

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

East Cowes

LEA area: Isle of Wight

Unique reference number: 118198

Headteacher: Mr M. Lee

Reporting inspector: Robert B. Bonner
25384

Dates of inspection: 8 – 11 May 2000

Inspection number: 189324

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Millfield Avenue East Cowes Isle of Wight
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Geraldine Heath
Date of previous inspection:	30/09/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Robert B. Bonner	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		Information technology	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		Design technology	How well is the school led and managed?
Deborah Granville-Hastings	Lay inspector	N/A	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Judith Clarke	Team inspector	Science	How well are pupils or students taught?
		History	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
		Music	
		Under fives	
Mary Vallis	Team inspector	English	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
		Geography	
		Special educational needs	
		Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holy Cross is a smaller than average Catholic First School for pupils between the ages of four and nine. There are currently 91 pupils on roll. This is about the same as at the time of the previous inspection. Children enter the reception class in the year that they are five years of age. At the time of the inspection there were no children under five years of age. The majority of children receive some form of pre-school education. Many of them have attended the pre-school playgroup on the school site. The attainment of children at five covers a wide range of abilities but is above that expected of children of their age. The school's catchment area covers the parish of St Thomas in Cowes and St David's in East Cowes and children come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds but it is broadly average overall. Twelve pupils, 13 per cent, are eligible for free school meals. This is broadly in line with the national average. There are two pupils who come from an ethnic minority background but they have English as their first language. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs, 24 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average, and the percentage of pupils with statements for educational needs, one per cent, is also broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in its work. Standards are very high in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, overall. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are very high in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching throughout the school is good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with adults and with each other.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities through extra-curricular activities and links with other schools and organisations.

What could be improved

- The governing body's involvement in monitoring the work of the school and guiding its direction.
- The process of strategic development planning.
- The responsibilities for curriculum co-ordination need to be more equitably distributed and time provided for those with these duties to fulfil their roles more effectively.
- More efficient use of available curriculum time.
- The provision for pupils with significant special educational needs.
- The range and quality of resources for science, geography, physical education, special educational needs and for children who are under five.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

In spite of many difficulties, particularly relating to the long term absences of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the school leadership under the guidance of the acting headteacher has responded well to the issues raised in the last inspection report in 1996. The majority of key issues have been tackled, but there are still some outstanding issues where insufficient progress has been made. The school has made very good progress in raising standards in the core subjects. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are well above the national average in writing and very high in reading and mathematics. Standards in Year 4 have also risen greatly and are now well above average in English, mathematics and science. The school has produced and implemented curriculum policies for all National Curriculum subjects. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and nationally recommended schemes of work have been introduced in most subjects. Although the curriculum is now broad and balanced, there is insufficient rigour in the setting and implementing of curriculum timetables, and consequently the teaching time available is not used efficiently. The school has begun to use information gained from analysing test results to

inform curriculum planning and to set individual targets for each pupil's development. It is planned to share curriculum targets with parents. Parents have been consulted about the quality of written reports and changes have been made to provide a clearer view of pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher conducts professional interviews with staff and targets are set, but there is no system of appraisal in place. The school has produced a short-term school development plan based on assessment of immediate priorities, including those pertaining to the curriculum. However, in its current form it is insufficiently rigorous and does not provide the school with a long-term view for its development. Staff absences and other uncertainties have made the development of the curriculum co-ordinators' role difficult, even so the current situation is still unsatisfactory. The responsibilities for curriculum co-ordination are not equitably distributed and insufficient time has been provided for those with these duties to fulfil their roles effectively. In other areas of the school's work, standards have risen in music and design and technology at both key stages and information technology at Key Stage 2. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, and the provision of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has also improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	D	A*	A*	A*	Very high A*
Writing	C	A	A	A*	well above average A
Mathematics	C	A	A*	A*	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the national average in writing and very high in reading and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools standards are very high in reading, writing and mathematics. A high percentage of pupils are achieving at the higher level (level 3), in all three subjects. These results indicate that the school's performance is in the highest five per cent nationally. Taking the last four years 1996 to 1999 together, standards were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have risen sharply since 1997. Pupils are making good progress in their learning. The school has set challenging targets for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They clearly enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic, interested and involved in their learning. This has a positive effect on their progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons, assemblies and around the school is very good. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy, and are caring and thoughtful in their attitudes to others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good opportunities for developing independence have contributed to pupils' very good personal development. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with adults and with each other.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy going to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Under fives	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years

Lessons seen overall	Insufficient evidence*	Good	Good
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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.

* At the time of the inspection there were no children under the age of five in the reception class.

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. In 96 per cent of lessons the quality of teaching is at least good and in 27 per cent it is very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers have very high expectations. Most pupils rise to the challenges provided and make good progress in their learning. Teachers manage the pupils very well achieving a very high standard of discipline. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Lessons are well planned and organised and time and resources are used effectively to promote pupils' learning. The teaching of literacy is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils. The teaching of numeracy is good. Lessons are very well planned with an appropriate emphasis on the development of mental and problem solving skills. Pupils with special educational needs are usually well supported and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Some pupils with significant special educational needs have needs that are not being fully met.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is generally broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Curriculum time available is not always used efficiently. The very good opportunities provided by after-school clubs, visits and speakers in school enrich the curriculum and contribute well to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for the majority of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school is sometimes lacking in the necessary expertise to meet the needs of a very small minority of pupils who have significant difficulties.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of care for its pupils. The high quality of relationships between staff and pupils is the basis of the support provided. As a result, pupils are relaxed and confident and enjoy being at school.

The school has a good partnership with parents. Parents are seen as an important part of pupils' education and development, and the school now seeks every opportunity to involve them as much as possible.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher has provided the school with much needed stability and direction. He has been successful in maintaining pupils' high standards of achievement, developing the curriculum, fostering an atmosphere of collegiality amongst staff and establishing positive links with parents. Curriculum co-ordinators work exceptionally hard in their roles. Responsibilities for curriculum co-ordination are not equitably distributed and insufficient time has been provided for those with these duties to fulfil their roles effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Members of the Governing Body work hard in their individual and collective roles and are committed to the success of the school. Although they are generally aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, their involvement in the strategic management of the school and in helping to shape its direction is unsatisfactory. There are some minor omissions in the annual governors' report to parents and the school's prospectus.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The acting headteacher monitors and evaluates the performance of staff and provides relevant training opportunities. There are effective procedures in place for assessing pupils' achievements and tracking the attainment of different groups of pupils as they move through the school. The school employs effective measures to raise the achievements of all its pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of all resources made available to it. The school development plan lacks rigour and a longer-term focus, and does not provide a secure framework for financial planning. The school has targeted spending to areas such as information technology in order to raise standards. It applies some of the principles of best value for money in aspects its work. Financial administration is efficient and effective.

There are currently sufficient numbers of appropriately trained staff to teach the National Curriculum. Some of these are part-time and others are on short-term contracts. The school's accommodation is good overall. The levels of resources to support the curriculum are overall satisfactory. However, the provision of resources for science, geography and physical education, for pupils with special educational needs and for children who are under five is unsatisfactory.

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 high standard of behaviour of pupils in the school. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The unsettled situation regarding the leadership of the school to be resolved. Their children receiving the right amount of work to do at home.

Inspection evidence strongly supports the positive views parents have of the school. Many parents have expressed their appreciation of the work done by the acting headteacher but are seeking the stability of a permanent appointment. The Governing Body is hoping to appoint a permanent headteacher in the near future. In the view of the inspection team pupils receive a good range of homework to support their learning in the classroom.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments for seven-year-olds indicate standards well above the national average in writing and very high in reading, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, standards are very high in reading, writing, mathematics and science. A high percentage of pupils are achieving at the higher level, level 3, in all four subjects. These results indicate that the school's performance is in the highest five per cent nationally. Inspection evidence supports this view that standards are very high in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress in their learning through Key Stage 1. Taking the last four years, 1996 to 1999, together standards were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen sharply since 1997. During the last four years, boys have out-performed girls in national tests in English, particularly in reading, mathematics and science. Observation shows that the gap has widened further in Year 4 but girls are now out-performing boys in Year 3. The school sets challenging targets for pupils but does not set separate targets according to gender. The very small number of pupils from ethnic minorities achieves in line with their peers.
2. In English, the majority of pupils in Year 2 speak confidently during class discussions. They enjoy books and the majority is developing an appropriate range of strategies for tackling unknown words, including using sound and clues from pictures and context. Pupils are able to use their knowledge of the alphabet to find information in books. Spelling of common regular words is good. More able pupils write short stories using simple rules of grammar and punctuation. In mathematics, pupils use and apply mathematics in problem solving situations, and are developing an appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They are developing confident mental calculation skills. They add and subtract numbers up to, and beyond 10, count in twos, fives and tens and are beginning to understand place value to 100. Higher attaining pupils know their number bonds to 20 and beyond. Pupils know the difference between even and odd numbers, and can divide shapes equally into halves. They understand concepts such as longer and shorter and use standard measurements like centimetres and grams. They recognise and name two-dimensional shapes and know which have line symmetry. In science, pupils understand that all living things grow and develop. Pupils describe different materials and identify their similarities and differences. They move objects by pulling and pushing. They distinguish between appliances that use batteries and those that work from mains electricity and construct circuits to make a bulb light up. The ideas and investigations they decide upon show a high level of enquiry skills.
3. The attainment of the children on entry to the reception class in September is good. Early assessments show that the majority achieves above the levels expected for children of their age. By the time they are five, the majority of children are working in the lower levels of the National Curriculum in all areas of their work. They make good progress in the reception class in all areas of their learning.
4. Pupils in Year 4 achieve standards that are high in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They speak with appropriate clarity and use the full range of their vocabulary in order to make what they say as clear as possible. During discussions, pupils exchange information, opinions and evaluations of their own work. Pupils listen well to each other and respond sensitively. Nearly all pupils read accurately and fluently and when reading aloud they use punctuation and contextual clues to enhance their expression and pace. Many pupils are able to comment on their reading in a way that goes beyond understanding of plot or information to show an appreciation of character and plot. They show secure research skills when using books and the Internet. Spelling is of a good standard and vocabulary is well developed. Pupils write notes, compose poetry as well as writing stories and articles for newspapers. In mathematics, the majority of pupils are developing their own strategies for problem solving and recording their findings both in working within mathematics, and in applying mathematics to practical contexts. In number work, they use a range of mental strategies and display a good understanding of place value in numbers over a 1000. Their knowledge and understanding of fractions and decimals are generally sound. They measure

perimeters, areas and volumes accurately, using the correct units of measurement. In shape work, pupils name two and three- dimensional shapes and can identify them by their properties. Pupils collect data on a frequency chart and display it in the form of line and block graphs, and interpret the information that is displayed. In science, pupils select suitable equipment to use, understand the need for fair testing, make predictions, carry out their investigations and record their findings systematically and accurately. They hypothesise, conduct experiments, draw conclusions from their results and give reasoned explanations for their findings. Pupils understand that one of the functions of bones is to protect the organs in the body. They know that suspended solutions occur when too much solid is mixed with the fluid.

