

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Devonport, Plymouth, Devon

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113491

Headteacher: Sister Dympna Duhig

Reporting inspector: Barry Allsop
1245

Dates of inspection: 18 – 21 June 2001

Inspection number: 192998

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Chapel Street Ope
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Plymouth
Devon

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Telephone number: 01752 563185

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Miss W Chapple

Date of previous inspection: 17 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1245	B Allsop	Registered inspector	English; Information and communication technology (ICT); Geography; History; Equal opportunities; English as an additional language	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are the standards – the school's results and pupils' achievements?</p> <p>How well are the pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
13048	P Bowen	Lay inspector		<p>How high are the standards – pupils' attitudes, values and personal development?</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
19302	C Perrett	Team inspector	Mathematics; Science; Design and technology; Under fives; Special educational needs	
31158	S Davies	Team inspector	Art; Music; Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School caters for pupils aged between four and eleven. It has 120 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 28 per cent, which is above the national average. The school is adjacent to the Naval Dockyard and has a high proportion of housing association and local authority homes. The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is above average at three per cent. Only a very small number of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is low, with 11.5 per cent of pupils on the register. The proportion with actual statements of special educational needs, mainly moderate learning difficulties, is also low at one per cent. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is very varied but overall is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with a number of very good features. The pupils achieve well and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science for the majority of the pupils. The quality of the teaching is good. The introduction to the school in the Foundation Stage is good. The teamwork of the staff, the good behaviour and the positive attitudes of the pupils all help to give the school a very positive ethos. The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide good leadership for the school. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Most pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above expectations.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good.
- Social and moral education are very good.
- The care and welfare of the pupils are very good.
- Links with parents are very good.
- The leadership of the school is good.

What could be improved

- Opportunities for the pupils to be independent, make choices and accept responsibility for their own work.
- On occasions to give the more able pupils work which really challenges them.
- Opportunities to study the culture and life of the diverse ethnic groups which make up our society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement in the school since the last inspection in March 1997. The greatest improvement has been in the standards attained in information and communication technology, where they were previously below average. The development of the curriculum, better resources and more confident teaching have helped to achieve this. Standards have also risen in design and technology throughout the school and in science at the age of seven. The quality of work and standards in the Foundation Stage have improved. The overall quality of teaching has improved, partially due to training for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The role of both the governors and the subject co-ordinators has

developed considerably. The challenge for the more able pupils, whilst better, at times remains too limited.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	B	A
Mathematics	B	A	C	B
Science	B	A	C	B

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

The results in the table above show that, by the time the pupils leave the school, standards are generally above average and in some years well above average. The results are also above average when compared to those of schools in similar circumstances. Standards in English are often better than in the other two subjects. The number of pupils taking the test each year is relatively small, often below 20, and because of this results tend to go up and down. However, the overall trend in standards over recent years has been upwards in line with the national trend. Results in the national tests for the pupils aged seven are also generally above and often well above average, with the best results in reading.

The inspectors found that the standards of the pupils aged eleven, currently in Year 6, are average, with a few high attaining pupils. These standards represent good achievement for this group, who were barely average when they took the tests at the age of seven. Standards for pupils aged eight, nine and ten are generally above expectations in English, mathematics and science. Standards in ICT are also above expected levels due to the considerable recent emphasis given to the subject. Standards in all other subjects are in line with expected standards.

For pupils aged seven, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and above expectations in ICT. Standards in all other subjects are in line with expected levels. The school is in line to meet the attainment targets set in conjunction with the local education authority.

Pupils throughout the school achieve well. They have very positive attitudes, work hard and are well supported by hardworking, dedicated teachers. They enjoy lessons and make good gains in skills and knowledge.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are enthusiastic, co-operative and eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good behaviour is seen in the classrooms, playground and dining hall.
Personal development and relationships	Overall, they are good. Relationships are very good between the pupils and between staff and pupils. However, the pupils have too few

	opportunities to be independent, show initiative and make choices in their work.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory overall. Whilst unauthorised absences are very few, too many pupils go away on holiday during term time.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and both teachers and support staff constantly work on encouraging pupils to respect and support each other. Relationships are very good and this is a major factor in the very good ethos of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of the lessons and is good or better in 82 per cent. It is very good in 19 per cent. Only one lesson was deemed to be unsatisfactory. The proportion of good teaching has increased since the last inspection. The teaching of ICT has improved considerably, with the teachers now confidently using computers to support their work across the curriculum. The teaching is consistently good or better in the Foundation Stage and in Year 2. However, some very good teaching was also seen for the pupils aged seven to eleven.

The teaching of English, mathematics, literacy and numeracy is good. The staff follow closely the guidelines for the National Strategies. The teaching of reading is a particular strength. Guided reading is used to good effect in all classrooms. The support given and the work set for pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are good. The classroom assistants are well briefed and skilled, and capably encourage the pupils to learn. All teachers plan their lessons well, use a wide variety of resources and engage the pupils in effective question-and-answer sessions, particularly at the start of the literacy and numeracy lessons. Targets are set for all pupils. The teaching successfully meets the needs of all pupils although the more able pupils, at times, need greater challenge.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The overall curriculum is satisfactory across the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils are given clear targets and work is matched to their needs. The support from the assistants for special educational needs and other classroom assistants is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The support from within the school and from the local authority is effective.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The provision for social and moral development is very good. The provision for spiritual development is good. The provision for cultural development is sound. There is insufficient emphasis on studying a diversity of cultures.
How well the school cares for	The school takes great care of all of the pupils.

its pupils	
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The ICT curriculum has been developed most effectively. The pupils are now given a wide range of experiences from word processing to using sensors to take temperatures. The teachers know the pupils very well and teach most of them for a period of two years. They are fully aware of the needs of individuals and their strengths and weaknesses. The school works in close partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led. The headteacher and senior staff provide clear educational direction for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively and take an active part in shaping the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. All staff are involved in analysing the strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' attainment and establishing programmes to deal with any identified weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's spending decisions relate closely to the identified priorities. Good use is made of staff, accommodation and resources.

The headteacher and senior staff are a hardworking, dedicated team. The school is successfully meeting its aims and objectives. The governors monitor the work and finances of the school closely. The school development plan is good and the governors apply the principles of best value appropriately. The staff are well deployed and the management of English, ICT, mathematics and the Foundation Stage are good. Resources are generally good but there is a lack of outside play equipment for pupils in the Foundation Year.

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 children work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • The children are helped to be responsible and mature. • The behaviour is good. • They can easily approach the school with questions and problems. • The children like the school. • The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • The range of activities outside the classroom.

One hundred and twenty questionnaires were sent out to parents and 85 were returned; 17 parents attended the parents' evening.

The inspection team endorses the very positive views of the parents' views about the school. The children work hard, behave well and enjoy the security and safety of the very good

relationships within the school. The inspection team felt that both the amount of homework and the range of activities outside the classrooms were very similar to those found in other schools of the same age range and size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The vast majority of pupils who attend the school start in the Foundation Stage. Here the children enter with levels of attainment that are very varied but below average overall. The teaching in the Foundation Year is skilled and the children make good progress. By the time the pupils are ready to enter Year 1 their attainment is broadly in line with expectations for this age group.

2. In 2000, the results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven were above average in English and average in science and mathematics. In comparison to those in schools in similar circumstances these results were well above average overall. The trends in standards over time are similar to the improvements made by all schools. The results for the pupils aged seven were well above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. However, in comparison to those in similar schools, the results were well above average in all three subjects. The results in 2000 rose slightly in comparison to most other sets of results. The school is in line to meet its targets.

