

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Nymphsfield

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115707

Headteacher: Dominic Whyte

Reporting inspector: Sue Chesters  
23196

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2001

Inspection number: 193029

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 5 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Front Street  
Nympsfield  
Stonehouse  
Gloucestershire

Postcode: GL10 3TY

Telephone number: 01453 860311

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Dr. Ian Crossland

Date of previous inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sue Chesters 23196	Registered inspector	English Geography History Music English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? Interpretation of results How well are pupils taught?
Bill Walker 19366	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development/attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well is the school led and managed?
John Williams 22516	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	Assessment Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mary Farman 22452	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities? Learning opportunities

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School is in the village of Nympsfield to the south of Stroud in Gloucestershire. It is smaller than most primary schools having 154 pupil (82 boys and 72 girls) compared with the average size nationally of 243 pupils. This is slightly smaller than at the time of the last inspection and although the roll has decreased in the last four years, it is now increasing again rapidly. Children start in the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. They have a wide range of abilities when they start school but most have levels of attainment which are expected for the age group. The majority of pupils are of white ethnic origin. There are two pupils for whom English is an additional language, one of whom is at an early stage of English language acquisition. There are 13 pupils (8 per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average. There are 20 pupils (13 per cent) on the register for special educational needs, which is broadly average. Four pupils have statements of special educational need; this is above the national average.

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

This is a good, effective school of which parents and the community are justly proud. It achieves average standards in most subjects and good standards in science and physical education. It is a warm and welcoming community in which pupils learn happily. It is very well led and managed by the dedicated and enthusiastic headteacher. The pupils are taught well. The committed, hard-working staff and knowledgeable governing body ably support him. They constantly strive to meet the school's worthwhile aims and to raise standards. The school gives good value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning are consistently good in all subjects and in all year groups. This results in pupils achieving well and making good progress in all subjects.
- Standards in science are above average. They are also above average in physical education and some aspects of English, mathematics and music.
- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are very professional and show a very clear vision for the future of the school. The school reflects very well its worthwhile aims, in all of its work.
- It provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development. It also provides an impressive number of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and show a great deal of enthusiasm, interest and involvement in all of the activities provided.
- It involves its parents very well in school activities. This has a significant impact on the children's learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- Listening skills so that the small, but nevertheless significant, minority of inattentive pupils learn to concentrate on what their teachers are saying.
- The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage, to take greater account of the outdoor learning environment.
- The accommodation, so that it provides better storage space and more convenient classroom space, particularly for Year 4.

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

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

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since then, it has made considerable improvements and addressed effectively the issues raised in the report of that time. There is now better challenge in lessons, especially for the more able pupils. Classroom organisation and teaching methods are better and ensure that pupils learn well. The school now assesses pupils' attainment very well and uses the data it collects very efficiently to monitor pupils' progress. Teachers use time effectively in all lessons and this results in lessons having good pace. Leadership is clearly focused on raising standards and the headteacher monitors teaching and learning very successfully. There is a good behaviour policy which is beginning to become an integral part of everyday life in school. There is a good curriculum which is monitored well by the subject leaders. This is beginning to have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and standards are rising, particularly in science. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these are having positive impacts on standards in English and mathematics. Standards in all subjects have been maintained or have improved in the past four years, particularly in science.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

**Key**

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

Similar schools are those having up to and including 8 per cent of their pupils receiving free school meals.

In reading and writing, the standards of the 7 year olds, in national tests and tasks, have remained above average over the past three years. This is in line with schools in similar contexts. In mathematics standards have been mainly well above average. This is above average when compared with similar schools. Indications are that results this year will be similar.

In the 2000 national tests for 11-year-olds, results in English and mathematics were in line with the national averages. They were below average when compared with schools in similar contexts. There has been a downward trend in science and, in the 2000 tests, results were well below average and very low (in the bottom 5 per cent) when compared with similar schools. This downward trend is against the national trend. The size of each year group does vary considerably and, therefore, care should be taken when interpreting these statistics. Also the number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group differs considerably and this affects results in tests. However, the results for 2001, for which there are no national comparators yet, indicate (when compared with last year's figures) that standards in English, mathematics and science will be above average. This reverses the downward trend and is a significant improvement. It reflects the positive impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and also the high emphasis that the school has placed on science recently. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls, nor between pupils of different ethnic groups. The school sets itself realistic targets and exceeds them. It aims to raise standards even higher.

Inspection findings show that the majority of the children in the Foundation Stage will reach or exceed the early learning goals set for the age group by the time they move to Year 1. Attainment for the current Year 2 is above average in reading, mathematics and science. In all other subjects, it is in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum. In the current Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is average but it is above average in science. It is also above average in those three subjects in Years 3 to 5. In all other subjects, attainment is in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum, apart from in physical education, where it is above expectations.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes towards school. They are very interested and involved in the activities the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around school. However, there is a small, but nevertheless significant, minority of pupils who do not listen and find it hard to concentrate.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. The staff provide very good role models and this contributes very positively to the very good quality of the relationships in school.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are punctual.

Pupils take great interest in school. The majority works hard and plays hard and are happy. They understand very well the effect of their actions on others and show very great respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. The older pupils are very mature, show good initiative and take on personal responsibility very well.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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 and learning is good. This contributes well to the good progress that pupils make. Where teaching is very good, teachers set high expectations in lessons, particularly of what pupils are expected to achieve and of their behaviour. They expect pupils to listen and to work hard. The purpose of the lesson is made very clear to pupils and effective use is made of questioning to revise previous learning. Work is very well matched to the individual learning needs of all pupils. As a result, they make good progress in lessons and make clear gains in new knowledge, skills and understanding.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good throughout the school. As a consequence, pupils learn well and make good progress. Teachers efficiently teach pupils the basic skills required to succeed in all subjects, with the result that most pupils develop their key learning skills effectively. A small minority of pupils does not listen carefully to their teachers and consequently their learning is inhibited.

Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to support pupils' learning in all subjects. There are particularly effective links in English, music and history. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and makes a strong contribution to the rapid progress that children make in their learning and to their being happy, secure and confident. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, receive good teaching and benefit from a good level of very good quality support from learning support assistants. Hence, they make very good progress and achieve the targets set for them in their individual education plans.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and relevance of the curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is good. It is good for most aspects of the Foundation Stage; although, currently, the provision for children's outdoor learning is underdeveloped. The school offers a particularly good range of activities outside of lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The newly implemented systems in place to provide for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Their impact cannot yet be quantified but pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well supported and challenged and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school understands its pupils very well. All staff know the pupils very well and care for them in a very sensitive and supportive way.

The school arranges a number of good quality educational visits for all of its pupils and regularly invites visitors into the school to work with the pupils. It has good links with the community and with its partner institutions.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good, professional leadership. The dedicated and hard-working staff ably support him. They share a clear vision for the future of the school and are committed to raising standards even further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are loyal, knowledgeable and supportive. They are fully involved in long-term planning and financial management.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors all of its work very well indeed. It analyses results very thoroughly. It uses this information well to identify weaknesses in provision and plan how to address them in order to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management is very efficient. The school applies the principles of best value very effectively.

The school has very worthwhile aims that direct its work. These reflect its Catholic values very well. It evaluates its performance very efficiently and takes suitable action to ensure that teaching and learning are good. There are sufficient well-qualified staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Induction procedures for new teachers are excellent. Learning resources are adequate and used well. The accommodation is satisfactory, although the lack of storage space restricts its use and, with the current rising roll, classroom space is at a premium.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Sixty-five parent questionnaires were returned (47 per cent) and 35 parents attended the meeting with the inspectors.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>• They feel that teaching is good.</li> <li>• The headteacher leads the school very well and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• The school provides an interesting range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents do not feel that their children receive the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and through the returned questionnaires. With regard to homework, the inspectors found the provision to be very appropriate and used very well by teachers to support children's learning in lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the time of the last inspection, standards, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, were in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science. In all other subjects, attainment was in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum at both key stages.
2. Standards since then have been maintained, or improved, in all subjects. In English, standards are in line with the national average. Standards of reading for both 7 and 11-year-olds are above average and the speaking skills for both ages are good. This shows a clear improvement since the time of the last inspection. However, listening skills and writing skills are not so well developed and are in line with expectations for the age groups.
3. By the time they leave school at 11 years of age, pupils' standards in mathematics are in line with the national average. They achieve well. This achievement is reflected in the school's improved performance in national tests for 11-year-olds over the last three years. These results, however, are still below those of pupils in similar schools. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and build well on the good start that they make in the reception class. The attainment of current Year 2 pupils is above average for their age. The attainment of Years 3, 4 and 5 is above average. That of Year 6 is currently what can be expected of the age group at this stage. This is mainly because although the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is impacting well on pupils' learning, Year 6 have had insufficient time using the strategy for it to have made a significant impact on their learning.
4. Standards in science have dipped significantly over the last four years. The school recognised this problem and introduced measures to remedy the situation. This has been most effective. So much so, that the standards now being achieved by 7 and 11 year olds are above average. This is very good improvement since the last inspection.
5. Schemes of work, which have been introduced for all subjects, give good guidance to teachers in what to teach in each year group. That has focused teachers' planning on each stage of the pupils' development. This, in turn, is having a positive impact on the quality of learning and consequently pupils make good progress. The school has also implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies fully and efficiently. These are beginning to have a noticeably positive affect on standards in English and mathematics.
6. In lessons seen during the inspection, no significant differences were observed between the performances of girls and boys nor between those of different ethnic groups. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. They achieve well in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. All pupils achieve well. In Years 5 and 6, when pupils begin to use the good level of basic skills that they have acquired in literacy and numeracy in other subjects, progress accelerates. This means that the current Year 6, while at this point in the academic year are working at standards expected, they are on target to reach or exceed average levels (Level 4) by the end of their time in the school.

### *Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>*

7. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of ability. Most have levels of attainment, across all areas of learning, which are average for the age group. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these young children. They make rapid progress in the reception class, particularly in their communication skills and their personal, social and emotional development. This is because of the good teaching in these areas of learning and because of the importance placed, by all staff, on using language correctly and working and playing well together. The majority of the children are on course to achieve the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage.

### *Years 1 and 2*

8. Results in the 2000 national tests show that standards for the 7-year-olds were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, these results were in line in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. In science, teacher assessments show standards were well above average. The results in national tests and tasks for 2001 show a similar picture.
9. Inspection findings show that, for the current group of pupils in Year 2, standards in English are average in listening and writing and above average in speaking and reading. The majority of pupils start school with average communication skills. They make good progress and many have reading ages above their chronological age. However, their writing skills, although satisfactory, are under-developed and this brings down the overall standard of the subject. The majority of pupils listen for a reasonable length of time. There is, however, a significant minority, mainly in Year 1, who find it difficult to concentrate and who do not listen purposefully. Pupils begin to speak in well-formed sentences, answer questions clearly and use a good range of vocabulary. The school places great importance on reading. Pupils enjoy books and begin to talk about them with understanding. They school inculcates a love of reading in the pupils and this love of reading is supported well outside of school. The more able pupils read confidently from known texts and use different methods to tackle unknown words. Teachers work hard to help pupils to improve their writing skills. They plan plenty of opportunities for pupils to write creatively and to practise their handwriting. Some pupils write well. They begin to use full stops accurately and spell regular words correctly. Some pupils use extended vocabulary precisely in their writing, but the work of the majority is inconsistent.
10. In mathematics, the pupils aged 7 achieve well and more able pupils attain levels above the expectations of the age group. Many pupils discuss their mathematics confidently, recognise patterns in numbers and understand place value. In science, attainment is above average. Pupils develop good understanding across all aspects of the science curriculum through practical investigation and exploration. By the age of 7, pupils achieve at the levels expected in all other subjects, except in physical education, where standards are above average.