5. Children who are under five make good gains in all areas of their learning. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 generally make good progress in all subjects as they move through the school. In English, mathematics and science pupils make good progress through both key stages. They also make good progress in their learning in all other subjects of the National Curriculum apart from geography where it is satisfactory.
6. The majority of pupils with special educational needs are making good progress. Early identification, generous classroom support and regular monitoring have all contributed well to this good progress. Additional help with literacy has enabled some pupils to achieve within the national average. Pupils with co-ordination and speech and language difficulties make good progress. For a very small number of pupils with significant special needs, progress is unsatisfactory. This is because staff have not had the training to deliver the specialised programmes of teaching in very small steps and using a variety of methods which is sometimes required. There has been no whole school training or guidelines for behaviour management of pupils exhibiting very challenging behaviour. A small number of pupils who have been identified as gifted in mathematics are making good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They are cheerful, hard working and conscientious. Parents appreciate how much their children enjoy school. Pupils attend regularly, they participate eagerly in lessons and are keen to answer questions. Concentration levels are impressive and pupils set themselves high standards. They discuss their work sensibly with each other and with adults and strive to improve. Pupils who experience any sort of difficulties are very well supported by their peers. Activities in and out of school are very well supported with a high number of pupils taking advantage of extra-curricular activities.
8. Behaviour is very good. Levels of self-discipline are high so that good behaviour is not dependent on the presence of adults. Pupils move around the school calmly, they wait to go into assembly in silence and treat each other and adults with respect. Pupils engage in purposeful play on the field, making good use of the equipment provided. They treat all adults with equal courtesy and are polite to one another. Boys and girls mix well together although they often choose to play separately. During the inspection no bad language was heard and no bullying or misuse of equipment was witnessed. Such high levels of good behaviour contribute very well to learning as teachers can concentrate on teaching.
9. Relationships are excellent and are a strength of the school. The ethos and care that surround the school are reflected in concerns pupils have for one another and the good humour with which they mix with their peers. Pupils feel comfortable talking to adults. They enjoy each other's company and respect each other's opinion. This means that pupils have the confidence to express their own opinion even if it is at variance with others. Within school they respond positively to opportunities to show independence. They use research skills productively; they show responsibility in collecting and putting away equipment and they work particularly well in groups. They have looked beyond school and considered those who are less fortunate than themselves. Money has been raised for the Blue Peter appeal and the response to the harvest appeal for a community in Kosovo was outstanding.

10. Attendance at the school is good. The attendance rate has improved steadily since the last inspection and is now just above the national average. Unauthorised absence is extremely rare and for the current academic year it is well below the national average. Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, and are completed accurately. The morning registration time of twenty minutes is too long. Whilst always conducted in a comfortable and social atmosphere, it is unstructured and sometimes results in a slow start to the day. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time. Occasionally, the school bus is up to twenty minutes late which delays the start of the day for all pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The quality of teaching is consistently good. In ninety six per cent of lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good or better with twenty seven per cent of these lessons being very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good.
12. In the previous inspection, teaching in fifteen per cent of lessons was unsatisfactory. This is no longer the case as the teaching in the school is consistently good. The acting headteacher has monitored lessons and given useful constructive feedback to all members of staff. This has ensured that the teachers have had the opportunity to discuss their work and they are all active in seeking to improve still further. At the time of the inspection there were no children under the age of five. Scrutiny of the teacher's planning and the children's work indicates that the teaching for this age group is good and that the children make good progress and learn well. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs of young children and is secure in her knowledge of how young children learn. She provide a wide range of practical activities, which involve the children in their learning and extends and develops them well.
13. In the lessons observed during the inspection in Key Stage 1, the overall quality of teaching was good, with sixty seven per cent of teaching good. Thirty three per cent of lessons were very good. In Key Stage 2, twenty one per cent of lesson were very good, seventy one per cent good and seven per cent satisfactory. The seven per cent satisfactory lessons reflected one lesson. Teaching was consistently good across all subject areas and throughout both key stages.
14. The teaching of literacy is good overall. Teachers plan effectively to the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. They have good subject knowledge and question pupils effectively. They know the pupils in their class very well and challenge them in their learning. Teachers are working well to continue to raise standards in this subject.
15. The teaching of numeracy is good. Although it is in its early stages of development, teachers have worked hard to adjust their planning and teaching to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. The good quality of teaching is having a positive effect on the progress that pupils make.
16. In both key stages teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use appropriate subject specific language to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. This was evident in all subject areas where the teachers used technical language well, for example in a music lesson the teacher used the terms *dynamics*, *tempo* and *pianissimo*. In Year 4 the pupils clearly understand that insects have three discrete body parts, *head*, *thorax* and *abdomen*, correct terms effectively used by the class teacher. Teachers are effective in teaching to their strengths and this is particularly evident in the Year 3 class where the part time teachers have structured their timetable so that this is achieved. In Year 4, the expert teacher's knowledge in an art lesson influenced the pupils' work as they reflected on selected pieces of Bridget Riley's. Teachers clearly understand the need to develop the pupils' learning through carefully structured work, with all pupils being rigorously challenged. Teachers are sometimes lacking in the necessary expertise to meet the needs of a very small minority of pupils who have significant difficulties.

17. Teachers' planning is good. The teacher in the reception class plans appropriately to the areas of learning for young children. In literacy and numeracy the teachers plan very closely to the structured frameworks and this is a strength of their work. All teachers plan well, they set clear learning objectives and keep to their planning during lessons. This was seen in a Year 2 science lesson where the teacher's good planning with clear specific objectives led to an interesting and challenging lesson where the pupils decided what they were to investigate with their selection of seeds. Planning clearly indicates what has gone before and builds upon the previous learning of the pupils well. Support staff are involved in the planning process and they have a clear and precise plan of their exact input into the lessons. In all lessons work is carefully tailored to the pupils' individual needs with the lower attaining pupils being given good support in their tasks.
18. Teachers' expectations of the pupils and their work are very high. Teachers question pupils very well and work is matched to pupils' individual needs. In a history lesson the teacher had very high expectations of the pupils' work in terms of quality, quantity and effective use of the time available for the task. This ensured that the pupils concentrated on their work and time was not wasted. In all classes pupils are encouraged to work independently. The pupils collaborate well in groups and listen carefully to the input of others in the class. The pupils and staff have excellent relationships with one another and this significantly adds to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn.
19. Teachers organise their lessons well and so promote the use of techniques and groupings that enable the pupils to learn well. Staff effectively use the format of the literacy and numeracy lessons well to support teaching in other curriculum areas. This was seen in a Year 2 music lesson where the class teacher introduced the lesson set clear objectives and then ensured that at the end of the session the pupils had an opportunity to reflect upon their piece of music and think how they might improve it. The pupils spoke not only about how they might improve their work but also about what they liked about it. Teachers are effective in the ways that they reinforce pupils learning by linking different subject areas together. For instance, the teacher in the Reception /Year 1 class in a design and technology lesson reinforced the pupils' science work on pushes and pulls while the pupils designed and made playground rides and slides from construction kits.
20. The management of pupils throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 is very good and pupils work in a busy, interested and active manner. The management of the pupils is consistently developed throughout the school with the very good behaviour being a reflection of the school's outstanding relationships. Pupils who find it difficult to behave well are supported and encouraged by the whole school. Class teachers work well to engage the pupils' interests to stimulate, challenge and fascinate them. However, they do not always use effective strategies to ensure that boys and girls contribute equally to discussion and performances.
21. Lessons are well organised and time and resources are used effectively to keep all the pupils on task. Lessons move along at a brisk pace, but there is also time for the pupils to consolidate their work and think about the tasks set. Resources are used well to support the learning in the classrooms. The teachers prepare good quality worksheets for the pupils to use and the schools resources and the resources the teachers bring from home are used effectively in the classrooms to supplement the school's often meagre resources. The school uses learning support assistants well. The local authority provides additional support for some pupils occasionally at other learning centres and this gives these pupils good support.
22. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good. Teachers use the information from the previous lessons well and modify their plans for the next lessons. The teachers monitor the pupils work well in the class giving support and advice, as the pupils need it. Although the teachers have systems for recording the pupils' progress in English and mathematics for the other subject areas there are no whole school systems for recording the pupils progress. The marking of work is inconsistent. Some marking, for example in mathematics, includes helpful evaluative comments that move pupils on in their learning. Too much other marking, although positive, does not identify areas for improvement clearly enough.

23. Homework is used well throughout the school. Pupils have homework in the form of reading and spellings and often the pupils research work they are doing in the class. The work pupils do at home is valued by the teachers and provides an additional focus for lessons.
24. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The work provided is well planned and adapted to meet the needs of these pupils and they are well supported in their learning. Support staff are usually well deployed and are effective in their work. There are times when they could be more involved in such activities as record keeping, especially when listening to reading and in monitoring and recording responses and behaviour. Teachers do not always plan strategies that enable pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties to remain within the classroom.
25. Pupils throughout the school are keen and interested in their lessons. They are enthusiastic learners who enjoy coming to school and engaging in the lessons provided by the teachers. The pupils are motivated by the consistent and outstanding relationships that they build with their class teacher and the challenging and interesting work they are provided. All try hard, and this is evident at all levels of achievement and in all subject areas. The pupils demonstrate appropriate levels of independence in their work and concentrate well on the tasks set for them. Pupils are beginning to take ownership of their own learning as they have targets set for English and mathematics although, this is as yet in its very early stages of development.