3. The inspection findings for the pupils currently aged eleven show that their attainment is average in English, mathematics and science. The standards for this year group are lower than those usually found. Whilst the year contains a few pupils with high attainment, there is a larger than usual proportion who have special educational needs. Therefore, these average standards represent good achievement for the year group. Standards for the vast majority of pupils aged seven to eleven are above average. The pupils attain expected standards in history, geography, art and design and design and technology. Standards in physical education could not be judged as no lessons were seen. Standards in music could not be judged for pupils aged eleven. However, in information and communication technology (ICT), standards are above expectations. The inspection findings for the pupils aged seven show them to be above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve expected standards in all other subjects apart from ICT, where standards are also above expectations. However, standards in physical education could not be judged as no lessons were seen.

4. By the time the children in the reception class are ready to start Year 1 they are meeting the expected levels in all of the early learning goals and exceeding them in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The children learn to play and work together well in lessons and benefit from the good example of the Year 1 pupils in the class. Standards are average in communication, language and literacy. The teachers spend a lot of time encouraging children to listen and giving them the confidence to speak. The children recognise full stops and capital letters and the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet. The children recognise key sounds. They enjoy writing and use well-formed letters to write simple sentences. Some use dictionaries to help them spell correctly. Good use of the early content of the numeracy strategy helps children to meet the early learning goal for mathematics. They enjoy counting games and songs. They can count reliably to ten and beyond and make good use of mathematical symbols. The children enjoy the interesting practical mathematics using a wide variety of apparatus. The children are exceeding expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Good teaching enables them to watch plants growing in the classroom and learn about the Fire of London. They start to use the mouse and click and point as they use the computers and word process some of their work. The pupils make good progress in their physical development. The pupils develop good ball control and show good spatial awareness. The lack of a suitably equipped secure outside play area inhibits some aspects of physical development. The children are competent

and confident in handling small tools such as scissors and paintbrushes. The pupils are confident and competent in expressing themselves in music and art. They make generally good progress in their painting and making skills but overall do not have enough experience of making choices of materials or of how they will undertake a task.

5. By the age of eleven, the pupils' standards in English are overall average. However, standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. The teachers successfully set up planned opportunities to encourage skills and confidence in speaking. Listening is given a high priority and the majority listen carefully to what is said. Whilst the standards in reading this year at the age of eleven are broadly average, for most pupils in the school standards are above average. By the age of seven, most pupils are reading fluently and with good expression. They show enthusiasm for and interest in reading and know how to use books to find information. By the age of eleven the pupils are fluent and confident readers and can make good use of phonic skills to help them read unfamiliar words. They deal confidently with texts and enjoy talking about books and their own preferences. Reading is given a high priority throughout the school. Writing standards are not as high as those for reading, but for the current Year 6, pupils' standards are average. From a low starting point for many, the pupils have made good progress. The higher attaining pupils write for a wide range of purposes. By the age of seven, pupils can write with mainly correct spelling and good presentation. Standards here are above average.

6. Pupils' standards are above average in mathematics by the age of seven and currently average at eleven. The standards in Years 4 and 5 are, however, overall above average. The teaching methods and content encouraged by the National Numeracy Strategy are having a positive effect in the school. By the age of seven a majority of pupils count competently, can add and subtract numbers up to 20 and can explain how they arrived at the answers to calculations. They can record data in simple graphs. By the age of eleven the majority use numbers confidently and competently, and understand place value. They confidently handle data and produce graphs.

7. In science, by the age of seven, standards are above average. By the age of eleven, the pupils are attaining average standards; this represents good progress for these pupils. The pupils up to the age of seven know how to set up a simple experiment, and gain a good understanding of fruits and seeds and about changes in substances. By the age of eleven, the pupils know about growing plants, and understand the functions of the major parts of the body. The pupils in Key Stage 2 do, however, lack opportunities to plan and carry out experiments of their own devising.

8. In ICT standards are above expectations. The use of the new ICT suite, the growing confidence of the teachers and the support of a competent learning-support assistant are currently enabling pupils to make good progress. At all ages the pupils make good progress in the skills of word processing and communicating information. They use the keyboard confidently as they cut and paste and develop their work. They develop skills and understanding in the control of programmable toys and in measuring things.

9. Standards in art meet expectations. By the age of seven, pupils observe closely, and draw and paint effectively. They produce effective pastel and wax leaves with a variety of textures. By the age of eleven the pupils produce effective drawings and use a variety of media in their work. However, the study and use of techniques of famous artists are too limited. Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection and are now meeting expectations throughout the school. The pupils enjoy making models with a variety of materials and their designing and evaluating experiences and skills are soundly developed.

10. Standards in history and geography meet expected standards. By the ages of seven and eleven the pupils gain the appropriate knowledge about physical features of the landscape and other contrasting environments such as St Lucia and Kenya. By the age of seven they know about the lives of famous people in the past and can sequence historical events. By the age of eleven they can talk about the differences between their own life and that of people in the ancient world, such as the Aztecs. They have a sound understanding of life in the past in Plymouth. In both subjects their literacy skills are appropriately developed through writing about places, people and events. At times the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged in their work.

11. Standards in music were unable to be judged for pupils aged eleven, as all the teaching took place after the inspection was completed. However, the pupils, by the age of seven, sing with expression and listen to and successfully repeat musical patterns on percussion instruments. Standards by the age of seven are broadly as expected for this age group. Standards in physical education were unable to be judged as no physical education was seen during the inspection. Pupils leave the school able to swim and having participated in a wide-ranging curriculum. A number of after-school activities successfully support the physical education curriculum.

12. The pupils with special educational needs make generally good progress towards their individual targets. Their needs are successfully identified at an early stage and they are given good support by capable classroom assistants. All teachers are aware of the pupils' specific needs, and classroom assistants are effectively directed to offer support. The learning targets are generally precise and enable teachers and assistants to carefully focus on the next small steps in learning.

13. The pupils with English as an additional language are very successfully integrated into the classes. They are gaining competence and confidence in English and the other subjects of the curriculum. They are given effective additional help by both the staff of the school and the support teachers from the local authority.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The last inspection report also found this to be a strength of the school. Good habits are established as soon as the children come into school, where they were seen to settle quickly to the tasks set. Throughout the school, they were seen to concentrate well and persevere with their work.

15. The pupils move around the school sensibly. After playtime they line up quickly without fuss. The pupils enjoy the extra-curricular activities and visits organised for them. These include sporting competition and team games. Interesting displays were seen which reported on work done in the local area, for example, visits to Victorian buildings and sites and the Devonport trail. No oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection and parents do not express concerns about bullying. The pupils are well mannered and considerate. They are confident when talking to adults.

16. Relationships are very good. The staff work hard to ensure that children feel valued, and to maintain the strong Christian ethos of the school. The pupils have the opportunity to reflect on the feelings of others, for example, in circle time and in assemblies.

17. The personal development of the pupils is good. The school provides opportunities for them to take responsibility, for example, as monitors at break-times, minding the security doors and helping to clear up the dining room. They are considerate of each other and listen attentively as others talk about their work. However, there is only a limited opportunity for

them to make choices about how they complete or undertake tasks set, for example, being encouraged to choose media for their art work or to undertake investigative work.

