indicate particular buildings on a map. This is an area of improvement since the last inspection, when mapping skills were identified as a specific weakness in the subject. Pupils have very secure understanding of the environmental issues, are able to compare different places and suggest aspects they like or dislike. This reflects the emphasis placed by the school upon environmental issues.
- 141 As pupils move through Key Stage 2, they build on these basic skills in both history and geography, so that by the age of eleven they have acquired the subjects' skills, knowledge and understanding in line with national expectations. In history, pupils know about different periods, events and important people in the history of the ancient world. For example, they learn about some of the aspects of the culture and lifestyle of the Egyptians. They learn about different periods in the history of the United Kingdom, such as the Victorians and Tudors, and understand how life was different for people in those times. Their research skills develop very well so that they can use a range of sources such as textbooks and artefacts to find evidence about specific topics.
- 142 In geography, pupils build on the knowledge they acquired in Key Stage 1 about weather to develop a very secure understanding of how the physical landscape and climate varies in different parts of the world and they learn about specific environments, such as mountains. The emphasis on environmental issues, particularly the human impact, is maintained, so pupils develop a secure understanding of how people can enhance, exploit and damage the world around them. This extends to wider world issues as well as local issues such as the derelict site of the old school, visited by Year 3 during the inspection to draw sketches and take photographs of the result of neglect.
- 143 The quality of teaching and learning in both subjects is good. The main strengths of the teaching are the very effective management of pupils and the close attention given to

extending pupils' basic skills within the subject and of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and explicit so pupils understand what is expected of them and what they have to do. Teachers expect pupils to remember and apply knowledge from previous lessons in discussions and when working on independent projects. In the introductions to lessons teachers ask probing, open-ended questions often directed to specific pupils, so that all pupils are fully involved in the discussion. This has a major impact upon pupils' behaviour and attitude in lessons. They are very enthusiastic and interested in lessons and behave very well.

- 144 Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to plan lessons that effectively meet the medium term planning objectives for the subject. Activities cover a broad range of the topics. Tasks are imaginative and do not always rely on worksheets. Pupils have opportunities to use their literacy and information and communication technology skills to research and present their work. Effective use is made of homework to provide additional time for pupils to work on topics, particularly in Key Stage 2, where teachers also use class priority time for topic work with a history or geography focus. Assessment through questioning and discussion is good in lessons and marking gives some guidance information as to how they can improve their work.
- 145 The co-ordinator gives clear direction to the subject by ensuring that teachers know about the topics they need to teach each term. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced the government schemes of work so the curriculum is broad and balanced, but teachers give the work a relevance to pupils by using local issues as a focus for work. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development through visits to places such as Manchester Museum and Roman Chester.
- 146 The school has begun to establish procedures for assessing pupils' progress in history and geography, but the subject co-ordinator plans to develop this further using the national guidelines.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 147 In the previous inspection, standards in information technology were below national expectations for pupils by the age of seven, and were well below for pupils by the age of eleven. All pupils made poor progress. One of the key issues was to raise standards and this has been addressed well and is still developing.
- 148 By the age of seven and eleven, pupils now attain standards in information and communication technology that are broadly in line with national expectations. However there is a weakness in control and modelling, because this has not yet been taught. In Year 1, pupils learn to create simple sentences by selecting words from a word bank. They show a well-developed understanding of how to use the keyboard and mouse to enter and manipulate text. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils showed a good understanding of how to use specific keys to change text. They explained clearly, using technical vocabulary appropriately, how to insert and delete words, scroll text and use the cursor. It is evident that they draw on well learnt literacy skills to develop their understanding of how to make a piece of text more readable. For example, they discussed that when a sentence does not have any spaces between the words it is more difficult to read.
- 149 Older pupils develop their knowledge and skills, as they learn how to delete, insert and replace text to improve clarity and how to use the shift key. Pupils show good

understanding of basic skills in literacy as they use a worksheet to identify, for example, the unnecessary repetition of the word 'she' in the passage, and think of other words to replace it. They check their own work and continually make adjustments to improve the text. The oldest pupils evaluate page layout. Many show good understanding of the important features of a book designed for children in the reception class. They draw on their own experience as readers, and explain their ideas clearly. Pupils know how to open files and zoom into text and they know that a red line under a word indicates an error in spelling. One pupil knows that words written without capital letters are written in lower case. Pupils explain their recent and developing work on using spreadsheets well.