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

26. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum are just satisfactory, mainly because of the very good extra-curriculum activities and additional contributions to the curriculum which are not time-tabled. Planning for breadth and balance within the timetable, however, is unsatisfactory. All statutory requirements are met. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection when the National Curriculum had yet to be fully implemented. The curriculum aims are achieved. The curriculum provides a Christian setting in which Catholic children and others can grow in understanding and acquire appropriate skills, knowledge, aptitudes and values. The school is currently benefiting from the introduction of schemes of work that are approved by the government across a range of subjects.
27. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented with sufficient time allocated to it. Parents and carers have been successfully encouraged to support reading at home and this is a positive contribution to the curriculum. Sufficient emphasis has also been placed on the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning for both of these initiatives has been thorough, including how skills will be developed throughout the year. For older pupils, the school has rightly substituted one literacy session a week for extended writing. Standards in this area have been identified as below the very high standards achieved in other areas of the English curriculum.
28. Timetable planning is a weakness. The school has given insufficient thought to the best use of time and some time is unaccounted for. This has meant that many areas of the non-core curriculum such as geography and history receive too little curriculum time. This has had an adverse effect on standards. This situation was highlighted at the time of the previous inspection and has yet to be resolved. Too much time is unstructured especially at the beginning of sessions. There are very good cross-curricular links between subjects, but too much time is spent on broad topics. This means that the skills and knowledge needed to ensure progress in individual subjects are sometimes not taught.
29. There are curriculum policy statements for all subjects. There has been some improvement in the introduction of policies and schemes of work since the previous inspection. The literacy and numeracy documentation is good. Policies for areas of English such as handwriting and spelling are in need of updating. Many other policies are brief and in need of revision. Planning follows a common format throughout the school and is detailed and satisfactory. It relates closely to the newly introduced schemes of work. Planning for mixed age classes in the lower part of the school makes appropriate reference to the national targets for their age group.
30. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs, except for a very

small minority of pupils with significant needs. Individual education plans help access to the curriculum and identify where and when the effective additional support is to be provided. They also identify additional resources such as lap top computers that are proving beneficial to two pupils. The plans are less successful in identifying small, measurable targets over the short term so that pupils' progress can be monitored more accurately. The additional literacy strategy provides more structured teaching of literacy for a small number of pupils. Lack of special needs experience means that the curriculum is not always broken down sufficiently to enable learning to take place in very small steps. The curriculum is not always well planned to identify strategies which will involve pupils who exhibit very challenging behaviour within the classroom. Relationships with the educational psychology and other support services are very good. However, lack of time for training or the dissemination of expertise has meant that staff sometimes struggle to meet exceptional needs.

31. School policies and the ethos of the school promotes equal opportunities. The school has not monitored its policy rigorously enough however to ensure that boys and girls and pupils of all abilities are receiving equal access. Older girls are out numbered by boys who are considerably more assertive. This has meant that boys sometimes dominate discussions and answer more questions. In a recent public performance boys played all leading roles. The school has been unsuccessful in its attempts to persuade any of these girls to join football or computer clubs. Boys are significantly out-performing girls and have done so over several years. This situation has now changed in Year 3. The school tries very hard to provide equal access to all its pupils. Pupils gifted in mathematics have been identified and very good individual plans have been drawn up setting them challenging targets.
32. Parents rightly appreciate the very good provision for extra-curricular activities. This is a strength of the school. A large number of pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs which support and broaden the curriculum in many areas. Teachers, parents, volunteers and paid instructors contribute their expertise to activities that include French, football, netball, mathematics, several types of dancing and computers. Enhancement of the curriculum includes a book week, participation in a country dance festival and singing in the island music festival. Visits support a range of subjects. Year 4 pupils improve design and technology skills at the local college, historical knowledge with visits to Osborne House, the Mary Rose and HMS Victory. Outdoor pursuits are followed at Little Canada and younger pupils visit a farm.
33. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory. Much of the curriculum is delivered in conjunction with religious education based on the 'Here I Am' syllabus. Cross-curricular themes include health education and education in personal relationships. External speakers have contributed positively to the curriculum for PSHE. For example, pupils learn about personal safety from the police, healthy living from the school nurse and the use and misuse of medicine from a pharmacist. There is some use of circle time when emotions and personal feelings can be explored safely. Pupils are not assessed for their personal development but reports include a statement on social development.
34. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. This aspect of the school's work makes a positive contribution to its aims and ethos. The staff provide very effective role models for the pupils and the relationships within the school are of the highest order.
35. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good. This is supported by the school's strong traditional links with the convent, the community and the two parishes. In each classroom there is a focus of worship and prayers and celebrations are an active part of the life of the school. Spirituality is fostered through collective worship and through informed and creative teaching which enables the pupils to consider others and to reflect upon the natural and man made world. Pupils reflect their understandings and thoughts through poetry and Year 3 pupils considered their feelings about 'Beechwoods' and produced some effective poetry and pieces of art work which reflected their personal ideas and experiences.
36. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and this is evident in the day-to-day working of the school. The Golden Rules provide an effective framework for the behaviour of the pupils. The relationships within the school are of such a high order that the references to the Golden Rules are seldom needed. The very positive relationships, encouragement and mutual support of all the people

in the school ensures that the pupils' moral development is within the higher orders of self-discipline, consideration and thought for others.

37. The provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The school aims to foster constructive relationships based on mutual respect and open communications. Pupils are encouraged to be kind, supportive and helpful to each other. They support each other in their work, listen to each other and help each other. Pupils help in and around the school, putting away chairs and clearing tables at lunchtime. Even the youngest pupils in the school are encouraged to put out equipment and at the end of lessons tidy away. Pupils respond to initiatives in the island and the wider community. The pupils took part in the recent Blue Peter appeal and made and sold cakes to raise money. The pupils throughout the school had the chance to bring their parents to school for a morning to take an active part in their literacy and numeracy lessons. This event was well attended and considered as very successful.
38. Pupils' cultural development is very good. The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to develop an understanding of their own and other cultures. Through history the pupils learn about ancient civilisations. In geography pupils learn about other peoples, their religions and beliefs. There are very good opportunities through music and art for the pupils to learn about different cultural traditions. Included in the range of work studied by the pupils is the work of Bridget Riley. The pupils study the work of a variety of artists and interpret their own work in their distinct style. Through ballet, Irish dancing and English country dancing the pupils learn to express themselves through dances from a range of cultures. Visits to places of interest help pupils form views about their own and other cultures and visitors to the school bring their own experiences to share with the pupils.
39. The school has very good formal and informal relationships with many schools on the island. Within the Cowes pyramid, primary, middle and high schools meet regularly to provide a consistent approach and share information. The school enjoys very good relationships with other Catholic schools in the Diocese through joint activities and celebrations. The school is also part of the Wight Association of Small Primary Schools (WASPS). An annual calendar of events includes a science day, a mathematics day and a barbecue. Throughout the year, there are many joint ventures with pupils from other schools. The school is about to embark on a performing arts project with a high school and there are many inter-school sporting events and competitions. Classes have had exchange visits with other schools to concentrate on numeracy, and the mathematics co-ordinator has worked with primary and middle school mathematics teachers to ensure an effective introduction of the numeracy hour. The school has very close ties with the pre-school group established on the same site just over a year ago. The young children visit the reception class a number of times before they begin at the school, and it is proposed that the pre-school and reception children have their break together to help the transition. Year 4 pupils visit the pre-school group to read to the young children. There is a good induction and transfer programme for Year 4 pupils transferring to the middle schools, ensuring they are well prepared and confident. The school has also developed contact with schools further afield. They correspond with a school in Bedfordshire to compare their different environments, and have a growing friendship with a school in Kosovo. The quality of these links with other schools makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and personal development, widening their experience of people and activities.
40. The school has a strong sense of belonging to the community and uses its links and contacts in a structured way to support pupils' learning very well. It celebrates many religious events with local churches and other schools. Its golden jubilee celebrations involved many friends and visitors in a variety of activities. Performances and events at the school are always well attended. The school makes very good use of the local environment to support the curriculum. The school also invites many people into school to contribute to lessons. A person from Carisbrooke Castle talked to pupils about Roman armour, and a local councillor joined pupils in a debate on big shops versus little shops, and a bridge between the island and the mainland. Regular visits from the police and health services provide pupils with valuable information and support on safety and personal development. Pupils have taken part in a science and technology fair at the Isle of Wight college, and Year 3 and 4 pupils have recently taken part in a country dance festival at Appledurcombe. The school has developed a friendship with Millfield House, and entertains residents with carols at Christmas. Pupils support a number of charities, such as the Blue Peter appeal and Comic Relief.
41. The links with the community play a positive part in the development of all pupils and add an

enjoyable dimension to school life and pupils' experiences.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school provides a good level of support and guidance for its pupils, which is appreciated by pupils and parents.
43. The school gives a high priority to the physical care and well-being of its pupils. There is an effective child protection policy. The headteacher is the designated officer and ensures that local procedures are followed. Clear and helpful guidance is provided for all staff on how to deal with such matters. Good use is made of medical support and other outside agencies, and lines of communication are clear. There are policies and guidelines for the organisation and participation of off-site activities and visits, and there are effective arrangements for dealing with first aid and sickness. Regular fire drills and safety checks on equipment are carried out. The health and safety policy clearly identifies roles and responsibilities, and the headteacher and governor conduct termly checks. There is a need, however, to carry out formal risk assessments on a more frequent basis.
44. The school is a caring place where pupils feel secure and valued. Staff and pupils work well together both inside and outside the classroom. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of all their pupils, and have a genuine concern for their progress, welfare and personal well being. Pupils find their teachers approachable, accessible, responsive and encouraging. The quality of their relationships is the basis upon which much of the personal support is built, and this contributes to pupils' confidence and ability to cope with everyday school life. The school is a happy place and pupils enjoy being there.
45. The school has good systems and procedures for encouraging and maintaining good discipline and behaviour based on a climate of honesty and fairness, and showing tolerance towards others. The school rules are few and are displayed in all classrooms and around school. Pupils were involved in the making of the rules, and in the home-school contract. They understand what is expected of them and respond accordingly. The behaviour book contains a record of the more serious incidents (which are few), and all non-teaching staff are fully involved in monitoring behaviour of pupils. Issues such as bullying are discussed through assemblies, and pupils have a mature and sensible approach towards helping each other. The excellent relationships between pupils and teachers also contribute to a calm atmosphere, and one in which pupils readily and naturally talk to teachers.
46. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. The good relationship with parents ensures that parents understand the importance of good attendance, and of keeping the school informed. Most parents telephone or write immediately and the school makes contact on the first day of absence if they have not received notification. Class teachers monitor the attendance of their pupils, and keep an absence record which highlights patterns and problems quickly. Weekly visits from the education welfare service are useful and support the work of the school well.
47. The school's measures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Baseline assessments for pupils who are under five are thorough and help to give a clear picture of attainment on entry to school. This information is used in planning work to suit individual needs. Standard Attainment Tests in Year 2 and similar tests in Year 4 provide detailed information about attainment in English, mathematics and science. Accurate teachers' assessment has been confirmed by test and task results. This information is shared between staff including classroom support assistants. Samples of pupils' work are beginning to be collected and the standard of the work evaluated by teachers. The information then guides teachers when grouping pupils and helps in setting targets for the future. These targets are shared with older pupils who also set targets for themselves. Procedures for monitoring the attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Statutory requirements relating to the Code of Practice are met.
48. Government recommended schemes of work are used for science, information technology and most non-core subjects apart from physical education. The majority of these are relatively new in place and the school has not, as yet, introduced the accompanying assessment procedures. This shows no improvement since the previous inspection. Some teachers devise end-of-topic

tests in subjects like geography, but there is a lack of consistency in approach. Pupils' progress in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding in science, information technology and the non-core subjects, is not recorded. Oral assessment is good however, and the teachers' good knowledge of individual pupils helps them in planning future work.

49. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Staff have a good knowledge of all aspects of their pupils' development, and monitor pupils on a daily basis. Pupil profiles are a good initiative and are beginning to build up a picture of progress over the years. Individual pupil targets are now being set and will form the basis of discussion at the parents' evenings. Target setting is more advanced in year 4 where pupils understand National Curriculum levels and have personal targets to aim for. The school works well as a whole community and pupils take pleasure in each other's success. Assemblies are used to celebrate and acknowledge achievements and activities, and are enjoyed by all.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The school has a good partnership with parents. Parents are seen as an important part of pupils' education and development, and the school now seeks every opportunity to involve them as much as possible.
51. The parents are very positive about the school. Their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting show that they are well informed and have an intelligent concern about the education and progress of their children. Parents have the highest regard for the staff at the school. They feel that the school values their opinion and support and that their concerns are generally acted upon quickly. They feel that staff are approachable and helpful, and that standards within the school are very good.
52. Parents receive good quality information about the school, its philosophy and approach. The prospectus and annual report from governors provide detail on how the school works and what parents can expect, but do not contain all the information required. Letters home are brief and relevant. The local newspaper regularly has photographs and articles celebrating pupils' work and achievements, keeping parents well informed and giving pupils a sense of pride in their school.
53. Formal reporting to parents is through three parents' evenings a year and a written report. Attendance at the parents' evenings is very good and the school works hard to communicate with those parents who do not come. The written reports were amended after the last inspection to contain more detail on what pupils can actually do, but failed to relate achievements to National Curriculum levels or to national expectations. Targets were set but these were general and not subject specific. Parents' views were sought on the new format, and as a result the draft of a new version is currently being discussed with parents and governors. The revised format is to be used in the summer term. It will clearly identify strengths and weaknesses within National Curriculum levels, and give parents a clearer view of their child's progress. The informal communication between the staff and parents is very good and the school is quick to respond to individual concerns.
54. The school is keen to encourage parents to take an active part in their child's education and is successful in doing so. Parents' views are sought regularly and their concerns responded to. As a result, the relationship with parents is now positive and effective. The recent 'Bring a Parent to School' was extremely well received by all that attended. Not only did it give parents a first hand look at the literacy and numeracy strategies, but also an insight into how the school and classes operate in general. Furthermore, parents said how valuable and interesting it was to see their child interacting with other children and with staff. Approximately seventy five per cent of parents attended the sessions, and all would like to repeat the experience saying they are now in a better position to understand and help their child at home. Parents are encouraged to comment on reading records, and on pupils' homework. Many comments are perceptive and encouraging, and show a commitment to supporting learning at home.
55. The home-school agreement is now firmly established, and parents were consulted regarding its content. There is a busy parent-teacher association that supports the school in many ways, and school concerts and activities are always very well attended.

56. The partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. They are consulted at every stage and kept fully informed. Parents' views are sought and recorded. Almost all parents attend the reviews of individual education plans and statements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. At the time of the inspection there was an acting headteacher in post as a result of the long-term absence and subsequent early retirement of the headteacher on the grounds of ill health. A senior member of staff has also been absent from school for much of the past twelve months on grounds of ill-health. The acting headteacher has been employed on short-term temporary contracts for the past year to cover for the absence of the headteacher. The Governing Body has experienced difficulties in appointing a new Catholic headteacher but hopes to in the near future.
58. The acting headteacher has provided the school with much needed stability and direction. He has been successful in establishing an atmosphere of collegiality, mutual support and fostered a common commitment to provide pupils with the best education. He has also been instrumental in restoring the confidence of parents, some of whom were extremely concerned about the future of the school. Parents find him approachable and numbers of pupils entering the school, which were beginning to fall, are now rising. During his period of leadership standards achieved in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in both key stages have remained high. He has continued to develop curriculum initiatives to overcome some of the weaknesses that were identified in the previous inspection report. The school has quite recently adopted government recommended schemes of work for several National Curriculum subjects, and is now planning lessons from these. During his time as headteacher, the school has been successful in continuing the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The co-ordinator for these two subjects has worked exceedingly hard in her role to achieve this success.
59. The acting headteacher monitors the work of teachers in the classroom and provides relevant feedback in order that staff might improve their performance. He undertakes professional development interviews with teaching and non-teaching staff. Targets are set and appropriate support and courses made available. Each week he teaches the Year 4 class and has taken two of the other classes on many occasions. Through these avenues, and by monitoring and evaluating on a day-to-day basis, he has a clear view of the effectiveness of the school and the impact of new initiatives. Under his guidance, the school has analysed test results and particular strengths and weaknesses have been noted. Planning has been adjusted on the basis of these findings, and groups of pupils identified for further support. Efficient tracking procedures have been established to monitor the progress of different cohorts. Pupils undertake termly tests in English and mathematics which are marked and moderated and are used to develop a useful profile of each pupils' attainment and progress. Many of these initiatives are relatively new and the school has yet to see how effective they will be in fulfilling their goal of raising standards. Monitoring of pupils' attainment by gender is insufficiently developed. Challenging targets have been set for cohorts of pupils in Year 2 and Year 4.
60. The current school development plan has been developed by the acting headteacher, following an initial audit of perceived strengths and weaknesses. His findings have been shared with staff and the governing body. In its current form, it has significant limitations. It lacks rigour and a longer-term focus. Targets are not always specific enough and the criteria by which the school is to judge its success are not sharply defined. There were similar weaknesses to be found in the school development plan devised by the previous headteacher. Although it had a longer-term focus of three years, it too lacked rigour and as a result did not provide a secure framework upon which the school could plan effectively or judge value for money.
61. Members of the Governing Body work hard in their individual and collective roles and are committed to the success of the school. Several of the school governors are relatively new in post and are keen to be more involved. Individual members of the Governing Body have undertaken some monitoring in school, but not in recent times. The governors with responsibility for literacy and numeracy, for example, have seen lessons taught in the classroom. Several governors, including the vice-chair work in school alongside teachers in the classroom.

62. Although governors are generally aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, their involvement in the strategic management of the school and in helping to shape its direction is unsatisfactory. Although good progress has been made in overcoming the weaknesses identified in the previous report, there are still outstanding issues relating to the curriculum and the role of the co-ordinator which are unresolved. The school development plans that have been drawn up by the previous headteacher and the acting headteacher have significant weaknesses and do not provide a secure framework for the school's improvement. The governing body has not had a significant role in the process of developing these documents or in monitoring progress towards the identified goals. The most recent audit report identified several weaknesses pertaining to the role of the Governing Body. These included the need to update the scheme of management delegation, to ensure that minutes of meetings are signed and to establish a register of pecuniary interest. There are also minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents relating to the provision of pupils with disabilities, and parents were not provided with information about pupils' achievements in national tests in the last academic year. The Governing Body has failed to perform a health and safety risk assessment within the past twelve months.
63. A vision statement and the aims of the school were developed in consultation with staff and governors. These aims are clearly reflected in the work of the school where pupils have very good attitudes towards their work and enjoy excellent relationships with adults and each other. The aims rightly focus on the Catholic ethos of the school and relationships, but do not refer sufficiently to the quality of education being provided or to striving after high standards.
64. The role of the curriculum co-ordinator was an issue in the previous report and is still unsatisfactory. There are co-ordinators for the majority of subjects but not for music, history or geography. The responsibilities for curriculum co-ordination are not equitably distributed and insufficient time has been provided for those with these duties to fulfil their roles effectively. The co-ordinator for English, mathematics and special educational needs works extremely hard and has been effective in introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies into school. She has provided introductory courses on literacy and monitored the teaching of this subject in the classroom. She is to lead INSET training in numeracy but has not been provided with time to monitor the work of teachers in the classroom. The co-ordinator for science and information technology has also worked extremely hard to promote her subject areas. A significant amount of work has been done in establishing a computer suite, training staff and acquiring and installing new equipment for pupils to use. Standards have continued to rise in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in information technology, largely due to the work of these two teachers.
65. The co-ordinator of special educational needs (SENCO) has significantly improved the record keeping which is now good. Liaison with outside agencies, parents and staff is very good. The SENCO has had no training for this role however, so she is unable to advise staff about specific special needs. She has significant other responsibilities and her role as SENCO places a heavy burden on her. Resources and staff expertise are insufficient to deliver parts of the curriculum in very small steps required by a tiny minority of pupils.
66. Although the staffing structure is at present unsettled, staff are working with great professionalism to ensure that the pupils are taught well and this uncertainty does not impact upon them. There are sufficient numbers of teaching staff to teach the requirements of the National Curriculum and there are good numbers of support staff to aid the teachers in their work. Teaching and support staff have access to courses to develop and extend their work. There are no induction procedures for new teachers but the staff handbook gives good guidance and the staff are supportive of each other. There are a number of teaching students from a local teachers training course and they report that they have good support and direction from the school. Formal staff appraisal is on hold while the school waits for guidance on performance management and has been replaced by staff development interviews.
67. The initial draft budget is prepared by the Local Management of Schools' Officer and the acting headteacher. The draft budget is debated and agreed by the Finance and Resources Committee before being presented to the Governing Body for approval. The Local Management of Schools' Officer monitors spending levels efficiently. Monthly monitoring statements are presented to and discussed by the Finance and Resources Committee. The Governing Body receives a financial report on the position of the school budget when it meets.

The Governing Body keeps parents fully informed of its financial position. A financial statement was approved at the last annual meeting for parents.