18. Attendance is not satisfactory as it is below the national average. Unauthorised absence is low, but authorised absence is higher than expected. The registers are marked appropriately and children are generally prompt to their lessons. The high absence is partly due to parents taking holidays in term-time and to the small numbers in school, which mean that one or two children can make a significant difference. The school has sent a copy of a DfES leaflet and a letter about attendance to all parents.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR TAUGHT?

19. The overall standard of teaching is good. During the week of the inspection 78 per cent was good or better and 19 per cent was very good. The remaining lessons were all satisfactory apart from one. The overall quality of teaching is a significant strength of the school. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection.

20. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and characterised by the high level of attention paid to children's personal and social development. In the reception class there is a calm, supportive atmosphere, routines are well established and relationships between staff and children are very good. Resources are well organised, allowing easy access for children to make choices and to work co-operatively with each other. In the most effective sessions teachers check understanding and encourage children to increasingly refine their language. Regular assessment helps the teachers to plan the next steps in learning.

21. The school has successfully introduced effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy based on national guidelines. All teachers have a secure knowledge of both the frameworks for teaching.

22. For all children the learning objectives of the lessons are explained at the start and throughout the lessons. Consequently, children are very clear about what they are learning and what they should do next. Very clear targets are set for individual pupils, especially in English. This clarity of explanation and the range of skilfully asked questions, seen in the best lessons, have a significant impact on pupils' progress.

23. There is a high proportion of good teaching and some very good teaching in all classes. The teachers cope successfully with the mixed age groups by, generally, carefully matching work to pupils' needs. The curriculum is also successfully planned to offer a two-year rolling programme so that pupils do not repeat work.

24. The highest proportion of consistently good teaching and very good teaching is found for pupils aged seven. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs of these pupils, and plans relevant activities that are well matched to the needs of the pupils. The next highest proportion of good teaching is found for the pupils under five. The very good relationships, high expectations and the teacher's good subject knowledge effectively push forward the pupils' skills and knowledge. All the teachers make good use of their subject knowledge when the pupils are set in ability groups for mathematics, English and science.

25. The highest proportions of good or better teaching are found in ICT, English, mathematics and science. The teaching is never less than good in those subjects. Here the recent subject training, the good planning, and the use of good resources all help to boost the quality of teaching.

26. The quality of teaching for pupils with special needs is good and most make good progress. Individual education plans are of a good standard, are very precise, show small

steps in learning, are readily available in the classrooms and lead to good planning of activities for children with special needs. Learning-support assistants engage in significant activities, particularly when planned with the teacher, that lead to good progress for children with special needs. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is effective and the few pupils who need support are becoming competent in English. On a few occasions the work set for the more able pupils in a class is not sufficiently challenging and not well matched to their identified and recorded levels of attainment.

27. Most teachers are significantly gaining in confidence in their subject knowledge, particularly over the last two years. They are positive in their attitudes to recent changes, making good use of additional resources, and are committed to raising standards.

28. Through all lessons the relationships between teachers and pupils, and the management of pupil behaviour, were always good. The teachers give clear explanations, which help the pupils to settle to their work because they know what they have to do. However, in a few lessons teachers' introductions were over-long and tended to over-direct the lesson. Paired work in classes was often good and pupils are encouraged to co-operate and share ideas.

29. An adequate range of homework is regularly set in English and mathematics and at times in science.

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

30. The school provides the pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum covering all National Curriculum subjects, religious education, and personal, social and health education. The time dedicated to each subject is appropriate. There are effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum provision for the teaching of ICT is a strength of the school and much improved since the last inspection. There are schemes of work to support the teachers' planning for all subjects. They make good use of the guidance offered by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and the guidance, where appropriate, for other subjects provided by the government's Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

31. The school has a clear policy for equal opportunities that promotes positive attitudes to gender, ability, ethnicity and inclusion. These principles can be seen in the very good behaviour and positive attitudes of the pupils, in both their work and their relationships with each other.

32. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. All year groups are encouraged to develop a healthy life-style and are made aware of the importance of exercise during their physical education lessons. Education on the dangers of the misuse of drugs, and sex education for the oldest pupils, are included in the science curriculum. The personal development of the pupils is greatly enhanced by the very good relationships evident between the staff and the pupils. This is a strength of the school.

33. The curriculum provision for the pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is good and greatly enhanced by the additional adult support in each class. All pupils with special educational needs receive the same learning opportunities as their peers, and are fully integrated into the life of the school. They all have individual action plans to address their particular needs, and the Code of Practice is well implemented. Individual targets are reviewed regularly and new targets are set. The pupils with English as an additional language are given full access to the curriculum on offer by means of carefully focused support from the classroom assistants.

34. A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum for pupils. This includes a number of trips and visits to places of local interest both locally and further a field. The school has regular visits to Seymour House, which is within walking distance of the school, for all year groups and the seven to eleven year olds recently enjoyed a very successful day trip to the Eden Project. This was to enhance their learning in science. Extra-curricular sporting activities are satisfactory. There is a good uptake for the football, netball and table tennis clubs by pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. All clubs are open to both boys and girls. The school has teams that enter local tournaments and athletic events, and plays friendly fixtures against other schools. The pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are offered the opportunity to learn how to play the recorder and there are 27 pupils who attend lessons on a weekly basis. The beginners group is currently taught in a very thorough way by a parent. At the moment there are no extra-curricular activities for the younger age group. This is in no way unusual in a small school.

35. Links with the local community continue to be numerous and varied. The school has maintained its strong links with local Catholic primary and secondary schools. A number of people visit the school and enhance the learning opportunities of the pupils. A recent visit by a local rabbi has deepened the pupils' knowledge and understanding of Judaism, a world religion studied in religious education. Overall, however, insufficient work is done in the curriculum to study the diversity of cultures within our society.

36. Overall the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Underpinning the good provision for the spiritual development of pupils' is the strong Catholic ethos embedded in the daily life of the school. Religious education was not inspected, but many opportunities during the school day for prayer and reflection were observed. Provision for moral and social education continues to be very good in the school. The pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and respond respectfully to the teachers and to each other. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to discuss what makes a good neighbour and how important it is to make the right choice so that people feel appreciated. The oldest pupils in the school undertake a number of responsibilities for certain daily routines, including helping the youngest pupils at lunchtime and generally assisting in the dining room. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. The pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions through the curriculum, community links and visits to places of local interest. Aspects of other cultures are studied through topics; for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 study Kenya and those in Years 5 and 6 study St Lucia. However, overall there is insufficient coverage of other cultures to ensure that pupils are being effectively prepared for living in a multi-racial society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school has a caring ethos, where staff know the pupils very well and provide a warm and purposeful community. The parents who attended the parents' meeting and responded to the questionnaire share this view. This aspect was also good at the last inspection.

38. Steps have been taken to ensure that the school is secure. Regular safety checks are carried out and suitable arrangements are in place for first aid. The school has a designated teacher for child protection, who has undertaken training and is familiar with the procedures. All teaching and support staff have had in-service training to ensure that they are aware of the signs to note and what to do if they have any concerns. Good relationships exist with the Education Welfare Service and those responsible in the Diocese. There are good systems in place to encourage attendance and follow up any absence.