### *Years 3 - 6*

11. The rate of improvement in the national tests for 11-year-olds over the past four years has fluctuated and shows a downward trend until 1998. This was in opposition to the national trend. However, in the last two years, this trend has been reversed and, although science standards remained very low, the general trend has moved upwards, which matches the national picture. The fluctuations were caused by the varying sizes of year groups and the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs within those groups. There was also some instability of staff during that period. The school monitors the attainment and progress of all its pupils very closely and keeps very good records to support this.

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<sup>1</sup> The new curriculum for children under six, which started in September 2000, [and](#) which replaces the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

12. The results in national tests achieved by 11-year-olds in 2000 were in line with national averages in English and mathematics and well below average in science. When compared with similar schools, these results are below average in English and mathematics and very low in science. However, the results for 2001 when compared with last year's national figures (this year's are not yet available) show a further improvement in English and mathematics. This reflects the positive impact that the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are having on English and mathematics. In science, there is an amazing jump from well below to above average standards. This is a direct result of the high emphasis placed on the subject and the in-service training provided in the last two years. There is no significant difference in performance between boys and girls nor of pupils from different ethnic groups. Pupils are on course to reach the targets predicted for them this year. In all other subjects, standards are in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum, apart from physical education where they are above.
13. Standards of speaking are good by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. Pupils discuss issues confidently and explain their work fluently. Reading standards are good. Pupils discuss literature in depth and use reading skills well in other subjects. For example, they give clear reasons why they prefer one author but have 'lost interest' in another. The majority of pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other and show respect for other people's work and points of view. However, there are a few pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4, who do not listen well and have underdeveloped listening skills. They do not show sufficient respect when their teachers and other pupils are talking and do not concentrate on their work. This slows the pace of their learning and consequently they do not achieve as well as they could. Standards in writing are satisfactory, although less well developed than other aspects of English. Pupils reach average standards. They write for different purposes and include the expected level of grammar. Most pupils take pride in their work and present it well. A few have not developed such a good attitude to work and this reflects in the quality of their handwriting and presentation of their work.
14. In mathematics, pupils in Year 6 work confidently with fractions and decimals to calculate answers to problems. They interpret data from graphs and reach reasonable levels of expertise in investigating mathematical patterns. In science, pupils achieve very well through practical investigation. They study, in depth, different aspects of the science curriculum. They use correct scientific language and record scientific experiments accurately.
15. Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils to use their literacy skills in all subjects. Pupils use their writing skills satisfactorily in other subjects, such as religious education and history. For example, they write descriptively or in reporting style to describe events in history. Numeracy skills are used well in geography and science. For instance, pupils use their knowledge of negative numbers when measuring temperature. Standards in information and communication technology are rising and pupils achieve well. They use the skills learned efficiently as tools in other subjects. For example, they edit and produce final copies of their compositions in history and English. They practise mathematical skills through number games on the computer.
16. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs, and for those for whom English is an additional language, through carefully planned work that matches their changing requirements very well. Teachers identify gifted, talented and the more able pupils and challenge them sufficiently. The school has identified the need to extend this work.
17. The school's focus on teaching the basic skills needed for pupils to succeed in the tasks set, ensures that the majority of pupils makes good progress and reaches the targets set. The school sets itself appropriate targets and strives to exceed them. It works hard to

raise standards in all subjects. The thorough coverage of the curriculum throughout the school ensures that pupils make good progress during their time in school. This, together with the clear learning objectives set by teachers in lessons, has a positive effect on raising standards.

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

18. St Joseph's is a happy place where pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to be involved in school life. They work well together, have very good attitudes to school and continue to show the enthusiasm and commitment which attracted favourable comment in the last inspection report. Most pupils behave very well but there is still a significant minority whose ability to concentrate is inadequate and whose distracting behaviour sometimes detracts from their learning. Levels of attendance compare favourably with those for similar schools nationally. Most pupils arrive in good time, enabling teachers to make a prompt start to lessons. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, enjoy the activities provided by the school and become fully involved in school life.
19. From their early days at school, children find that it provides a safe and welcoming environment. They settle quickly and become absorbed in the stimulating activities provided for them. They visibly grow in confidence, as they begin to build relationships with their teacher and their classmates. As they move up through the school, pupils soon adapt to routines and recognise the high expectations of their behaviour. Most are keen to learn and are anxious to be involved in preparations for the day. They take pride in carrying out their very varied designated duties, such as preparing the milk for later consumption, delivering registers or assisting the younger ones to line up at the sound of the bell. They smile readily and most have the confidence to talk with visitors about their school and their work. Older pupils show much enthusiasm for the extra curricular activities that are on offer and are eager to benefit from the varied sporting and cultural opportunities provided by the school. The cheerful demeanour of pupils across the school reflects the unanimous view expressed by parents that their children are happy.
20. Behaviour is good. Pupils respond well to the good teaching. They collaborate well with their peers and apply themselves conscientiously to individual tasks. As at the time of the previous inspection, however, there are a few pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4, who misbehave. They do not listen, are easily distracted and sometimes find it difficult to conform to normal classroom expectations. Teachers usually manage such pupils well and any disruption to lessons is minimised. Pupils behave well in and around the school. The school is a civilised and orderly place, with the atmosphere of a Christian community. Pupils move about calmly and show courtesy and consideration to others, particularly visitors. They hold doors open, await turns patiently and readily offer help and support to others. They treat property with respect and show good manners and proper courtesies when eating their lunch, indoors or out. Playtimes are lively occasions when pupils run off their excess energies. There is much good humour and goodwill and no instances of unpleasant behaviour were observed during the inspection. Only one pupil was involved in the four exclusions that were implemented during the previous year. In each case the headteacher worked closely with the governing body and carefully followed the guidelines provided by the local education authority.
21. The personal development of pupils at St Joseph's is very good. In their early weeks at the school, children learn to accept some responsibility for their actions. They become progressively involved in daily routines, putting things away, cleaning up any mess and tidying their classroom. As they move through the school, their responsibilities increase; they set out classrooms, operate equipment, move benches and chairs, look after lost property and assist younger children who are unsure of procedures. In these and many other ways most pupils show a growing maturity and contribute positively to the well-