68. Specific grants allocated to the school are spent in accordance with the purpose intended. Funds allocated for special educational needs are efficiently used to support the learning of these pupils in the school.
69. Day-to-day financial control and administration are satisfactory. The school secretary has a clearly defined role that she carries out efficiently. Administrative systems are unobtrusive and support efficient day-to-day organisation. There are satisfactory management systems in place for ensuring that incoming monies are handled efficiently. Finances are kept in good order and the recommendations of the latest audit are being acted upon. The school makes satisfactory use of computers to raise invoices and keep records relating to its pupils.
70. Since the last inspection an information technology suite has been created that is used for teaching pupils. Each class has a timetabled session to use the suite on a weekly basis. There are also an adequate number of computers in the classrooms. The school is connected to the Internet and pupils use it frequently to research for information.
71. The school's accommodation is good overall. Classrooms are of a comfortable size and the recently developed computer suite gives an effective working space. The school hall is used for drama, physical education, assemblies and as a dining room. The school has plans to develop the library area in the corridor in the near future and the new library will provide an improved facility for the school. The outdoor areas of the school are very pleasant with splendid views across The Solent. There is a large grassed area for the pupils to use and a smaller hard surfaced area. The Parents' Teacher Association has recently completed an adventure playground for the pupils and this is used well. The swimming pool area is to be redeveloped and the oldest pupils have been drawing plans for the garden area, many of which include seating areas and water features. They have written to a well-known television personality who lives locally to enlist his aid.
72. The levels of resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory overall. However in many areas they are just sufficient and when the school completes its audit and matches its resources against the new schemes of work it has implemented, staff anticipate the need to purchase more, vital equipment. Resources in science are unsatisfactory. The school has insufficient resources for accurate measurements to be made during experiments and the class teachers often supplement their lesson needs by resources they buy or bring from home. In geography there are insufficient maps and globes in the school to enable the curriculum to be delivered effectively. The resources for the teachers to use with the pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory as there is insufficient equipment specifically designed to meet their needs. At present the gymnastic equipment in the school hall is unsatisfactory, as it is too large and heavy for the pupils in the school. The acting headteacher has made plans to have this changed. At present there is no secure area for the children who are under five to use outdoors nor is there any climbing, balancing, or wheeled toys for them to use; this is unsatisfactory. In contrast, the resources to support literacy and information technology are good.
73. The school seeks best value for money by comparing prices and evaluating the quality of their purchases and the services that are provided. Parents have been consulted about the quality of written reports and changes have been made to provide a clearer view of pupils' attainment and progress. However, weaknesses in development planning impacts on the schools' ability to plan financially and to evaluate its cost effectiveness.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further improve the quality of education in the school, the acting headteacher, governing body and staff should:

- Develop the role of the governing body by:
 - providing for a greater involvement in the strategic management of the school, including school development planning. (*see paragraphs: 60, 73*)

- Develop effective strategies by which the governing body can more effectively monitor the work of the school. *(see paragraphs: 28, 29, 30, 31, 43, 59, 61, 63, 68, 89, 97)*
 - Ensuring all the issues raised in the auditor’s report relating to the governing body are fully met. *(see paragraphs: 62)*
- Improve the quality of the school development plan by:
 - extending its length beyond one year;
 - including specific, measurable goals for each of the targets;
 - rigorously costing all identified priorities. *(see paragraphs: 60, 73)*
 - ensure that the responsibilities for curriculum co-ordination are more equitably distributed and time is provided for them to fulfil their roles effectively. *(see paragraphs: 62, 65, 90, 97, 102, 107, 113, 118, 122, 134)*
 - Make alterations to the school timetable to ensure that the time that is available is used more efficiently; *(see paragraphs: 26, 28, 117, 122)*
 - Provide appropriately trained staff in order that they might deliver the specialised programmes of teaching required for some pupils with significant special educational needs; *(see paragraphs: 6, 16, 24, 30, 88)*
 - Improve the provision of resources to include;
 - equipment for the teaching of science, geography, physical education and for pupils with special educational needs; *(see paragraphs: 21, 72, 102, 118, 140)*
 - outdoor play equipment for furthering the physical development of children under the age of five; *(see paragraphs: 72, 78)*

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered by the governors for inclusion in the action plan:

- Ensure that the school prospectus and governors’ annual report to parents and school prospectus meet statutory requirements. *(see paragraphs: 52, 62)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	27	69	4	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	91
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	22

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	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
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
	1999	8	11	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	8
	Girls	11	10	11
	Total	19	17	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	89 (96)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	19	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (96)	100 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5:1
Average class size	22.3

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	214623
Total expenditure	213115
Expenditure per pupil	2132
Balance brought forward from previous year	26455
Balance carried forward to next year	27963

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	91
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	25	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	25	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	27	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	40	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	75	22	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	32	2	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	22	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	58	38	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	20	3	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	32	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	62	35	3	0	0

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

74. At the time of the inspection there were no children under the age of five in the reception class. The attainment of the children on entry to the reception class in September indicated by their early assessments shows that the majority achieves above the levels expected for children of their age. They achieve well in all areas of learning with the exception of physical development, which is at the level expected for children of their age. The children demonstrate particular strengths in their speaking and listening skills, attitudes to learning, relationships with others, the use of mathematics and shape work. Almost all the children have had some pre-school experience before they start school, many in the play group adjacent to the school. By the time they are five the majority of children are working in the lower levels of the National Curriculum in all areas of their work. The examination of the children's work shows that they have made good progress in the reception class in all areas of their learning. Their personal and social skills are well developed and are above the levels normally found.
75. The provision and teaching for the children are good overall. The children follow the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and are working at the appropriate levels for their abilities. The children further develop their listening skills and are encouraged to articulate their ideas and suggestions. From the start they write in a cursive style and begin to write for themselves and in response to suggestions. They have a reading book and share texts during literacy sessions. In mathematics they learn the names of a wide range of shapes. They count up to 20 and recognise odd and even numbers, learning how to count in two's and five's.
76. In order to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world, a wide range of activities is planned to teach early concepts in science, design and technology, geography, history and information technology. The children talk about pushes and pulls and label doors and parts of the class with the appropriate push or pull tag. In design and technology they make playground equipment from construction kits. In history the children look at toys from the past and the present. In information technology they use the computer to plan a village and talk and record their route to school in their learning in geography.
77. In their creative learning the children use a wide variety of media to represent and record their ideas and thoughts. The children have the opportunity to develop their musical talents as they sing familiar songs and play percussion instruments. Opportunities for role-play are also available for the children in the home area.
78. Physical development is promoted through lessons in the school hall where their children experience a variety of ways of controlling their bodies. There are however no facilities for the children to develop their control and co-ordination in outdoor play as there is no secure area for them to play in nor is there any large balancing or climbing equipment nor wheeled toys for them to use. The school recognises that this is unsatisfactory.
79. The resources available for the children to use are good overall and provide a wide range of experiences for the children. The class teacher has a good knowledge and understanding of young children and how they learn. The class teacher and support assistant work well together and they provide a caring supportive and challenging atmosphere in which the children can develop to their full potential. The teacher plans in detail for the children, ensuring that they achieve the national targets for their age group and then move on to the programmes of work set out in the National Curriculum. The good provision for the children under the age of five ensures that they make good progress and are well prepared for their learning in Key Stage 1.

ENGLISH

80. Standards in English overall by the end of Key Stage 1 are very high. They are well above standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection when they were judged to be in line with national expectations. Few pupils were then achieving levels above national expectations. In the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds, all pupils reached the expected level; level 2 in reading and results were very high in comparison with the national average.

Standards in writing were above the national average and the percentage of pupils reaching higher levels was very high in comparison with the national average in reading and writing. In comparison with similar schools, standards are very high in reading and writing. A high percentage of pupils are achieving at the higher level, level 3. These results indicate that the school's performance is in the highest five per cent nationally. The performance of boys in reading and writing was well above, and girls above, the national average. These high standards maintain those achieved in 1998 when they rose significantly above the national average and well above those reached in the previous two years. Standards are very high in Key Stage 2 and are well above the national average. Voluntary national tests at the end of Year 4 show that almost half the pupils are achieving at levels above or well above expectation in reading and writing. The high targets that the school set itself in 1999 were exceeded in both key stages. The equally challenging targets set for this year's cohort of pupils look likely to be met.

81. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in speaking and listening is very good. Many pupils enter the school with well-developed language skills and these are extended. A small number of pupils need additional support before becoming competent communicators. Pupils in Year 1 are able to retell a familiar story in sequence. They can discuss it and identify rhyming words. They are beginning to understand how words change tense and they know some of the technical language associated with English. Narrators, illustrators and characters are identified in books. Pupils listen actively. Their very good vocabulary enables them to extend and justify their answers. This was observed when a Year 2 pupil explained he had not enjoyed a story because of the amount of repetition.
82. Attainment in speaking and listening is excellent by the end of Key Stage 2. This is aided by the range and quality of the opportunities given over all areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 3 are able to question and understand figurative language, asking "What does 'having a black cloud' hanging over her mean?" They then supply the answer! Pupils in Year 4 have high order speaking and listening skills. They can evaluate each other's work sensitively, perform publicly with confidence, debate issues with town councillors and negotiate with peers. Extensive vocabulary gives pupils the confidence to hold to individual opinions. The opening of Pandora's box was 'just curiosity, not wickedness.' Boys sometimes dominate oral work, although they listen politely to girls when they assert themselves. The social conversation and skills of pupils of all ages are very good which make occasions such as eating lunch and playtime positive experiences for adults as well as pupils.
83. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading is good and pupils are making very good progress. They read from a wide variety of books and other texts of fact and fiction. They can relate the plot of stories and discuss the characters. More able pupils make accurate predictions about what will happen next and can refer to the text to support their opinions. Pupils use a broad range of skills to help them read. These include an increasing knowledge of phonics and use of clues such as illustration and context. Structured reading schemes for those pupils still requiring them contribute to steady progress. Some schemes are out-dated however and do not encourage a love of reading. Pupils are able to use their knowledge of alphabetical order to find information in books. The consistent help and encouragement of family members, which is evident in reading records, contribute well to attainment and progress.
84. Attainment in reading in Key Stage 2 is very good and very good progress is maintained. More able pupils are developing higher order reading skills such as comparing texts and skimming and scanning quickly to extract information they require. Pupils in Year 4 read myths, legends and traditional stories from a range of cultures and can identify common themes. They read an extensive range of fiction and more able pupils make use of the local library. Many pupils read aloud expressively and with obvious enthusiasm for the written word. Guided reading during the literacy hour and consistent reading at home supplement the other very good opportunities for reading for a range of purposes.
85. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment and progress in writing are good. On entry to school most pupils can represent their ideas in pictures. They make marks on paper to represent sounds and some form individual letters. One more able pupil progressed from writing one or two letters on entry to writing a few single words by the end of term and during the next term could write a sentence of five words. Pupils learn by copying how to space words correctly. They benefit from learning letter joins from an early age so that handwriting is sometimes

fluent and stylish by the end of Year 2. Knowledge of letter sounds learned during the literacy hour is used well to build up words and spelling of common regular words is good. More able pupils write short stories using simple rules of grammar and punctuation. They write instructions and news and complete comprehension exercises.