39. The school is very successful in promoting good behavior. The pupils know what is expected of them and show consideration for each other. All staff in the school consistently apply the behaviour policy. Each week there is an assembly to celebrate the pupils' achievements both in school and outside. The pupils are proud to show their work and develop confidence in talking about what they have done. The parents are satisfied that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

40. In the last inspection report, one of the key issues was to develop clear and consistent procedures for assessment. These are now in place. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good, and assessment data is well used to inform the curriculum. Children are tested on entry to the reception class, and these results are used to inform groupings so that the work set matches individual needs. Assessments in English, mathematics and science are carried out at the ages of seven and eleven, in line with statutory requirements. A range of data is collected as a result of these assessments, along with regular testing in all year groups in English, mathematics and science. The results of careful assessment analysis are used to set individual and group targets, and predict future attainment. Pupils are very aware of their targets, particularly in English, and they refer to them constantly in an effort to improve their work. The results of the statutory testing of pupils aged seven and eleven are analysed to highlight curriculum strengths and weaknesses, and adjustments are made accordingly. For example, spelling was identified as a weakness, and this became a school priority for improvement and extra training was made available for teachers. Assessment in the foundation subjects is not as well developed, but teachers make informal judgements about pupils' attainment in these subjects.

41. The monitoring of the personal and academic progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Regular reviews of the pupils' progress are carried out, and assessment data is used effectively to set new targets for learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents who attended the parents' meeting and answered the questionnaire expressed very positive support for the school. Some parents expressed concern about the extra-curricular activities in the school. However, the inspection team found that the after-school clubs were good for a school of this size. In addition, the visits the children make and the visitors who come into the school have a positive impact on their learning. Some parents also felt that there was insufficient homework, but the inspection team felt that this was satisfactory.

43. The school has very good links with the parents. Regular newsletters are sent home. Parents' evenings are held once a term and almost all the parents attend. Those who do not are followed up and offered an alternative appointment. At the spring term meeting the teacher, parents and child discuss progress and agree targets, which are signed by all parties. This forms the first stage of the annual report. Curriculum evenings have been held; for example, last autumn there was one on home reading for all parents. .

44. The annual reports are prepared in two stages, the first part in the spring term and the second at the end of the summer term. The second stage reports on the progress since the spring term and on the targets set at that time. It also includes information on personal development and targets for improvement. The pupil's achievement is not noted on the report, but it is sent on a slip to parents and reported on at the interviews following the annual report. This provides very effective information for parents.

45. The school has a homework policy and a home-school policy. The latter was drawn up with the help of a panel of parents and almost all the parents sign the agreement. Booklets from the Basic Skills Agency have been sent to all parents explaining what their children

should know at each stage of the primary education. There is a homework diary and a reading record, which are useful means of maintaining links with home and school. Ninety-eight per cent of the parents who responded to the questionnaire said that they would be comfortable about approaching the school with a question or a problem. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning.

46. A significant number of parents help in the classrooms and with trips out of school. The reading at Key Stage 1 is good and parents' commitment to reading daily with their children has made a significant contribution to this. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved at every stage of the Code of Practice. They are well informed about their children's progress, and encouraged to help them at home. There is an active School Association, which organises social and fund-raising events, such as the Family Fun Day, which is very well attended. Overall, the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is very good. The positive picture presented in the last report has been maintained.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The overall leadership and management in the school are good. The morale and teamwork of the staff are good and the stated aims and objectives of the school are very well met. The staff have a positive and shared commitment which is steadily improving the school. The leadership by senior staff is of high quality and this clear educational direction has a very positive influence on the pupils and their attitudes to work.

48. The headteacher and key staff are keenly aware of the standards of the pupils, and test results are carefully analysed, weaknesses are highlighted and teaching programmes put into place in an attempt to raise standards. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and monitored and have a positive influence on the quality of teaching and on standards. The leadership of English, mathematics, Foundation Stage and ICT is good. Effective monitoring of planning is undertaken by all co-ordinators and teaching has been soundly monitored by the headteacher and the mathematics and English co-ordinators. The special educational needs co-ordinator is diligent in monitoring the progress of pupils with special education needs. Monitoring of pupils' work and the teaching in the foundation subjects is limited.

49. The governors effectively fulfil their responsibilities. The governing body is enthusiastic and interested in the life and work of the school. The committee structure works successfully and the governing body has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

50. The monitoring of the school is achieved through some governors visiting the school and having reports about the progress in subjects. The special educational needs governor liaises with the co-ordinator. There is close and effective involvement of the governors in the creation of the school development plan and financial planning and control.

51. The school development plan is good and has improved since the last inspection. It is comprehensive and identifies appropriate priorities, and spending decisions are effectively linked to the selected initiatives. The subject co-ordinators produce useful action plans to develop their subjects and these plans take full notice of the overall school developments. The strong commitment to improve National Curriculum test results is a unifying theme in much of the development activity. Target setting is based on a thorough analysis of the national tests and other regular assessments. In the classrooms the teachers set targets at the start of lessons and individual pupils are also set targets.

52. The school's spending decisions relate closely to the planned developments. The principles of trying to obtain best value from purchases, and contracts are effectively applied.

For example, the school has spent a large sum of money in developing the ICT suite. Both staff and governors look closely at the needs, study the quality of what is provided, and try to see what effect the staffing and resources have on the progress of the pupils.

53. The aims and objectives of the school are very well met through the curriculum, the extra-curricular activities and the very good ethos of the school. The good support for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language reflects the inclusive nature of the school. The individual education plans are clear and manageable targets for the pupils to attain. The co-ordinator successfully manages the links with parents and the team of support assistants.

54. The staff of the school work very hard to improve standards. Teachers are deployed well. There is good liaison between the learning-support assistants and the teachers to provide for the needs of the pupils. The number of support staff and teachers is good. This provision has a positive effect on the level of support which teachers can give to individual pupils, especially to those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, and on the management of pupils with more challenging behaviour.

55. The quality of the accommodation is good and enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. The buildings are very well maintained and cleaned by the school caretaker. There are good displays of pupils' work both in the classrooms and in the public areas of the school. These enhance learning and celebrate pupils' achievement. The outside areas are well used by the school for physical education. The school acknowledges that the outside play facilities for pupils in the Foundation Stage are unsuitable. The playground lacks a secure play area for these pupils adjacent to the reception classroom.

56. The overall quality and range of resources to support the teaching and pupils' learning across the curriculum are satisfactory overall. Resources for English, mathematics, science, physical education, art and ICT are good. There are also good resources for pupils in the reception class, but they lack larger outside play equipment, for example, large wheeled toys or climbing equipment. There are sufficient resources for teaching of all other subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

1. Improve the independence and responsibility of the pupils, by:

- giving more opportunities for pupils to make decisions about planning their work and using equipment in science and mathematics;
- giving more opportunity for pupils to choose materials and equipment in art and design and technology;
- giving more opportunities for pupils to undertake more personal research in subjects such as geography, and history.

(See paragraphs 4, 7, 17, 28, 63, 81, 85, 94.)

2. Give even more careful consideration to challenging the more able pupils, by:

- carefully matching work to their needs;
- giving them more responsibility for planning experiments, solving problems and making choices.

(See paragraphs 26, 60, 71, 78, 94, 99.)

3. Provide greater opportunities for pupils to understand a wider range of cultural backgrounds, by:

- offering a wide experiences of literature, music and art from a range of cultural backgrounds.

(See paragraphs 75, 87, 11.)