ordered environment that characterises the school. This maturity is reflected in the devotion with which they respond to the celebration of Mass, and in their thoughtful demeanour during assemblies. It is also seen in the confidence with which they speak. A Year 4 pupil, for example, initiated a conversation with an inspector by expressing concerns about the reaction to the recent terrorist incident in the United States of America. In a variety of ways pupils learn to take some responsibility for their own work. They develop library skills and are encouraged to carry out research in their own time. This was illustrated well in a music lesson when a pupil used the work he had undertaken in a personal history project about World War II to tell the class how important Vera Lynn had been to the British forces.

22. Relationships are very good. The school community is seen very much as a family, comprising pupils, staff, parents and governors. Pupils react very well to this concept. They work and play together harmoniously, supporting each other and sharing resources amicably. They respect their teachers and are anxious to please them. No evidence was seen of bullying during the inspection. Some pupils are boisterous, particularly when they feel they are not being observed, and some inappropriate behaviour undoubtedly occurs from time to time. However, pupils clearly feel secure and indicate that they know what action to take should any untoward incident occur.
23. The levels of attendance at the school continue to be good. They have been consistently above the average level for primary schools over recent years. There is very little unauthorised absence. The good levels of attendance and punctuality make a positive contribution to standards of attainment in the school.

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

24. The quality of teaching is good. In all lessons teaching is satisfactory or better. In 89 per cent of lessons observed the quality of teaching was good or better. In 29 per cent of these lessons the teaching was very good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. This is an improvement since the last inspection where some lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory and the percentages of good and very good teaching were lower. Weaknesses in teaching in the previous inspection were reflected in poor pace of working and activities that were not purposeful nor challenging. This is no longer the case. The strength of teaching in the school is significant. It is consistently good and often better and gives good challenge to all pupils. This has a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve and on their positive attitudes to school.
25. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good or better in all lessons. In Years 1 and 2, it is good or better in 100 per cent of lessons. It is good or better in 82 per cent of lessons in Years 1 to 6, with consistently good or better teaching in Years 5 and 6.
26. At the ends of both key stages the teaching of literacy in English lessons and numeracy in mathematics lessons is at least good. The teachers have worked hard to implement both strategies, which they have done well. Interesting texts and a good range of carefully selected big books, guided reading texts and relevant reading books have ensured that literacy lessons are challenging and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Numeracy lessons have good mental warm up sessions in which the vast majority of the pupils are engaged and clearly focused on improving their mental agility.
27. The teaching of literacy and numeracy supports learning in other curriculum areas. For example, in science lessons the pupils have the opportunity to measure accurately, to record the results of their experiments and explain what the results show. Teachers promote good cross-curricular links and, in this way, the pupils see the relevance of their

learning and the way it develops. They use information and communication technology as an effective tool in other subjects. For example, Year 3 use a music program to compose and produce a variety of sounds and sequences.

28. Throughout the school, the teachers show great commitment and hard work in their drive to improve their teaching. The headteacher monitors teaching and is very well aware of strengths and weaknesses throughout the school. All staff strive to improve personally and provide the best possible teaching for their pupils. The support and assistance that the teachers give to each other has a positive impact on the quality of teaching.
29. The pupils on the special educational needs register, and those from ethnic minority groups, are well taught. Work is specifically targeted for their learning. Clear texts and specific support materials are provided for these pupils and for those who have English as an additional language. This, along with the very good support from class teachers and learning support assistants, ensures that they achieve well.
30. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher has a very clear understanding of the needs of young children. Her enthusiastic, supportive and patient approach enables the children to be confident in their learning. As a result they achieve well. Planning takes into account the early learning goals for children in the reception year. Careful planning ensures that the needs of all children are well met. The class teacher works hard to develop a wide range of learning opportunities, which help to promote good learning at a good pace.
31. Teachers, throughout the school have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use the correct technical terms and appropriate subject vocabulary to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of each subject. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics and science, where technical language is used accurately. For example, in a very good literacy lesson, the teacher, when asking the pupils to identify adjectives from a text, also explained the formation and use of adjectival clauses.
32. The teachers place a significant level of demand upon individuals, to ensure that all are fully involved. Thus, the vast majority of pupils listen carefully to the good instructions they receive and know exactly what they are expected to do. They work hard and learn well. However, a significant number of pupils impolitely chose not to listen closely at all times. This reduces the impact of the teaching on their learning and productivity. At times, this minority of pupils also disrupts the good pace of lessons because the teacher has to stop teaching to remonstrate with the offenders.
33. Teachers' planning is good. In literacy and numeracy, the teachers plan very closely to the structured frameworks. They plan all lessons well and at the beginning of each lesson recap and revise previous learning most effectively. They usually share with the pupils what it is they want them to learn in lesson and return to it at plenary sessions. This ensures that the objectives are being met. However, where this sharing of ideas is omitted from the lesson there is a noticeable dip in the pupils' learning. Planning is tailored effectively to include all the levels of attainment in the classes. The school adjusts the planning on a six point scale and this ensures particularly good support for all of the pupils in their tasks.
34. Teachers' expectations of the pupils' and their work are good. Teachers question pupils well to establish what they know and understand and to help them think for themselves. Most teachers have high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. The vast majority of pupils live up to these expectations. Teachers praise and encourage the pupils and challenge them effectively so that they give their best performance. This ensures that the vast majority of pupils are fully involved in their lessons, work hard and

concentrate well. As a result these pupils achieve well. However, the small minority of pupils who do not listen well and do not respect their teachers sufficiently inhibit their learning because they do not concentrate well enough.