86. Pupils consolidate their writing skills during Key Stage 2. However, good presentational skills are sometimes sacrificed in the desire to record ideas and feelings. Spelling is good. During Year 3, pupils increase their range and amount of writing and are beginning to show the sensitive use of imaginative language which is a feature of the best work at Holy Cross. Year 4 pupils can write brief notes, compose poetry of different types, such as limericks, as well as writing increasingly confident stories and articles. Vocabulary is often used with precision. The computer is used insufficiently to draft work.
87. The majority of pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in line with their peers. Good support and the recent introduction of the additional literacy strategy have aided this. A very small number of pupils would benefit from more support in their writing. The very good attitudes which pupils display towards this work and the high levels of self-discipline have contributed well to the standards that are achieved. Concentration levels, which are well above those usually observed, mean that a pleasing amount of work is completed during each lesson. The excellent relationships which exist between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves also aids learning. Pupils want to do well to please their teacher and to satisfy themselves. Good collaboration has resulted in some effective writing and in the production of a modern 'Prodigal Son' which has just been performed publicly. The very supportive environment within classrooms is conducive to the good integration of pupils experiencing difficulties.
88. The quality of teaching is very good. This shows an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are confident and competent. They have good subject knowledge and use an interesting range of techniques and resources to aid learning. Questioning is used particularly well. Teachers knowledge of the strengths and needs of individual pupils is very good. They know how to challenge pupils and how to move them on in their learning. The only exception is in the lack of specialist knowledge amongst the staff for meeting the needs of a very small number of pupils with significant special needs. Support staff work in harmony with teachers and pupils and make a good contribution to learning. Their deployment is usually planned well but some time could be spent more effectively in assessment, especially when listening to reading. Teachers are working well to bring the already good standards of writing in line with the very high standards in other areas of English. Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is accurate and consistent with test results. Simple recording procedures are in need of development.
89. The National Literacy Strategy has been competently implemented. The staff have been well trained and supported by the co-ordinator. The governor for literacy has attended some lessons, but not in recent times. Standards have clearly risen significantly since its implementation. Money allocated for resources has been well spent. Other areas of the curriculum support literacy well. Sequential writing in design and technology is used when designing a water wheel. Pupils make notes on joints in science and label parts of the body. Dictation skills are increased in geography and reference skills frequently practised in history.
90. The co-ordinator of English has managed the subject well. This is despite her other considerable responsibilities and lack of time to carry out her role. She has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching during the last year and documentation needs updating. Pupil profiles of work to help monitor progress are a positive initiative in the early stage of development. English contributes significantly to the social and cultural development of pupils. Book weeks and visits from poets and storytellers enrich the curriculum. Drama is well used in lessons and performances in and out of school. The range of fiction and reference books in classrooms and the library is sufficient. The library is under used however, books are not catalogued and it is a resource in need of the planned up grading.

MATHEMATICS

91. Standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are very high. The results of the most recent National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were very high in comparison with the national

average and with similar schools. Very high numbers of pupils achieved at the higher level (level 3). These results indicate that the school's performance is in the highest five per cent nationally. Standards are above those recorded at the time of the last inspection. Challenging, but realistic targets have been set for this year's cohort of pupils and they are likely to be achieved.

92. The majority of pupils in Year 2, uses and applies mathematics in problem solving situations, and is developing an appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They are developing confident mental calculation skills. They add and subtract numbers up to, and beyond 20, count in twos, fives and tens and are beginning to understand place value to 100. The majority of pupils orders numbers accurately to 100. They know the difference between even and odd numbers, and recognise patterns in a hundred square. Pupils understand concepts such as longer and shorter and use standard measurements like centimetres. They identify horizontal and vertical lines of symmetry in geometric shapes and recognise and name two and three-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining pupils identify the number of corners, edges and faces using the correct technical vocabulary. The majority of pupils has a sound understanding of quarter and half turns, clockwise and anti-clockwise. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their learning and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
93. Attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2 is very high. Voluntary national tests at the end of Year 4 show that almost half the pupils are achieving at levels above or well above the national expectation. The high targets that the school set itself in 1999 were exceeded in both key stages. The equally challenging targets set for this year's cohort of pupils look likely to be met. The majority of pupils in Year 4 is developing their own strategies for problem solving and recording their findings both in working within mathematics, and in applying mathematics to practical contexts. They are beginning to organise their work well and explain their methods and reasoning when solving problems. They use a range of mental strategies, such as rounding and focusing on specific digits in a number, to help them take their investigations forward. They add two digit numbers mentally and are effectively extending their use of number facts up to 10×10 . The majority of pupils displays a good understanding of place value in numbers over a 1000 and applies the four rules of number to hundreds, tens and units accurately. Their knowledge and understanding of fractions and decimals of the majority is generally sound. Most measure perimeters, areas and volumes of shapes accurately, using the correct units of measurement. Pupils collect data on a frequency chart and display it in the form of line and block graphs, and interpret these when making comparisons. Pupils make at least good progress through this key stage. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their learning and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
94. Pupils' attitudes towards this subject are very good overall. The majority shows interest in their work; they participate well in class discussions, they listen attentively and respond to questions with enthusiasm. They settle to their work quickly and remain on task, showing good application when at work. They collaborate and co-operate well on joint tasks and work comfortably on their own when required to do so. Pupils have positive supportive relationships with each other and their teachers and display a high standard of behaviour. They take responsibility for clearing up after themselves and those with monitorial duties take their responsibilities seriously.
95. Overall the quality of teaching is good in both key stages, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use appropriate technical language to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations are high which is exemplified by their skilful and challenging use of questions. In some lessons, however, teachers use too many questions that require one answer and do not extend probe pupils' knowledge and understanding enough. Work is well matched to the individual needs of the pupils, and at its best, teaching allows pupils of all abilities to be challenged to their full potential. However, teachers do not always allow for pupils of all abilities to answer questions, by varying their level of difficulty. Teachers' planning is good over the medium and short term. The best lessons contain a range of stimulating activities with readily available resources for three attainment groups and extension activities for the more able pupils. In all classes, teachers display positive attitudes towards the pupils; encouraging them to behave well and to do their best work. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and expect them to work hard. Pupils respond well to these challenges. Teachers know their pupils well and the high quality relationships provide a confident and positive atmosphere in which achievement flourishes. Lessons are generally well

organised and time and resources are used effectively to keep all the pupils on task. Most lessons move along at a brisk pace, but there is also time for the pupils to consolidate their work and think about the tasks set. Resources are used well to support the learning in the classrooms. In the best lessons, teachers use the information from the previous lessons to inform and modify their plans for the next day. In these teachers monitor the pupils' work well giving support and advice, as the pupils need it. The quality of marking is variable across the school. At its best, it provides pupils with a clear view of their achievements and provides information to move their learning on, or target the next stages in their learning. Homework is used consistently to support the pupils' learning in the classrooms. Detailed records of pupils' achievements are kept and passed on to the next teacher.

96. There is good provision, throughout the school, for pupils to apply their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding to other areas of the curriculum such as science, history, art and information technology. In the Reception/Year 1 class pupils studied two-dimensional shapes in buildings and in their science lessons sorted things by whether they were pushed or pulled. Pupils in Year 2 measured how far vehicles travelled down a slope recording their results in centimetres and then displayed this data in the form of a block graph. As part of their work on information technology, pupils programmed a floor robot to move forwards and backwards and turn through ninety degrees. In Year 3, pupils measured shadows using metres and centimetres and in history lessons they recorded information about the Vikings on a timeline. In Year 4, pupils created artistic patterns by rotating a shape through turns of ninety degrees. In science, pupils measured the length of bones in skeletons in centimetres and sorted animals using a tree diagram. They measure carefully in their design technology work and study the amount of rations that were made available during the Second World War.
97. This subject is very well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She has worked very hard to develop this subject and prepare staff for the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Her work has already had a positive effect on raising the quality of teaching in this subject. Profiles of pupils' work have been developed to help monitor progress. She has conducted a thorough analysis of tests that have been taken by pupils, identifying particular strengths and weaknesses and set challenging targets for different cohorts of pupils. She has not had an opportunity to monitor standards through work sampling or to conduct classroom observations. At the present time the co-ordinator is overburdened with too many responsibilities with insufficient time being made available to complete her duties. The co-ordinator is currently organising in-service training and seeking to develop resources further. There is a newly appointed governor for numeracy who has attended numeracy training and is keen to be more involved in monitoring the work of the school in this area. Some new equipment has been purchased to facilitate the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and is being well used by teaching and classroom support staff. A mathematics club is well attended and enjoyed by the pupils who participate in it. There is very effective liaison with nearby schools. Pupils in Year 4, for example, shared a fruitful mathematics day with Whippingham School.

SCIENCE

98. By the age of seven and nine the pupils' attainment in science is very high in comparison with national averages. These results indicate that the school's performance is in the highest five per cent nationally. The attainment of the pupils is consistent across all the areas of science studied by the pupils. This is better than at the time of the previous inspection. Standards were then judged to be in line with national averages at the age of seven and nine. The school is now following a detailed scheme of work that clearly outlines the steady and increasing development of knowledge and skills. The teachers have ensured that the focus of their lessons is based on experimental work. These factors have had the effect of driving up standards in science in both key stages.
99. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are very high. Pupils understand that all living things grow and develop. They relate the growth of humans into a number of stages and know that babies grow into adults. The youngest pupils learn about their senses and recognise that they smell with their noses. During one of their science lessons the pupils tried to recognise a wide range of substances by their smell identifying chocolate, onions, oranges

and vinegar. Year 2 pupils study different seeds and set up their own investigation to answer a question they posed for themselves. The ideas and investigations they decided upon showed a high level of enquiry skills. The pupils worked in their groups and consider what they should investigate, the size or colour of the seeds, or whether the seeds would float. In this lesson the class teacher had high expectations of the pupils, and the very good promotion of enquiry skills ensured that the pupils made good gains in their learning during the lesson. Pupils describe different materials and identify the similarities and differences of the materials. They move objects by pulling and pushing. The pupils in the reception class labelled all the doors in the class with sticky labels to show whether they were opened by a push, or a pull. In a lesson focusing on pushes and pulls the pupils looked at a wide range of toys and decided whether they moved by pushing, pulling or winding them up. The pupils really enjoyed this task looking carefully at the toys and considering how they worked. Pupils in Year 2 look at electrical circuits and decide whether they will light or not. Pupils distinguish between appliances that use batteries and those that work from a main's electricity supply. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the key stage. The good emphasis on practical work and investigation, good teaching and a clear scheme of work ensures that the pupils make good gains in their learning.

100. Standards attained by pupils in Key Stage 2 are very high in comparison with the national average. Pupils demonstrate a systematic approach to their investigations. The good teaching of investigative methods ensures that pupils understand and can devise a fair test. They select suitable equipment to use, understand the need for fair testing, make predictions, carry out their investigations and record their findings systematically and accurately. The pupils construct accurate graphs from the measurements that they have made. They devise a hypothesis, conduct their experiments, draw conclusions from their results and give reasoned explanations for their findings. Pupils understand that they need food to grow and be active. They understand the need for a balanced diet and that some tablets can be very dangerous. They look carefully at the skeleton and know that a part of the functions of bones are to protect the organs in the body. In Year 4 the pupils studied a range of habitats within the school field and identified the wide variety of mini-beasts they found there. The pupils made accurate drawings of the mini-beasts and identified them using the reference books back in the classroom. The pupils used the computer to design and make a branching classification that could be used to identify a range of mini-beasts. Pupils in Year 4 experimented with solutions recognising that suspended solutions occur when too much solid was mixed with the fluid. Year 3 pupils worked together in a group considering how they could show that leaves are needed by a plant to grow in a healthy way. The pupils considered the question carefully and devised their experiment. Pupils work confidently and are not inhibited in making their suggestions even if they do not match those of the others in the group. Pupils in Year 3 in their studies on light investigated shadows measuring their length and position throughout the day. In Year 4 pupils work with magnets and make electro-magnets with wires and nails. They learn that all materials are not good conductors of electricity and use their knowledge to make an alarm system. In both year groups work is based on experimentation and the teachers good subject knowledge, high expectations and secure planning ensures the pupils make significant gains in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support by the class teachers and support assistants to ensure that they also make good progress. Pupils work hard in their science lessons to improve their knowledge and understanding and develop increasing accuracy and attention to detail in carrying out their experiments. They develop and refine their accurate recording of results and interpreting the information they have gained.
101. The quality of teaching is good throughout both key stages. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, make good links with previous learning, give clear explanations and instructions and make good skilful use of questioning. This was a common element in all science teaching observed. The teachers are effective in using appropriate scientific terms and language so that the pupils learn the correct scientific words. Where teaching is most effective, teachers challenge pupils' thinking, probe their understanding and involve them in their learning. The emphasis in all lessons is on practical investigations with often the pupils deciding what they need to investigate and deciding how they are to set about the task. Teachers plan well and ensure that all pupils are challenged and that their learning is extended. At present there is no systematic whole school approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress in science. Some useful end of topic tests, are being completed but these are not in use across the school. Numeracy is used well to support the science experiments undertaken by the pupils; they draw graphs, measure accurately and chart their results. Occasionally the lack of accurate scientific measuring equipment, such as thermometers, prevents pupils from completing their

experiments.