As additional issues, the school may want to consider:

- continuing to be vigilant about authorised absences and to continue discouraging parents from taking pupils out of school for holidays (see paragraph 18);
- giving the co-ordinators more opportunity to monitor teaching and learning (see paragraphs 47, 83, 88, 91, 106);
- providing a secure outside play area for the reception class with suitable equipment for climbing and the opportunity to use large wheeled toys (see paragraph 62).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

32

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

21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	61	16	3	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 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		120
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		5

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8	6	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	8
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	13	14	14
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	3	9	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	3	3
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	10	10	11
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	83 (81)	83 (94)	92 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	9	9	10
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	75(75)	75 (88)	83(88)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	99
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	129

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	262204
Total expenditure	251844
Expenditure per pupil	2190
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	10360

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

120

Number of questionnaires returned

85

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	42	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	29	5	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	35	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	46	11	2	0
The teaching is good.	64	34	1	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	40	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	32	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	25	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	38	14	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	53	44	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	35	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	35	18	15	1

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

57. Children start school in either September or January before their fifth birthday. They are taught in the same class as Year 1 pupils. The majority of the children have had pre-school experience, and enter school with a wide range of abilities which overall are slightly below those expected for their age. The provision in the reception class is good, and the children make a good start to school life. High expectations are set, and the children achieve well and attain the early learning goals in the recommended areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Year, with some children working well within the early levels of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. By the time children leave the reception class they will achieve the early learning goals in this area. Relationships are very good, so children are happy to come to school and quickly learn the routines of the class. They benefit from the good role models of the older pupils in the class, and work and play well together, for example, when engaged in a mathematics game where they have to take turns. They sit quietly on the carpet for extended periods, and are polite and well behaved. They move between activities sensibly, and show respect for equipment. They develop good levels of concentration, and are interested in their learning. They access their own equipment, and tidy up after themselves efficiently. Overall the teaching is good, but there are too few opportunities given for children to choose their own activities, as the majority of the day is spent in teacher-directed activities. The adults in the class provide good role models, and value all the children's ideas and points of view. The adults listen well to any problems, and this gives the children confidence to express their feelings.

Communication, language and literacy

59. By the time children leave the reception class they will achieve the early learning goals, with many working at the early levels of the National Curriculum. The teaching is good. This is because good opportunities are given for children to develop a whole range of skills. For example, they develop their speaking and listening skills when sharing their news and discussing features of the Big Book in literacy sessions. The teacher uses skilful questioning to encourage children to talk, and is a good active listener. The children confidently express their thoughts and ideas in front of the whole class when engaged in 'carpet' sessions. Children in the reception class are well integrated into the school's literacy strategy. They enjoy books and listen attentively to stories. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books, and know how to use a contents page. Their reading skills are developing well as the ability to read is emphasised, and children read regularly to adults. Children are encouraged to take their books home and share them with adults at home. They have a good grasp of phonics, and use their letter sounds to help them with their reading and writing. All children are beginning to write freely and form their letters correctly. The higher attaining children use simple dictionaries with ease, and are beginning to write their own stories. Good, focused teaching ensures that the children communicate well and have a good grounding of literacy skills by the time they complete the Foundation Year. Every opportunity is used to enhance the children's vocabulary.

Mathematical development

60. Children's awareness and understanding of number are developed well, and by the end of the reception year the majority have exceeded the early learning goals and are working at the early levels of the National Curriculum. This is as a result of the consistently good teaching which makes effective use of the numeracy strategy to help children develop their skills when doing mental calculations. The teacher uses questioning well in whole-group sessions to ensure that all children are appropriately challenged. Assessment is well used to ensure that the work set matches the children's abilities. Children recognise numbers to at least ten, and the majority can count to 20 and beyond. They can identify one more than and one less than, and know the concepts of short and long, and heavy and light. They use mathematical symbols correctly when recording their addition sums of two and three numbers to make ten. The adults ensure that all children use the correct mathematical language, so enhancing their learning. Although expectations are usually high, there are occasions when too much time is given for the more able children to complete a simple task before offering additional challenge. Time is sometimes used in non-productive activities such as colouring in. This has a negative impact on learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. Children enter the reception class with a spread of general knowledge. They build on this knowledge through the varied opportunities presented to them, and develop a better understanding of the world they live in. By the end of the Foundation Year they have exceeded the early learning goals. They have a clear understanding of the Fire of London, and know that it started in a baker's shop and that the strong wind made the fire spread. They are beginning to appreciate the differences between the past and present when they look at pictures of the way babies are clothed. They are given opportunities to use the computer, and show well-developed control of the mouse. They effectively move icons around the screen, word process simple sentences and, with some adult help, illustrate the text with a suitable picture. They investigate what plants need to make them grow, and know the external parts of the body and of plants. Teaching of this area of learning is at least good, and the good opportunities presented to the children ensure that they achieve well.

Physical development

62. The children use the school playground for physical education lessons, where they use running and chasing games to enhance their spatial awareness. Most children are already meeting the early learning goals in this area. They show an awareness of space and other people as they move around, and show good control of a medium-sized ball when rolling, bouncing and kicking it to a partner with reasonable accuracy. The teacher makes good links between the importance of exercise and its effect on the body. The children use a variety of small tools, such as scissors, paintbrushes and glue sticks with a good degree of precision, and the majority hold their pencil correctly when writing and drawing. The lack of a secure outdoor area and the lack of wheeled 'ride-on' toys prevent further development of pupils' physical skills.

Creative development

63. All children are in line to meet the expected standard by the end of the Foundation Year. They are given opportunities to use paint to create representations of minibeasts, linked to the science topic. They mix colours to form a different colour, and their representations are easily recognisable. They use a variety of recycled materials to make a boat, and card and split pins to make a range of cards, using a simple mechanism to make limbs move. Teaching is good in this area of learning, but on occasions activities are too teacher-directed, limiting opportunities for the children to use their imagination.

64. Children in the Foundation Year receive an appropriate curriculum which is planned to meet the recommended areas of learning, and children make good progress towards the early learning goals. The teacher plans relevant activities for the reception children alongside those for Year 1 pupils to match their age and abilities. Although all areas of the curriculum are timetabled, there is insufficient time allocated for structured play activities to enable children to learn through experience, and take some responsibility for their own learning. There are only limited opportunities for children to enjoy outside play activities and further develop their physical skills, as there is no separate secure area and there is a lack of ride-on wheeled toys and climbing equipment.

ENGLISH

65. The 2000 national tests taken at the age of seven in English show the pupils to be well above average compared to those in all schools and to those in schools in similar circumstances. The results for pupils aged eleven were above average compared to those in all schools but well above average when compared to those in schools in a similar context. Test results show that the girls generally reach higher levels of attainment than the boys.

66. The inspection findings show that standards at the age of seven are above average, but those at the age of eleven are average. The standards currently found at the age of eleven are not as high as in previous years but represent good achievement for this group of pupils, who were barely average at the time of taking the tests as seven year old pupils. Standards for the pupils aged eight, nine and ten are generally above average.

67. As the pupils move from the reception class through to the end of Year 6 the vast majority develop good speaking and listening skills. Pupils aged seven to eleven are encouraged to speak clearly and express their ideas. In Year 2, when discussing the poem 'The Ning Nang Nong' by Spike Milligan, pupils confidently and enthusiastically share their ideas about words, pattern and rhyme. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils readily and clearly express their ideas about the meaning of such words as 'blemish' and the use of the semi-colon when studying the text of 'Black Beauty.' The pupils have good opportunities to speak to larger audiences in the class assemblies. Throughout the school great care is taken to check their understanding of vocabulary in guided reading and to encourage pupils to use precise words when replying to questions. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers in all classes. They listen respectfully to the ideas and responses of other children. They value each other's ideas.