- 150 All pupils generally make good progress in lessons and satisfactory progress over time in some aspects of the subject. It is evident that their skill in word processing develops well as they build on previous learning systematically. However, opportunities in information and communication technology are recent and the oldest pupils have clearly not had sufficiently good experiences in the past to build on.
- 151 All pupils are willing to talk about their work and have a keen interest in it. They pay good attention to adults' demonstrations in lessons and use the information carefully when they have hands on opportunity at a later time. Behaviour is good and pupils sustain concentration well in whole class work and when working at the computer on their own or with a partner. Pupils share their learning with each other well.
- 152 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are sufficiently confident to teach basic skills and do this well. Opportunities to link the subject to other areas in the curriculum are appropriate. Pupils are well managed. Lessons are planned in good detail and resources are organised and used well. The learning objectives are specific and suitable. A strong feature in teaching is the emphasis on helping all pupils to learn through well chosen questions. This encourages all pupils to contribute to the lesson and reveals what they know and do not know clearly. In this way teaching develops pupils' understanding enabling them to make good progress in lessons. Teaching gives clear explanation with demonstration, and this enables pupils to practise for themselves when they have 'hands on' opportunity at a later stage. Relationships are very good and this has a positive impact on learning.
- 153 The school has effectively improved teachers' confidence and subject knowledge through a staged training approach. There is now a clearly defined curriculum that supports teaching and learning well. The co-ordinator has been in post for about a year and has been instrumental in raising standards in teaching and learning. The links with other curricular areas promotes the subject well. The school continues to develop information and communication technology to include all strands and this is their current focus. Procedures for assessment are developing but are not yet sufficiently focused so that teachers can track pupils' skills through the school.

MUSIC

- 154 In the previous inspection standards attained by the oldest pupils were well below national expectations and were broadly in line for pupils at the age of seven. There have been good improvements, mainly due to an investment in expertise, and now standards are more consistent.
- 155 By the age of eleven pupils attain standards in music that are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils sing well and use expression effectively. When the song

challenges pupils by changes in pitch and tempo, their diction and clarity are heightened, the quality of singing greatly improves and standards are good. When this occurs, the sense of pupils' own achievement together with the improved quality in singing contributes well towards a sense of spirituality.

- 156 Standards in the creating and appraising of music are not as well developed. This is largely because pupils have too few useful experiences to support them in their learning. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils listened to taped music before they wrote their ideas of how the music made them think and feel. They used their imagination well as they drew on personal experiences as well as on previous learning. These opportunities are very useful but are just developing.
- 157 By the age of seven, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations. They sing, perform and create music with guidance well. Skills in creating music through exploration, choice and organisation of sounds are not well developed. There is a weakness in appraising music. Pupils sing tunefully and cheerfully and clearly enjoy the work. They recognise rhyme and use expression well. They play simple percussion instruments to support whole group singing well. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used instruments and objects to create sound to tell the story of an environment. They successfully created the rolling thunder as it passes and becomes a distant rumble, using a sheet of card effectively. Others used chanting and together they created a texture of sound that effectively captured stormy weather. Through this work pupils begin to get a sense of timing, rhythm and dynamics. All pupils throughout the school make good progress in lessons and generally better progress in the parts of the lessons where the challenge is more appropriate.
- 158 Pupils show good interest in the work and when they are challenged they show very good interest and this is generally sustained well. Occasionally older pupils are not entirely well focused on the work for the whole of the lesson. Relationships are good and improve through absorbing and challenging work and this supports pupils' personal development and their skills in singing well.
- 159 The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are managed well and there is a good sense of purpose and urgency. Lessons are well planned and linked to the National Curriculum and have useful cross curricula links. This is an important strength in teaching. Resources are used well. The teacher is a skilled pianist and uses this skill well to settle pupils at the beginning of lessons and set the scene for purposeful learning. Teaching generally has high expectations of what pupils can do and this is evident particularly with older pupils. The emphasis on fun with the younger pupils detracts somewhat from sustaining a sense of enjoyment through developing quality performance.
- 160 In a Year 2 lesson there was good emphasis on precision as everyone worked together to create the stormy weather music. Good quality advice was given to support pupils to improve their work. There was a firm determination on the part of the teacher that pupils could do better with practise. In this way teaching successfully develops a good attitude to the work and encourages all pupils to make their very best effort. It is the teacher's skill that enables pupils to settle to the work and become absorbed and interested so that, as was seen in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were keen to continue learning even when the lesson was over.
- 161 Although the scheme of work is in an early stage of development, it is already having a positive impact on pupils' experience of some elements in music. Cross curricula opportunities are planned carefully and offer pupils the chance to apply their literacy