102. The co-ordinator for this subject works very hard in her role but has not yet monitored classroom practice and pupils work across the school. Resources for science are unsatisfactory, as there is an insufficient range and quantity of resources to aid the teachers in their work. This means that the teachers often bring resources from home to ensure that they can deliver the curriculum. Pupils are well mannered and often share and wait for particular pieces of equipment to become free. The co-ordinator recognises the need to audit the resources in the school and match them carefully to the new scheme of work. This is included in the School Development Plan to take place in the near future.

ART

103. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those usually seen nationally for pupils of this age. This judgement has been made on the basis of observing the work on display and in pupils' folders as no art lessons were taught to younger pupils during the inspection. The good practical skills of pupils on entry to school are evident in their confident use of a range of media. Poster paints have been used to paint pictures of individual teddy bears. A visit to the school adventure playground stimulated successful pencil sketches of equipment. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use an increasing range of media. They use simple tools to imprint clay when making thumb pots and they make paper sculptures. Pupils' art education is broadened by studying the work of artists, such as Kandinsky.
104. Standards are good in Key Stage 2 and show a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils use opportunities to experiment very well. In Year 3 pupils discuss cross sections of fruit then represent their observations choosing from a range of media. Good progress is made as pupils experiment with blocking, hatching and smudging using pastels. Pupils in Year 4 show assurance with a number of techniques. Their exposure to the work of artists from a range of cultures has been influential in raising standards. For example, close study of the work of Bridget Riley was evident in the good standards achieved in a lesson concentrating on optical illusion. Good discussion preceded practical work using black and white paper. The results were then evaluated by peers. The concentrated efforts of pupils with special educational needs, and the correct level of support, contribute to their very good achievement.
105. Attitudes to art are good. This was observed within classrooms and in the after school art club where attendance was good. Behaviour is very good and pupils sustain concentration and effort well. They are prepared to discuss the work of others. One boy referring to his peer's collage remarked 'That looks very effective.' Co-operative working is much in evidence. Photographs show the good contribution pupils have made to the local millennium festival with much work exhibited in the local gallery. Group textile work one metre square is contributing to a national tapestry at the Millennium Dome.
106. Teaching is good. Staff, especially those in Key Stage 2, are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Lessons are very challenging and provide stimulating opportunities to develop pupils' visual education. Resources are well selected for their purpose, variety and stimulation. Plenty of time is given to introductions to lessons so that pupils observe closely and develop a technical vocabulary. Oral assessment and the use of peer assessment is good.
107. Documentation is scant. That standards are largely good and the pupils are exposed to such a wide range of experiences is due to the continuing enthusiasm and commitment of the co-ordinator. Her influence and expertise permeate the school and can be observed in displays and textile work that enhance the surroundings. Work from Holy Cross School has won national awards. Visiting artists and photographers who demonstrate and work with pupils help to broaden the curriculum. Art and crafts from India, Africa and Egyptian cultures have been studied recently. Pupils have made and used a pin hole camera under expert local guidance and taken and developed photographs of the school surrounding. This subject makes a very positive contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural life of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. Only two lessons were observed during the period of the inspection, one in each key stage. Taking into account examples of previous work and displays around school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress across both key stages and the work produced is of a good standard. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards in Key Stage 2 were judged unsatisfactory.
109. In Key Stage 1, pupils have opportunities to work in a range of materials such as card, clay, food and textiles. They use construction kits and recycled materials, developing their skills of cutting, sticking and joining. In the Reception/Year 1 class, pupils created a moving picture of the three little pigs using levers and slides made from card. Pupils analysed how the movement worked. Pupils in the same class visited the school's adventure playground and drew the equipment they saw there. When they returned to class, they made slides and swings using construction kits and card. During this session, the teacher effectively drew pupils' attention to the properties that gave this equipment its strength and effectively took the pupils' learning forward. In the Year 1/2 class, pupils' understanding of design was further developed when they planned and drew a vehicle that they were to make. They explained what the vehicle was, how it would go and how they would use it. Some of the designs were labelled with the materials that were to be used. The vehicles were made from cardboard with wooden axles and card wheels. The finished products were painted and headlights were added. Many of them were of good quality.
110. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop further their designing, measuring and cutting skills. In Year 3, pupils investigated how packaging protects the product inside. They studied the shape and construction of cereal packets and created nets for their own boxes. They accurately measured, cut out and formed a cuboid and designed their own label. Pupils in the same class also designed and made their own baked bean can label. Pupils in Year 4 further developed their designing skills as they drew front and back elevations of bags they were going to make. They annotated their designs indicating which materials they were going to use, how they would join the pieces of fabric together and how they were going to strengthen vulnerable areas. Pupils in this class worked with a retired lecturer in photography to make their own pin hole cameras and used them to take photographs around the school. Pupils had to measure out the card accurately to make two interlocking box shapes. These were then taped together, ensuring no light could get in and a pin hole was made. The finished products were of good quality and pupils were able to take their own photographs.
111. Pupils display positive attitudes towards this subject. They listen intently and settle to their tasks with interest and enthusiasm. They are very well behaved and relationships amongst them and with their teachers are excellent. They co-operate and collaborate well together sharing resources and ideas. They enjoy talking about their work and are appreciative of the work of others. They clear up well at the end of lessons.
112. In the two lessons seen, one in each key stage, the teaching was good in both. Lessons were introduced clearly and pupils were reminded about the work they had covered previously. Lessons were well paced and teachers had high expectations of the pupils' achievements. Excellent teacher/pupil relationships were evident and this provided a confident and positive atmosphere in which pupils could learn and grow. Teachers questioned pupils effectively, challenging their thinking and taking their learning forward. Good opportunities were provided for pupils to contribute their ideas. These were welcomed and well received, which built pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
113. Planning is of good quality and is based on the government's recommended scheme of work. An appropriate emphasis is placed on the need for design and the evaluation of finished work so that pupils make good progress in the understanding of how designs affect the quality of the finished product. The planning includes clear statements about that pupils are to do. This subject is well supported by effective links being made with other subjects such as science. For example, pupils in Year 4 designed and made alarm mats during their study of batteries and circuits and wheels that could be turned by sand. Pupils are provided with half termly challenges such as making a puppet from an old sock or a boomerang that would travel at least three metres and then come back. There are also good opportunities through links with nearby schools. For example, pupils in Year 4 worked together with pupils from another school on a kite and bridge-making project.

GEOGRAPHY

114. It was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection as no geography was time-tabled. Where judgements have been possible they have been based on work on display, photographic evidence, work in pupils' books and scrutiny of teachers' planning and documentation.
115. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in geography are just satisfactory. The youngest pupils can represent their route to school pictorially. Standards of presentation are good. They can find their way around school and the school grounds. They know their address and can discuss house numbers and names. Pupils in Year 1 can represent information in more than one way. For example, pupils understand that bar charts and pictographs can be used to show methods of travelling home and pupils can interpret these graphs. They are beginning to understand that change can be attractive or unattractive. Pupils in Year 2 can make simple comparisons with life on the Isle of Wight and on Struay. They can look at photographs and draw conclusions that Struay is a hilly island with farms and sheep. They compare jobs and transport and understand similarities and differences.
116. Standards during Key Stage 2 remain barely satisfactory. There has been little coverage of the subject in Year 3 although some work on Vikings includes the development of map skills. Pupils in Year 4 show knowledge of the compass and more able pupils can name 16 compass points. They can compare life in England with life in India and can also identify differences between Indian town and country life. Well-planned cross-curricular work has resulted in well-drawn plans for a new school garden. This has involved careful measuring and recording and the use of keys. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers. Work is sometimes insufficiently adapted for their ability however.
117. The standards observed fall well below standards for the same pupils in core subjects such as English or mathematics, and could be higher. Attainment and progress, which again are barely satisfactory, have been adversely affected by a number of factors. It is disappointing that most of these limitations were identified in the previous report and progress since then has been unsatisfactory in geography. Insufficient time is given to the subject and the small amount available is sometimes eroded by preparations for events such as Christmas performances. The range and depth of topics covered are narrow although geographical vocabulary and basic skills are being extended.
118. As at the time of the previous inspection, there was no co-ordinator for geography and resources are inadequate. There are too few globes, maps of varying scales and aerial photographs. Documentation is scant and assessment and monitoring opportunities are not identified. Assessment in Year 4, takes the form of end of topic tests, otherwise assessment is unsatisfactory. A new and appropriate curriculum has recently been adopted and is a good basis on which to build for the future. A pleasing and positive initiative is a link with a school in

Kosovo. This has already resulted in helping to develop Information Technology skills as well as giving practical opportunities for applying a range of other geographical skills. Good use is made of the school grounds and a residential visit in the near future will include orienteering.

HISTORY

119. By the age of seven and nine when the pupils leave the school, standards are in line with those expected for pupils of a similar age. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their history lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards achieved by the oldest pupils were judged to be too low.
120. By the age of seven the pupils have satisfactory skills in historical enquiry. The pupils in the reception and Year 1 class looked carefully at a range of toys and discussed how they knew they were old and the different materials they were made from. They talked about the memories their parents had of playing with the toys and how old the toys were. Pupils learn about significant events in British history. For example they learn about "The Great Fire of

London” and the immense impact that this had upon peoples lives during this time. The pupils in Year 2 learn about famous historical characters such as Florence Nightingale. They looked carefully at pictures from this period and made sensible suggestions about clothes and hairstyles and how they are different from modern times. They are confident in their discussions and work very well together to identify the major features from the pictures. Interesting lessons, conducted at a brisk pace ensured that the pupils remained on task and made good gains in their learning.