68. In reading, pupils between the ages of five and seven effectively build on the knowledge and skills gained in the Foundation Stage. The standards in reading are above average by the age of seven, with nearly half of the pupils attaining at a high level. The majority of pupils in Year 1 are starting to read with confidence, have an interest in books and recognise an appropriate range of familiar words. By the end of Year 2, pupils have acquired an interest in and enthusiasm for reading and books. They read fluently and many correct their own mistakes. They make effective use of their letter sounds and other phonic skills to read new or unfamiliar words. The higher attaining pupils read with considerable expression and respond appropriately to punctuation marks in the text. They talk enthusiastically about their reading and the types of books they enjoy. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language develop a good understanding of letter sounds and how to use phonic skills. They steadily gain appropriate reading skills.

69. By the age of eleven, pupils' standards in reading over recent years have been above average, although this year standards are closer to average. However, this again represents good achievement for many of the pupils. The pupils clearly enjoy reading and talking about books. The majority have a wide ranging sight vocabulary and a good range of strategies to decipher meaning and break words down into syllables, and use clues in the text. The

teachers read to the pupils in a lively and stimulating manner. The pupils' knowledge of well-known authors is satisfactory and, when given the opportunity, they can use their research skills to locate information. They make good use of their ICT skills to search the Internet for information about authors such as R.L. Stevenson. Throughout the school, reading is given a high priority and all staff take pride in the standards of reading

70. By the age of seven, pupils' overall attainment in writing is above that expected for their age, although few pupils are at Level 3. The content of the writing is often good; for example, when writing a poem a child wrote, "I swallowed a woodlouse. I felt it tickle my tummy. I felt it tumble and turn." They can talk about the use of alliteration in their work. Most of the pupils use fluent, uniform handwriting, although it is not always joined. They write for a range of purposes and punctuate well, and most use correct spellings.

71. By the age of eleven, pupils' standards in writing, this year, are average, with very few writing at Level 5. However, a significant proportion of pupils aged eight, nine and ten are writing at an above average level for their ages. They produce a wide range of writing; for example, instructions for activities, the script for an interview or adapting books for a television programme. Handwriting is generally good and many pupils take a pride in crafting longer pieces of fiction. There is, however, little evidence of drafting and re-drafting work to improve it. On a very limited number of occasions work is not always challenging the most able pupils.

72. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by both the teachers and classroom assistants. Lessons are well planned so that in the group work their specific needs are often carefully met. Work for the more able pupils is, however, on occasions not always so carefully matched to their level. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and make steady gains in skills and confidence in speaking, reading and writing in English.

73. Teaching is good across the school and at times very good. In 38 per cent of lessons teaching was very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, make very good use of the National Literacy Strategy and plan all their teaching in careful detail. They have high expectations that pupils should speak clearly, write carefully and participate fully in the lessons. A strong feature in some lessons is the way in which literature is presented in a lively and stimulating manner. For example, the nonsense poems read in one classroom developed a keen and lively interest in the pupils and they were eager to write and talk about their own ideas. Lots of discussion surrounded the words they could use and this developed their vocabulary and gave them the confidence to write. Teachers have a good knowledge of what pupils can do as they often teach them for two consecutive years. They often use this knowledge well to plan work for groups of children. Good use is made of the ICT suite and the skilled learning assistant who manages the room. In one very good English lesson the pupils were asked to word process an informal letter about their very recent visit to the Eden project. They capably set out the letters and then prepared to email them to pen friends in a school in Oxfordshire.

74. Relationships between staff and pupils are consistently good and often very good. All teachers treat the children with respect. Their contributions to lessons are listened to and valued. Pupils are keen to contribute and feel confident in trying out new ideas in their work. Pupils are very rarely off task; the odd incident is dealt with calmly and firmly. Because the work is well planned, skilfully taught and supported by capable assistants, all pupils make progress. All pupils are given appropriate personal targets which are on a card within their English books as a daily reminder of what they need to do to improve.

75. The subject co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator monitors planning and has effectively monitored teaching. She has played a key role in the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the annual national tests

and other work are successfully analysed. Programmes of work are developed to improve weaknesses; for example, a lot of effective work has been done to improve spelling. The resources are good and there is a wide range of reading books, although stories from other cultures are not sufficiently represented.

MATHEMATICS

76. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 2000, pupils' attainment was in line with the national average, but was above average when compared with that in similar schools. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2000, pupils' attainment was as expected for their age, but when compared with that in similar schools it was well above the average. Currently standards of attainment of pupils aged seven are above average, but standards in the current Year 6 are average. This cohort of pupils has more pupils with special educational needs than other year groups, and attained below average standards at the age of seven. So their achievement is good in relation to their previous attainment. Cohorts of pupils are relatively small, and results fluctuate from year to year, but there has been a general upward trend of the attainment of pupils aged seven. Inspection evidence shows that the current Year 5 pupils are working at levels that are above average, so next year standards should rise. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, including those with special educational needs. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

77. Pupils in Year 6 work confidently with large numbers and use their understanding of number operations to solve problems including different units of measurement. They work with decimals and fractions, and collect a range of data, which they effectively organise into charts and graphs, using their information/ICT skills. Pupils in Year 5 cover the same topics as in Year 6, as they are able to work at a similar level. Pupils in Year 2 collect data, use bar charts, Venn and Carroll diagrams to organise their findings, and then use these confidently to answer questions. They are developing a variety of strategies to solve mental calculations. The majority of pupils know their number bonds to at least 20, double and halve confidently, and use appropriate strategies for adding and subtracting 19 and 21. The National Numeracy Strategy is used well throughout the school, and is having a very positive impact on pupils' ability to recall number facts easily and calculate in their heads.

78. The quality of teaching is consistently good with some very good features. All teachers plan their lessons well, and ensure that the pupils know what they are to learn. The pace of learning is generally good, and in the best lessons progressive challenges are set throughout. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and work is matched well to the needs of the different age groups within the class. Clear explanations are given so that pupils know what they have to do, and this ensures that they transfer from whole-class work to individual and group work without fuss. Teachers use questioning well to involve all the pupils, and reinforce previous learning before introducing new concepts. Teachers emphasise the use of correct mathematical language at all times, so that even the youngest pupils understand the meaning of technical words. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are always positive, and these positive attitudes ensure that maximum learning takes place. They are well behaved, are obedient, concentrate well, and show an interest in their learning. Pupils work well co-operatively, and the younger pupils show a good degree of independence. For example, those in Year 2 have a mature attitude to the way they ask their peers for information for their data collection. This independence is not developed sufficiently as pupils get older, as activities are very teacher-directed. On occasions there is a lack of further challenge for the more able older pupils in the class. Pupils are sometimes given more of the same to do when they have finished their tasks, rather than being given additional open-

ended problem-solving activities to further develop their learning by applying their knowledge and understanding in a different context.