skills well. The music co-ordinator is a long term supply teacher, who teaches music one day a week. The teacher is responsible for teaching all the music lessons for the school. This has been a good investment in expertise and has had a positive impact on standards and quality of the subject. However, it is difficult in the circumstances for her to take on the role of co-ordinator satisfactorily. There are also implications for the involvement of the other teachers and for the delivery of a complete curriculum in the time available.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 162 Evidence from observation of lessons observed during the inspection indicate that standards are broadly in line with what is expected and progress is satisfactory. Planning for the subject was weak at the time of the last inspection, there was no co-ordination of the subject and there were imbalances in the curriculum. With the appointment of a new co-ordinator there has been much improvement at a planning level, but there are still weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, which have an impact on the progress pupils make.
- 163 In a gymnastics lesson Year 2 pupils show they have acquired basic skills. They travel around the hall in different ways, demonstrating an awareness of each other and the space around them. They have developed good balance and control of movement. They combine elements to make a sequence with a clear beginning, middle and end. They set up and use apparatus sensibly and safely.
- 164 Year 6 pupils demonstrate that they understand about the need to warm up and cool down before and after exercise. They develop movements such as balancing on different parts of the body and learn how to improve their performance. They transfer their movements effectively to apparatus. However, they have not reached the stage of creating and performing sequences of movements.
- 165 Teachers plan their lessons carefully and as a result pupils develop skills. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher had clear learning objectives and organised the activities successfully. Pupils developed their ball skills very well. Most pupils throw a ball accurately and successfully hit it with a racquet. All pupils play a game, following rules and keep the game going without supervision. However, in all the lessons observed, whilst pupils were developing their skills effectively, they were not always being challenged. This was usually as a result of the teacher being unsure how to develop the quality of their movements or the effectiveness of their games skills.
- 166 Swimming is a strength of the school's physical education curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to go swimming from an early age and they develop their skills well. Virtually all pupils achieve the expected levels and many go far beyond this. The provision is good. In a Year 4 lesson the pool instructor and the class teacher worked together to provide some very effective teaching. A good pace is kept up, the time is used well and pupils are kept active. Pupils listen carefully and work hard. The extra-curricular provision is also good. There is an emphasis on sport and a good percentage of pupils take part in a variety of games.
- 167 Pupils' attitudes to physical education are very good. They listen and respond well to their teachers. They prepare themselves for lessons well and so no time is wasted. This was particularly noticeable in the swimming lesson, where behaviour was very sensible and had a positive impact on how much progress the pupils made during the lesson.
- 168 Physical education has lacked co-ordination for a long time and it is only very recently that an enthusiastic teacher has taken on the role. Already she has worked hard to

organise the curriculum so that pupils get a balanced experience and she is very keen to develop the subject further. Teachers plan their lessons well but do not always have the expertise they need to develop pupils' skills adequately and enable them to achieve the high standards of which they are capable. The subject needs to be brought forward as a priority for development.