121. By the age of nine pupils build upon their enquiry skills. Pupils look for evidence about the Ancient Egyptian civilisation in photographs and replicas of artefacts from this time. They look at significant happenings and place them in the correct places on a timeline. They study the lives and times of the Vikings and are intrigued by their letters and violent way of life. The Year 3 and 4 pupils are at present studying the Ancient Egyptians and looked carefully at timelines and worked out which of the dates B.C. were the most recent and which the most distant. They look carefully at a range of artefacts and talk about what they have learnt about the Ancient Egyptians from them. The Year 4 pupils work on a drama presentation to enhance and widen the pupils’ understanding of this time. The pupils talk about the pyramids, mummification and sarcophagi and explain the importance of these objects and processes to the Ancient Egyptians. The class teachers make very interesting and stimulating presentations for the pupils. They have good subject knowledge and very high expectations of the pupils. For example in the Year 3 class, the teacher set time limits for the lesson and talked about the quality of work she expected from the pupils. These high expectations led to a purposeful and demanding lesson.
122. At present there is no co-ordinator for history, but government guidance is being used to provide a scheme of work. There are at present no systematic whole-school assessment procedures. History is alternated on the timetable with geography and this does not always ensure the systematic acquisition of enquiry skills and knowledge and understanding of historical events. Resources in the school are satisfactory and teachers supplement these with those they bring from home and borrow from parents. The school also loans artefacts from a local museum. History makes a significant contribution to the provision the school makes for the cultural development of the pupils as the pupils learn about a range of different peoples and times.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

123. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and those in Year 4 achieve appropriate standards and pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when standards in Key Stage 2 were judged to be unsatisfactory.
124. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils knows how to turn the computer on and off and how to load, save and print out work using a familiar program. They control a floor robot, making it go forwards, backwards and turn around by entering a series of commands. They construct pictures and patterns using a painting program. They click on tool bars choosing different size brushes and colours, and employ different techniques to paint in the shapes they have created. They use drop down menus, following instructions to open files and save their work. Pupils use computer programs in literacy lessons to reinforce their learning by, for example, matching words with the same endings. Pupils independently use music centres, putting story cassette tapes in and operating the start, stop and eject buttons.
125. In the Reception/Year 1 class, pupils begin to develop their information technology expertise. They learn how different types of electrical equipment are powered by electricity and operated by switches. They know the names of different part of a computer like *keyboard*, *mouse* and *monitor*. They know how to turn the computer on and off. Pupils’ knowledge of the letters on the keyboard is satisfactory. They type out their names using upper and lower case letters. More able pupils efficiently use the keyboard using keys such as *delete* and *caps lock*. They show satisfactory mouse control as they dress Teddy by clicking and dragging his clothes into position. They print out their work with some help. Pupils using control vehicles know that batteries give the toys power, that they can turn them off and on by moving a switch and that they can control them using a hand control. Pupils create self-portraits displaying sound mouse control as they create head shapes and draw in the features.

126. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 2 record information on spreadsheets about themselves and others. They create block graphs about such topics as favourite colours. This is further developed in Year 4 where pupils record data about the number of pets pupils have and how they come to school, presenting their information on line and block graphs They write descriptive poems using word processing packages. There have been insufficient opportunities for pupils to draft and re-draft work onto the computer. Pupils in Year 4 are able to describe some of the uses of computers in society. They connect to and use Internet facilities to search for and download documents to enhance the information available on topics such as Henry VIII and the Tudors. Pupils explore a range a web sites including the one provided by the BBC, whilst those in the mathematics club access mathematical information from other designated web sites. They use CD ROMs when researching for information on such topics as the Ancient Egyptians. Pupils sort and identify mini-beasts using a specifically designed program.
127. The pupils display positive attitudes towards this subject. They listen intently and settle to their tasks with interest and enthusiasm. They are well behaved and relationships between them and with their teacher are excellent. They co-operate and collaborate well together sharing resources and ideas. They enjoy talking about their work and are appreciative of the work of others.
128. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching as only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 and none in Key Stage 2. The lesson observed in Key Stage 1 was of good quality and advanced pupils' knowledge and understanding of different electrical appliances and how they worked. The lesson and well planned and organised. Subject knowledge was good and pupils were provided with plenty of opportunities to make contributions to the discussion about electrical appliances. The excellent relationships in the classroom provided a positive atmosphere in which pupils could share their ideas and grow in confidence. There were times, however, when pupils were allowed to shout out which inhibited the contribution of others. Effective use of questioning extended pupils' knowledge and, led to good levels of understanding. The lesson was conducted at a challenging pace and this ensured full concentration from all pupils. Under the current arrangements, many lessons in this subject are conducted by a well-informed classroom support assistant. Work is planned with the class teachers and taught to groups of pupils from each class during the afternoon session. Clear demonstrations with well-sequenced instructions are given. Basic skills are developed effectively by breaking down the learning into its different parts and then providing time for all pupils to consolidate their skills. Resources are deployed well and the best use is made of the time available to maximise pupils' learning. Most pupils respond very well when they have time on computers and co-operate very well to complete the tasks. Many have computers at home are very interested in the subject and practise at home the skills they learn at school. The school also provides two lap top computers that are proving beneficial to two pupils who have special educational needs.

129. Although no teaching was observed in Key Stage 2, it is evident from a scrutiny of teachers' planning and from an examination of samples of completed work that teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Planning is based on recommended government guidelines and provides a range of challenging activities both in information technology lessons and in other subjects such as literacy, numeracy, geography and science so that pupils can practise and improve their information technology skills. Teachers keep records to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities but do not as yet keep formal records to inform them of pupils' achievements. The co-ordinator has worked extremely hard to establish the computer suite and improve standards. An audit has been completed and a development plan prepared that sets clear and realistic timetable of how the school wishes to develop this subject. The co-ordinator has provided in-service training for all staff and further training is planned. A computer club is provided for pupils to consolidate and extend their skills. There are computers in each class. New computers have enhanced provision and it is the school's intention to purchase more.

MUSIC

130. By the age of seven and nine, when pupils leave the school, standards are in line with those expected for pupils of a similar age. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their music lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be low.
131. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, in the lessons seen the teaching was good with very good features.
132. In the lesson observed in Key Stage 1, pupils composed a piece of music using percussion instruments to accompany a well-known story "Goldilocks and the three bears". The class teacher gave good guidance and support and listened carefully to each group's ideas and suggestions prompting them and giving good advice and encouragement. The pupils selected the specific instruments they needed and decided how they were going to play them to tell their part of the story. At the end of the lesson the pupils listened to the compositions and suggested how they might improve their work. The levels of concentration, collaboration and aided the outcomes of their work. The class teacher used specific musical terms and words enabled the pupils to develop a good understanding of the meaning of these terms.
133. Pupils in Key Stage 2 sing a wide range of popular and secular songs. A volunteer from the community leads their singing lessons. The pupils sing during their services held in the convent and the local parishes. Recently, the pupils have been working in collaboration with other Catholic primary schools to put together a piece of work to celebrate the millennium. The pupils dramatised a Bible story and sang a range of songs with actions to support this. In assemblies pupils listen to a range of music and recognised that the Rugby World Cup song was taken from a well-known classical piece of music. In a Year 3 music lesson taken by an accomplished musician, the pupils talked about the emotions provoked by a piece of music. They contributed some imaginative and thought provoking memories. The pupils produced their own piece of sad music and, after they had performed it, talked about how their music could be improved. The class teacher ensured that the pupils were effectively challenged in their learning. The pupils' good behaviour and commitment to learning as well as the class teacher's expert knowledge, ensured that the pupils made good gains in their learning during the lesson.
134. The scheme of work gives good guidance for non-specialists. There is no whole-school system for assessing pupils' attainment. At present there is no member of staff who is responsible for the co-ordination of music in the school. The pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the violin during the school day. The resources for music are satisfactory and they are stored appropriately. Music is used by the school well to develop and extend the pupils' understanding of the cultures of other peoples. Music is also used to support the spiritual life of the school and to enable the pupils to understand and empathise with a range of emotions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and for pupils in Year 4 are in line with those expected of pupils of a similar age. Pupils' progress over time is satisfactory, although the recently improved provision is enabling pupils to make good progress in their lessons.
136. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils listen carefully to instructions, take turns and pay particular attention to safety factors. During warm up sessions pupils travel in various ways, hopping, jumping and walking. In dance lessons they develop control and co-ordination as they move in response to ideas presented by the teacher. They simulate movements that they would make if they were travelling through water, mud, a snowstorm or a forest. The majority displays an interesting range of shapes as they move around the hall. They develop the appropriate vocabulary to describe their activities and begin to understand the beneficial effects of physical education on their body and health. In games lessons, pupils develop skills of sending and receiving balls using their hands and their feet. Pupils passed the ball with the inside of their feet showing satisfactory techniques and levels of control. Those receiving the ball positioned themselves quite well, displaying sound standards of poise and balance.
137. In Key Stage 2, the great majority of the pupils show increased independence. They understand the beneficial effects of physical education on their health and general well being. They make good progress in moving to music in their dance lessons. In a Year 3 lesson pupils created contrasting smooth and jerky movements in response to the changes in music. They worked effectively in pairs, one moving fluidly around the other. In a Year 4 games lesson, pupils displayed satisfactory levels of hand to eye co-ordination when they threw and caught a ball and struck a ball with a cricket bat.
138. All pupils in the school enjoy their lessons in this subject. They work hard with interest and concentration and want to please. They listen carefully to instructions, co-operate well in teams, and try their best. They remain focused for the duration of their lessons, behave well and show pride in their achievements.
139. Teaching is good in each key stage. Lessons are well planned to provide a good range of activities to achieve the learning objective of the lesson. There is a good warm up which prepares pupils for the lesson and provides an insight into the effect of exercise on their bodies. Resources are very well organised, which helps good use of time and maintains pupils' interest. There is a good level of management and control, and pupils are well organised around their tasks. In response pupils behave very well and display positive attitudes to their work. Teachers give clear instructions and intervene at appropriate times to reinforce teaching points. This helps pupils to improve their skills and make good progress. Teachers often give clear demonstrations and use pupils effectively to illustrate good practice. Teaching that is provided by outside agencies is also of good quality and pupils make good progress in these lessons.
140. There is a policy and guidelines for the teaching of this subject, but no scheme of work. The framework provides for the teaching of all elements of the National Curriculum, including swimming for pupils in Years 3 and 4. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities which includes, football, netball, kwik cricket, ballet, country dancing and Irish dancing. Pupils can also go ice skating. Pupils in Year 4 attend a residential centre where they participate in outdoor and adventurous activities, such as orienteering. The provision for resources in most areas of this subject is satisfactory; however some of the gymnastics equipment is inappropriate for pupils of this age. The co-ordinator, who has other key curricular responsibilities, is seeking to further develop this subject to include the adoption of the government's recommended scheme of work