79. The subject is managed by an able co-ordinator who has a good overview of the subject. The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is closely monitored, and standards are constantly checked. Assessment procedures are good, and teachers have a clear picture of what their pupils know, and set appropriate targets for further improvement. The national test results are carefully analysed to highlight strengths and weaknesses, and these findings are used well to predict pupils' future attainment, and to inform teachers' planning and the curriculum. Resources for the subject are good, and well used. Although ICT is, at times, used to support mathematics, it is not used enough. The co-ordinator is aware of this, and there are plans for more training of teachers to enhance this area of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

80. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, the standards of attainment of pupils aged eleven were as expected for their age, but teacher assessments of pupils aged seven showed that their attainment was high. This is a considerable improvement in standards by the age of seven since the last report. Inspection evidence shows standards to be similar this year for eleven year olds, and above average for seven year olds. The current Year 6 has more pupils with special educational needs than other year groups within the school. This helps to explain why standards are not higher, as most of this cohort will achieve the national standard, but few will achieve at the higher level. However, the current Year 5 pupils are in line to attain standards above those expected nationally next year, so standards should rise. When compared with that in similar schools, attainment is above average for eleven-year-olds, but very high for seven year olds. Over the past four years the attainment of the oldest pupils has been erratic, but there has been continuous improvement. All pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, including those with special educational needs. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

81. By the age of seven, pupils carry out their own investigations to answer questions they are set. For example, they investigate different white substances and sort them according to their properties, such whether they float or dissolve, and whether they are sticky. They learn about fruits and seeds and examine a range of fruits to see how many seeds they contain. They use their observational skills well when they draw the various seeds. They investigate whether the changes they observe are permanent or not. For example, they know that melting ice can be reversed, whereas burning cannot. Pupils in Year 6 learn about the major organs of the body and the diversity of plants. This knowledge is enhanced by a visit to the Eden Project, where pupils had actual experience of this diversity. Throughout the school pupils are given opportunities to learn from first-hand experience through investigations where their scientific skills are progressively developed. However, there are few opportunities for them to plan their own investigations and so develop independent learning skills.

82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but during the inspection the quality of teaching varied from good to unsatisfactory. In the best lessons teachers shared the aims of the lesson with the pupils, so that they knew what they were to learn, and challenging tasks were set to enable them to use their previous knowledge to make scientific conclusions. For example, Year 3/4 pupils used their knowledge of the dispersal of seeds to make a judgement as to whether, by taking acorns away and burying them, the squirrel was helpful or not to the oak tree. In a Year 1/2 lesson a real sense of wonder was experienced by the pupils, when a papaya was opened to reveal a host of seeds rather than one, as in a mango. In the least successful lesson pupils were insufficiently involved in doing their own investigations, and there was a lack of challenge for the most able. There were missed opportunities for pupils to draw conclusions from their findings based on their previous knowledge and understanding.

Pupils throughout the school enjoy their lessons and concentrate well, and these good attitudes have a positive impact on their learning. Although good use was made of soil sensors in a Year 5/6 lesson, there is a general lack of ICT to support science.

83. The co-ordinator monitors what is taught throughout the school by examining teachers' planning, but has had no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Attainment is regularly assessed in science, and the results are used to set targets and inform planning. Test results are carefully analysed for trends and to identify strengths and weaknesses. A selection of pupils' work is kept to show the level of attainment, and to inform reports to parents. The co-ordinator has therefore a clear picture of attainment in the subject throughout the school. Resources are good, and good use is made of a variety of visits to local scientific places of interest, which enhance the curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

84. It was only possible to observe one art lesson during the inspection, although all the pupils have an art lesson each week. Other evidence was gathered from a close examination of pupils' work around the school, pupils' portfolios and sketchbooks, teachers' planning and discussion with the pupils and the subject leader. This shows that the standards of attainment of pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6 are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Overall the standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Throughout the school the pupils are given a variety of activities that help to develop their skills and understanding in art.

85. The teaching of art in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory. In the lesson observed half the pupils worked with clay to model small British mammals and the other half drew them using pastels. This is linked to work the pupils are doing in science. They take pride in their work and persevere to complete the task, although the pupils are given no choice about what materials they might use. By the time the pupils are in Year 6 they can talk about the various techniques they have learnt and how they will use them in future work, but are unsure about the work of famous artists and their influences.

86. As there was there was no art teaching observed in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 during the inspection, it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching of those year groups. Discussion with the pupils and looking at work on display in these classrooms and around the school show that art is linked to ongoing or recently completed topic work. By the end of Year 2 the pupils can use paint effectively when making pictures and use wax crayons for leaf rubbings and pastels very successfully to create leaves with different textures. By the end of Year 4 pupils use pastels to blend colours for different effects to create trees. All the pupils in the school make good use of their sketchbooks as working documents where they can practise and refine new skills and ideas.

87. The school has a plentiful supply of resources that are stored centrally for the teaching of art. There are a small number of art books and posters, but the emphasis is mainly on white or European culture. There are very few examples of art from other cultures.

88. The subject leader has only recently taken responsibility for art, but has already rewritten the policy and reviewed the scheme of work, recognising that some changes need to be made. She has a clear view of the development of art in the school. There have been limited opportunities to monitor teaching or to develop a method of assessing pupils' learning and tracking progress through the school. This has yet to be developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection, as none was planned for this part of the term. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work, an examination of teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils show that an appropriate curriculum is

delivered, and that standards of attainment by the age of seven and eleven meet the expected standard. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards by the age of eleven were described as below national expectations. Standards in design and technology were a key issue in the last report, and this has been satisfactorily addressed.

90. By the age of seven, pupils use a variety of joining methods and simple mechanisms to make cards for a range of occasions. For example, they use slit pins to make a snowman who takes his hat off, and to make an Easter bunny move its ears. These joining skills are developed throughout Key Stage 2, and, by the age of eleven, pupils design and make a bus shelter with wood, using glue and pins to join the framework. These shelters have a good finish. For example, one contained the bus timetable and a clock. Pupils throughout the school are beginning to evaluate their products and suggest improvements. In food technology lessons pupils in Years 3 and 4 make a range of sandwiches, and evaluate them for appearance and tastiness. Pupils with special educational needs do the same tasks as their peers and make similar satisfactory progress.

91. No judgements can be made on the quality of teaching, but discussions with pupils show that they enjoy their lessons and take a pride in the items they make. Design and technology lessons are taught in blocks throughout the year to allow pupils sufficient time to finish their models. The profile of the subject has been raised since the last inspection, and the co-ordinator ensures that there is sufficient coverage of the subject, although she has had no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. There are no formal assessment procedures, although pupils are encouraged to evaluate all their work.

GEOGRAPHY

92. The standards achieved throughout the school are in line with those expected for pupils of their age. The pupils develop sound skills in map reading and map making, observing and recording, and comparing different environments. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

93. By the age of seven the pupils successfully compare life on an island with that in a city. They can describe differences in environments and which they prefer. They draw simple maps of islands and understand the use of symbols. They record observations done on field trips in the local area as they look out over Plymouth Sound. The pupils develop sound skills and geographical knowledge. The teachers plan lessons which capture the pupils' interest and they make good use of the local environment to promote the use of skills gained in the classroom. By the age of eleven, pupils successfully develop an understanding of life and work on St Lucia in the Caribbean and in Kenya. They can identify how buildings, work and climate differ from those in Plymouth. They successfully use maps and atlases to find the characteristics of climate in the deserts and in polar and tropical environments. They also benefit from a range of field trips to study the coastline, features of the local docks or a local village. Mapping skills are soundly developed.

94. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory and at times is good. Lessons are well prepared and appropriate resources are prepared. Good links are established between geography, mathematics and ICT. In one good lesson the class had collected weather statistics for temperature and rainfall during the course of one week and these were then entered into a data base, and graphs were produced to illustrate the daily change. The teachers have sound subject knowledge and this enables them to set work soundly matched to pupils' needs. At times, however, there is insufficient well-planned challenge for the more able pupils, especially to undertake their own research into aspects of geography. The pupils enjoy geography and make steady gains in skills and knowledge as they progress through the school. Pupils with English as an additional language are given sound individual support by

classroom assistants, which enables them to gain an appropriate understanding of geography.