35. In all classes, teachers encourage the pupils to work independently. They plan activities which allow pupils to work in groups of various sizes. Consequently the majority of pupils co-operate well together, collaborate on the tasks set and achieve good results. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. The mutual respect shown by teachers and most pupils adds significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn. The pupils feel their input is valued and this aids their personal development.
36. Teachers manage the pupils well. They constantly strive to find ways in which to reward good behaviour and work. Lessons are well organised. Teachers use time and resources effectively and, as a result, lessons move along at a good pace. The learning support staff give very good, careful support to pupils and considerably enhance their learning. The school appreciates the support staff and recognises them as a very valuable resource.
37. The quality of day-to-day assessment is very good. Teachers monitor the pupils' work well and give support and advice, as needed. They are quick to evaluate their lessons and use this information to inform their future work. They mark pupils' work in a supportive manner, but they do not always indicate what it is that the pupils need to do to improve further. Homework is used very well to supplement and support work done in class.

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

38. The school has made a significant improvement to the curriculum provision for its pupils since the previous inspection. It is broadly based, well balanced and effectively meets the needs and interests of all pupils. The provision for extra-curricular activities is particularly good. The increased time allocation for mathematics is having a positive impact on standards. There is a marked improvement in the curriculum for science and information and communication technology. This improvement is reflected in pupils' achievements. Throughout the school, pupils have carefully structured opportunities to develop their investigative and enquiry skills in mathematics and science. The use of information and communication technology is developing effectively in all subjects. The curriculum for the foundation subjects is good and covers them in sufficient depth. This shows an improvement in curriculum provision since the previous inspection. The school prepares pupils very well for future work at secondary level. The school has policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
39. The school makes very good provision for pupils' physical and personal development. The science curriculum includes a suitable health education programme that includes sex education. The school implements a relevant drugs awareness programme. It has very strong links with the local community. These deepen pupils' understanding of social dependence and of belonging to a caring community.
40. The school is successfully implementing the National Literacy Strategy. This is having a positive impact on pupils' reading and writing skills. The improvement in their listening skills is not as good. The school is aware of the need to develop and improve pupils' listening skills and concentration.



41. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is proving effective in raising pupils' standards in mathematics. The school places a suitably strong emphasis on the investigative element of work in mathematics. This develops the pupils' ability to carry out independent research to solve problems.
42. The time allocation for the foundation subjects<sup>2</sup> is adequate. Homework is set on a regular basis and gives an effective level of support to the work pupils do in lessons. The inspection findings do not agree with parents' concerns about homework. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. These include sports, athletics, music, drama and visits to places of interest. They broaden and enrich pupils' experiences. For example, there are opportunities for pupils throughout the school to learn to play musical instruments. Pupils enjoy these activities.
43. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is satisfactory. This part of the curriculum is based on the early learning goals set for children in reception. Provision for young children's personal and social development is very good. This prepares them well for future learning. There is still work to be done on the provision for outdoor learning opportunities. The school is aware of this and is in the process of improving this area of learning. The curriculum prepares children well for work at Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. The school continues to develop and improve the quality of its provision for children in the reception class.
44. The school makes good provision for pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. It also provides well for pupils who have English as an additional language. The school's strategies for inclusion ensure that all pupils, regardless of age, ability or gender, have equal access to the curriculum. This is noticeably effective in the case of pupils with special educational needs. They integrate very well into classroom work and work happily alongside their classmates. The school regularly reviews the trends in performance of boys and girls and the different ethnic groups. This enables the school to plan work that meets the interests and needs of different groups of pupils. The school has carefully structured procedures in place to monitor, analyse and evaluate the impact of the curriculum on the standards that pupils' achieve. This ensures that the planned curriculum meets the ability range of all pupils in the school. All pupils have opportunities to join in the extra-curricular activities. The school ensures there is no financial disadvantage for any pupil.
45. The school provides very well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The dedicated headteacher, ably supported by caring and committed staff, is pivotal in this provision. This is an even more positive picture than was found during the last inspection, when this aspect of school life was judged to be good. The school is a very caring place, where the principles of showing compassion, love and respect for each other, the wider community and the world are constantly evident. These themes are also evidenced in subjects such as art, English and music and in other lessons where the teachers encourage the pupils to think about their attitudes and feelings. Through very carefully planned assemblies, the pupils develop a very good insight into citizenship and these help to strengthen the sense of belonging to a community.
46. The school has very good aims and principles for these important aspects of school life. They are embodied in its motto 'Working Together in Faith'. These underpin all learning activities for pupils. As a result, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere, in which the pupils learn very comfortably. The pupils have very positive attitudes to school and the behaviour of the vast majority is good. The parents are justly proud of the way in which the school helps their children to become confident, responsible people with enduring

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<sup>2</sup> Foundation subjects are those not currently deemed 'core', that is: art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

values, able to contribute effectively to society. The rich experiences and activities that the school offers pupils, both in lessons and in educational visits, very effectively help them to prepare for life as adults.

47. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual development. There is a very well planned programme of collective worship that is mainly Catholic in character but includes an appropriate range of festivals and events from other religions. A spiritual element of awe and wonder is apparent in these assemblies where the pupils are encouraged to reflect upon some of the fundamental questions in their lives. The teachers take care to value the pupils' ideas for others to see; for example, in lessons there are plenary sessions where the pupils are helped to take pride in themselves and their work through discussions on new learning. There are also moments of genuine awe and wonder in lessons, such as when Year 2 pupils imagined what it is like to be a seed in the warm ground and then burst into life. Similarly, there is joy in the faces of the reception pupils who experience their first 'Harvest Mass' and on the face of the boy who finally succeeds in remembering that Vera Lynn is 'The Forces' Sweetie' in a music lesson. As the pupils move through the school, they experience numerous opportunities to reflect upon world issues and their place within the scheme of things. Their responses are thoughtful and display a deep spiritual awareness and self-knowledge.
48. The school provides very well for pupils' moral development. There is a very strong emphasis on moral issues and very strong links with its Christian teaching. The staff work very hard to develop high moral standards. The pupils are taught the principles of right and wrong; these are embedded in all aspects of school life and are respected by the pupils. Teachers reinforce moral principles and use praise effectively to support these ideals. They understand the importance of leading by example and treat each pupil with individual respect. The school operates as an honest and fair society, which actively promotes equal opportunities, regardless of ability, background, gender or belief. The pupils know and respect class and school rules; they understand the importance of self-discipline, fairness, trust and honesty. They are proud of their school. The success of the school's endeavours is demonstrated by the careful manner in which the pupils handle resources and equipment during their lessons and in their responsible behaviour when sharing space in and around school.
49. The school also provides very well for the pupils' social development. Social education permeates all aspects of school life, as exemplified by the very good relationships that exist throughout the school and by the way in which staff set very good role models. This is further enhanced by the active support that the school receives from the parish priest and the governors. They regularly participate in the daily life of the school. Many aspects of school life successfully promote positive relationships. Older pupils, for instance, routinely help younger ones become used to the school's routines. The chance for social contact outside of the classroom, such as extra-curricular activities and visits, further encourage this development. The school benefits greatly from the strong support it receives from parents and the wider community. This has a significant impact upon pupils' social development. Staff encourage pupils to show sensitivity and consideration for the needs of others. This is reflected in the wide range of charity and fund-raising activities, such as carol singing and fund-raising for the Holy Childhood mission and the Catholic Children's Society.
50. The pupils' cultural understanding is also developed very well through subjects such as English, geography, history, art and music. It is particularly well developed through religious education. A wealth of experiences, visits and visitors heightens the pupils' awareness of some of the wider dimensions of life. The pupils celebrate other festivals besides Christmas and Easter; including the Chinese New Year. Pupils learn about Buddhist symbols for love, friendship and peace. There are planned opportunities for the pupils to appreciate their own culture and recognise its beauty. For instance, the school

organises visits from travelling theatre companies and musicians from a range of different cultures. Pupils visit art galleries when they study the work of famous artists, as well as art that originates in other cultures. An essential feature of the school is the way that it celebrates cultural diversity. This is a strength supported well by such activities as residential visits to London for Year 6 to ensure pupils are prepared well for life in a modern, multi-cultural society.

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

51. The school provides a very caring environment and places a high priority on the welfare of its pupils. Efficient procedures for health and safety are well established and continue to be successful. The arrangements for child protection comply satisfactorily with local education authority guidance. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has worked closely with all members of staff to introduce an effective whole-school behaviour policy. He has also shown a commitment to maintain and improve the good attendance record in school. The weaknesses, in assessment and monitoring, that were identified in the previous inspection have been resolved. The school now provides very good educational and personal support for its pupils.
52. The school amply fulfils its aim 'to promote an atmosphere of friendly understanding in which pupils feel free to approach any member of staff with a personal worry'. Open and trusting relationships are the hallmark of this overtly Christian community. They enable teachers to build up a clear picture of those in their charge, and to be very sensitive to their needs. Both staff and governors have very responsible attitudes towards health and safety matters. The school policy has been drawn up in collaboration with the local education authority and benefits from specialist expertise found within the governing body. It provides very efficiently for routine maintenance of fire and electrical equipment, for regular assessments of health and safety issues around school and for the independent monitoring of any subsequent action. At the time of the inspection, the temporary use of the hall to store equipment for an after-school club presented a safety hazard for pupils engaged in physical education because the space available was reduced. The school complies with the locally agreed child protection procedures. The headteacher recognises the value of further training for all staff to renew their awareness of the issues involved and enable them to make use of the curriculum to build preventive approaches to child protection.
53. The headteacher is very conscious of the contribution which regular and prompt attendance can make to attainment and progress. He monitors records systematically to encourage an improvement in the already good rates of attendance. The recently reviewed behaviour policy is proving to be effective in reducing disruption in the classroom. All staff have worked together to develop strategies to cope with the challenging behaviour that is sometimes found, particularly in Key Stage 2. The strength of the policy lies in the consistency of its application. Pupils have a clear idea of the standards expected of them and know that bullying or any form of harassment is not tolerated. Any incidents of misbehaviour that do occur are dealt with promptly and properly.
54. Procedures for monitoring academic progress are very good. Teachers make very good use of assessment data. Homework and schoolwork are marked regularly. The best marking gives pointers for improvements in the pupils' books. Annual reports on pupils' progress clearly indicate what they have studied in each activity area and how well they have done. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are well supported by non-teaching staff and by their teachers. The best individual educational plans, including those which centre on the welfare of pupils, have precise and measurable targets which help ensure progress is well monitored on a termly basis. There is good support from outside agencies.

55. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics are very good. The process begins with assessment of children's attainment when they enter the school. Progress is recorded against national criteria and used very well to plan for improvement. Assessments made at the end of each key stage conform to statutory requirements. The school carries out additional testing at regular intervals to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in English and mathematics. Teachers analyse the results of these tests and set realistic targets for pupils. These targets are then regularly reviewed. This information is used very well to inform teachers what to teach next. Many pupils examine how well they and their peers have done, in plenary sessions held at the end of lessons.
56. Assessment, in subjects other than English and mathematics, is less formal. Teachers maintain good records in English and mathematics of what pupils have understood and the skills that they develop. They hold common expectations of attainment because the school keeps very good portfolios of pupils' marked work. Teachers identify targets for pupils' individual academic development and this helps them make progress from day to day. The assessment co-ordinator uses assessment data very well to check the progress of different groups of pupils; for example, those with special educational needs, those from different ethnic groups, those who are gifted or talented, and those who are learning English as an additional language. Pupils who need extra help are identified early and their progress is monitored closely. The success of coupling an early intervention strategy with rigorous analysis of assessment is plain to see in the success many achieve in national tests.

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

57. The school's partnership with parents continues to be a great strength. The headteacher, governors and staff have built on the good practice that was in place at the time of the previous inspection and have rectified any area of weakness, particularly in relation to annual reports on pupils. The increasing level of parental satisfaction with the school is well reflected in its rapidly growing popularity; many parents choose to send their children to St Joseph's rather than to schools nearer their home, despite the cost and inconvenience of travelling. They have a high regard for the leadership of the school and respect the professionalism and high expectations of the teachers, whom they find very approachable. They appreciate the fact that their children are happy, behave well in school, make good progress (both academically and personally) and develop responsible attitudes. They also like the interesting range of activities provided for their children outside of lessons.
58. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented documents, which comply fully with legal requirements. Regular newsletters are well written, informative and interesting. Annual reports on pupils are detailed and give parents a clear idea of their children's work and effort over the previous year. A particularly helpful feature of these reports is that they incorporate a self evaluation by the pupil of their learning and effort and often identify their own targets to help their future progress. Parental awareness of their children's school work is enhanced by the termly distribution of information about curriculum areas to be covered in the forthcoming weeks. On an individual basis, the two parental consultation evenings make adequate provision for parents to discuss their children's attainment and progress in a formal way. In addition, the daily accessibility of teachers, including the headteacher, gives parents very good opportunities to resolve any interim concerns that they may have.
59. Parents respond very well to being included as part of the school community and as valued partners in the education of their children. Many come into school to support the weekly paired-reading sessions, helping not just their own child but those whose parents

are not free to attend. Others help more with classroom support, supervision outside of school such as on visits to the swimming pool, or with assistance at extra-curricular activities, particularly sport. There is a very successful parents teacher association which sometimes involves the whole-school community in raising funds to support the school's resources. In the home, parents support their children very effectively with homework which is used effectively to reinforce and extend classroom learning. The parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in the diagnosis of problems and the review of individual educational plans. The partnership between school and home is very fruitful and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, behaviour and personal development

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

60. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides very positive leadership, promoting and sustaining a clear sense of direction for the school. He does not have the benefit of a deputy headteacher but is ably supported by committed, hard working staff and by a governing body which is knowledgeable, active and effective. Together they have a shared vision for the future of the school and are committed to the further raising of standards. This is a marked improvement on the situation that was found at the time of the previous inspection when, following a period of change, the focus was on sustaining morale, rebuilding confidence and establishing procedures to improve the quality of education and the standards of attainment.
61. The high quality of the leadership is well reflected in the supportive atmosphere and the sense of community and shared commitment displayed by all who work in the school. The headteacher and senior members of staff set excellent examples in the work that they undertake, both within the school and in supporting many extra-curricular activities, including the very successful fundraising events. This helps to engender the great enthusiasm and effort which is shown by all members of staff. Apart from the newly qualified members of the teaching staff, all have delegated responsibilities which they carry out responsibly, conscientiously and often with joy. They form an impressive team going far towards achieving the ambitious aims set out in the school's vision statement.
62. Several areas for improvement were identified in the previous inspection report and the school has taken positive and effective steps to address them. There is now better challenge in lessons, especially for the more able pupils. Classroom organisation and teaching methods have been improved to ensure that pupils learn well. Thus, all pupils, whatever their gender, ability or ethnicity, are fully involved in all activities. The school assesses pupils' attainment very well and uses very efficiently the data it collects to monitor pupils' progress. It monitors attainment and progress according to gender, ability and ethnicity and this ensures all pupils make good progress. Teachers use time more effectively in all lessons. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning very successfully and there is a clear focus on raising standards across the school. The new behaviour policy has become an integral part of everyday life in the school and is increasingly effective. The curriculum is well monitored by subject leaders and this has a good effect on pupils' learning, particularly in science. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics. All of the key issues from the previous inspection report have been successfully resolved.
63. The governing body makes a good contribution to the work of the school. Several governors are regular visitors to school and keep themselves well informed about day-to-day issues and problems that arise. A few are very new to their role but it is clear from discussions and documentation that, over the last few years, governors have proved themselves to be loyal, knowledgeable and supportive. They meet all the statutory requirements, are aware of their duties and play a vital role in sustaining the strong

Catholic ethos which characterises the school. Their effective committee structure provides for efficiency in strategic decision-making. With the headteacher, they are closely involved in prudent financial management and planning over the medium and long term. They provide effective support for educational initiatives designed to raise standards. The governing body as a whole has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is a most valuable, critical friend to the headteacher.