95. The co-ordinator has recently taken on the responsibility. The long-term plan and policy for teaching geography are successfully influencing the curriculum. The co-ordinator effectively monitors planning across the school. The monitoring of the quality of pupils' work and teaching has not yet taken place.

HISTORY

96. Standards at the ages of both seven and eleven, as at the time of the last inspection, are as expected for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, gain sound knowledge and understanding in the subject.

97. Up to the age of seven, pupils learn about the lives of famous people such as Louis Braille and Florence Nightingale. As they study toys from the past they learn to use appropriate vocabulary to show the passing of time, such as 'past' and 'present', 'old' and 'new'. The pupils know that things change and develop over time. They competently identify the differences seen in transport, household goods, toilets and seaside holidays between now and earlier last century.

98. By the age of eleven, pupils attain a sound understanding of different periods, events and important people in the history of the United Kingdom and the ancient world, such as the Aztecs. They learn about life in the Tudor period, the life of William Shakespeare and how settlements have developed. They enjoy the history lessons, which are enlivened by a number of well-planned visits. For example, the pupils spend time in a Victorian classroom and quickly understand the strictness of that regime. They visit the local dockyard museum and Buckland Abbey. The Years 5 and 6 pupils develop a secure understanding of life in Plymouth in World War II. They effectively find out about the effects of the bombing and the life of evacuees when they interview elderly local residents.

99. The teaching is satisfactory. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this knowledge to plan lessons, which are well matched to the long- and medium-term plans for the subject. They have a good understanding of the importance of the value of primary source materials in capturing the pupils' interest. For example, a written account of a local person's experience in Plymouth during the war is used to good effect. In a Years 3 and 4 lesson, copies of the 1841 Census for a local street were used effectively to bring to life aspects of Victorian Plymouth. Good use is made of ICT to record visits and to paste in digital camera photographs. Whilst work is generally well matched to the needs of pupils, those with special educational needs are given close and effective support. At times the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to analyse documents or carry out their own research. The management of pupils is consistently effective and they respond positively, concentrate and show interest and enthusiasm.

100. The co-ordinator is well trained, experienced and effective in monitoring planning. She has not, however, monitored the standards of work or seen the teachers at work in the classrooms.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

101. The standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged as not meeting expectations. Standards are now above expectations for pupils aged seven and for those aged eleven. The installation of a new ICT suite, staff training and the

employment of a skilled learning-support assistant have all assisted in raising standards. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

102. The appointment of a new co-ordinator who is well trained and knowledgeable and the adoption of the nationally recommended scheme of work has also supported improved teaching and learning. ICT is a rapidly developing area of the curriculum.

103. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils learn about the layout of the keyboard and the function of important keys. They use the mouse with skill and confidence and quickly gain access to programs and click and point. They can use the spacebar, shift, return and delete keys, change the size and style of fonts and put a border around their work. They make sound use of clip art to illustrate their sentences on mini-beasts. Standards are above expectations.

104. At Key Stage 2 the pupils extend their word-processing skills and capably lay out letters to pen friends whom they regularly e-mail in a school in Oxfordshire. The Years 5 and 6 pupils confidently use the Internet to research the life and work of Robert Louis Stevenson to support their work in English. They make good use of information found under the heading of Plymouth to gather impressions of life during the bombing raids in World War II. Weather records are successfully entered into a database and graphs printed. Simple control work is undertaken to program a series of light switches; floor robots are successfully programmed to follow a course. A temperature sensor is effectively used in science to record the temperatures in different soil samples. Standards are above expectations.

105. The teaching is good overall, improving rapidly and having a significant impact on pupils' attainment. All members of staff have responded positively to the new computer suite. All lessons are planned well. Teachers give clear, confident whole-class explanations about how to use a program or enter data. They are capably supported by a knowledgeable classroom support assistant who manages the room and resources well. This ensures that pupils have immediate access to computers. All teachers make effective use of ICT to support work across the curriculum. The literacy hour is effectively supported by work in ICT, when pupils word process their writing and research for information about literature. Geography and history work is word processed or entered into a database. Support for the mathematics curriculum is limited.

106. The newly appointed co-ordinator has been instrumental in improving standards and in setting a clear direction for the development of the subject. She is well trained and poised to start an intensive training programme with all staff. She has developed good curriculum documentation but has not yet monitored teaching or fully implemented a pupil record of attainment.

MUSIC

107. There was little opportunity to see music being taught during the inspection, although all the pupils have a weekly music lesson and a weekly hymn practice. Due to a lack of evidence no judgement can be made about the standards achieved by the time the pupils leave the school at the age of eleven, although several of the older pupils have learnt to play the recorder in a recorder club and some have peripatetic keyboard and flute lessons. The judgement about standards for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 is based on one lesson, and discussions with pupils and the subject leader. The standards being achieved are in line with what are expected for pupils of their age. They sing tunefully with enthusiasm and enjoy creating phrases of music in pairs with percussion instruments, which they use with care and control.

108. The teaching of music to pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good. They enjoy music. The teacher encourages them to use their voices expressively, concentrate and listen well to each

other. She has good subject knowledge and provides the pupils with appropriate levels of challenge. No judgement about the quality of teaching for the seven to eleven year olds can be made, as none was seen during the inspection, but when questioned about music the oldest pupils are enthusiastic, particularly about singing in the school.

109. All the seven to eleven year olds are offered the opportunity to play the recorder. Currently there are 27 pupils who attend a weekly lesson, divided into three groups. The beginners group is taught very thoroughly by a parent, who is a local piano teacher; the subject leader teaches the other two groups. All these children are taught to read music and play to a good standard.

110. Resources in the school are satisfactory; there are enough instruments for a whole class to make music, although there has not been an increase in the number of tuned instruments since the last inspection. They are stored centrally and are well cared for. There is a small collection of CDs and taped music, but it is essentially white European music. There is only a limited collection of music from other cultures. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not able to talk with confidence about different composers or about music from other cultures.

111. The school has a policy and a scheme of work that give the teachers a firm structure for their lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection; however, there is still no formal procedure for assessing pupils' achievements and the progress they make as they move through the school. This has yet to be developed. The subject is well managed; the subject leader provides informal advice and support to teachers, and monitors planning but not the teaching of the subject. Music plays an important part in the assemblies and the religious life of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. No judgements can be made about the standards of pupils at seven and eleven, or the quality of teaching, as no physical education was observed during the inspection. All the pupils have two lessons every week. Evidence is gained from teachers' planning and discussion with teachers and pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and provides the five to seven year old pupils with the opportunities for dance, games and gymnastics, with the addition of swimming, athletics and outdoor education for the seven to eleven year olds. Swimming is undertaken in a three-week block of time at the end of the summer term, in the first instance for those pupils who need to learn to swim and then, for the more advanced swimmers, some deep-water work. The majority of pupils leaving the school are able to swim the statutory 25 metres.

113. The pupils' attitudes to physical education are good. They recognise the importance of exercise and keeping the body healthy. They are enthusiastic about the curriculum they are taught, and pupils in Year 6 are keen to continue with sporting activities when they move to secondary school. A number of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 attend the football, netball and table tennis clubs that are open to all pupils in those years. They enjoy games against other schools and taking part in athletic events.

114. The school has a policy and a scheme of work based on the local education authority's scheme that are effective in providing a basis on which teachers can plan lessons. The subject leader recognises that there is currently no formal procedure for assessing pupils' skills and tracking progress throughout the school. This has yet to be developed. Resources are good for all aspects of the physical education curriculum. They are easily accessible from the central store and are very well cared for. The school hall and the large, secure playing field are good facilities.