64. The school improvement plan has been produced in consultation with the staff, governors and, more unusually, parents. Based on a thorough analysis of the school's needs, it clearly identifies the school's priorities and constitutes a useful and effective management tool. The plan is used well to inform the headteacher and governors in their deliberations to set the school budget. There are appropriate criteria for success and the document is subject to regular review to evaluate progress.
65. Both the headteacher and the governing body are sensitive to the need to evaluate the school's performance. Despite his many other commitments, the headteacher is very active in this regard. He monitors teaching methodically, identifying strengths and weaknesses within subject areas and working with staff to support and encourage improvement in areas where there is weakness. This has been seen to good effect in the progress made recently in information and communication technology and science. The headteacher also provides classroom support so that subject leaders can monitor the planning of their subject. They are becoming increasingly involved in analysing standards and using the information gained to promote further development in their respective areas of responsibility. The governors have recently agreed an effective performance management strategy and the headteacher has set clear and forward-looking targets for all teaching staff. This is having a good impact in honing teachers' classroom skills and helping them to set their own new targets for development.
66. The high quality of the school's professional development strategy is reflected in its acceptance as a provider of initial teacher training. A new policy was agreed recently by the governing body to ensure that newly qualified teachers receive their full entitlement to support, training and time away from the classroom. The school's documentation on school routines and resources is clear and precise and of value to any member of staff new to the school. There are currently two newly qualified teachers in school. Both have spoken very warmly of the welcoming and supportive environment that they have found in the school, the support which has been offered and gratefully received from their designated mentors and the additional encouragement and guidance which has been readily available from all other members of staff. They each have a 90 per cent teaching load and arrangements are in hand for them to attend appropriate consultation and training with the local education authority over the coming year.
67. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and the provision is well managed. She works closely with the local education authority and with designated learning support workers in school. They are all involved in planning and in liaison with parents. The school fulfils the recommendations of the Code of Practice<sup>3</sup> and all statutory requirements are met. The work of pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored. They make good progress in their time at school.
68. Financial management in the school is very efficient. The governors keep a tight rein on financial expenditure. They are familiar with the principles of best value and are at pains to ensure that the school's resources are spent judiciously. When agreeing the budget, they relate it to the school improvement plan and routinely compare spending patterns with previous years' experience and with similar schools. In their deliberations, the

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<sup>3</sup> Code of Practice: This gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

school administrator, who is responsible for day-to-day management, and keeps staff and governors up to date with the budgetary position, ably assists them. In consultation with the governors, the headteacher makes very efficient and proper use of specific grants, such as the 'Standards Fund', and is able to account in detail for any expenditure. There is currently a 9 per cent budget surplus which is earmarked for building and resource improvements for the two new classes formed to cater for the increased roll. The school administrator and the school clerk work well as a team and make a very valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school day. They deal with all routine administrative and financial matters and are well trained to make good use of new technology in carrying out their varied duties. The most recent audit of the school's accounting procedures was carried out two years ago and the few recommendations made then have been fully implemented. The efficiency of the school office enables teachers to focus their attention on the classroom and, in so doing, to help raise standards in the school.

69. The school has an adequate number of staff to teach the National Curriculum. Teachers are properly qualified and possess appropriate subject expertise. They are well assisted in their teaching by skilled and enthusiastic support workers who fully understand their role and make valuable contributions to the quality of education provided by the school. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is well managed. Most classrooms are light and bright. They provide attractive teaching areas and some good use is made of display to celebrate pupils' work and to enhance the learning environment. There are, however, weaknesses. Foundation stage pupils have no dedicated, secure outdoor area. This restricts their opportunities for outdoor learning and play. It also deprives them of the safe environment to which they are entitled. The hall is of appropriate size and proportion for the whole-school assemblies and for the teaching of physical education but it is also currently used for the storage of large equipment. This creates hazards and is of particular concern during physical education lessons. A third weakness arises from the use of the information and communication technology suite as a classroom. This necessitates the home class vacating their classroom each afternoon. This is inconvenient and dysfunctional for both the pupils and their teacher. The headteacher is very conscious of this problem and is currently working with the governors to find alternative arrangements. The school's resources are good in several areas, notably science, mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education. For other subjects they are adequate and in all cases they are used effectively to support teaching.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. There are no major issues. However, in order to improve the quality of education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should consider how to raise standards by:
- (1) improving the focus on listening skills throughout the school by:
    - raising pupils' awareness of the importance of concentrating on what teachers say so that they know what they have to learn;
    - including listening as part of the behaviour policy and ensuring that it becomes an integral part of everyday school life;
  - (2) reviewing the use of the accommodation to improve the learning environment and thus raise standards by providing:
    - appropriate outdoor learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage;
    - better storage space to eliminate all health and safety risks and to provide adequate safe space for the delivery of the National Curriculum, particularly for physical education;
    - more convenient classroom arrangements, particularly for Year 4.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	10	21	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	29	60	11	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	154
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	20

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
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 (Year 2)<sup>4</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000			17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (81)	88 (86)	88 (81)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (86)	88 (86)	88 (86)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	13	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	12	10	11
	Total	20	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (77)	72 (77)	76 (71)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	8
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	20	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (84)	76 (84)	76 (77)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

<sup>4</sup> The existing guidance from OFSTED is that test and examination data should be excluded from inspection reports if the year group is 10 or fewer. This also applies to year groups of boys and girls separately.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	120
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5
Average class size	22

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	318,039
Total expenditure	299,482
Expenditure per pupil	2,155
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,228
Balance carried forward to next year	28,785

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 46.8%

Number of questionnaires sent out	139
Number of questionnaires returned	65

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	34	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	45	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	57	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	31	20	0	0
The teaching is good.	66	32	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	38	3	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	20	2	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	35	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	31	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	78	22	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	32	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	68	23	3	0	6

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

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

71. The previous inspection findings indicate that the school makes satisfactory provision in the reception class for children under five. The Foundation Stage of learning includes all children in the reception class. Current inspection findings show that the school is continuing to maintain and develop its level of provision for these young children. This has a positive impact on their learning, progress and achievements. The school has plans to improve the provision further by developing an outdoor learning area. This is planned to increase children's awareness of the world around them and enhance their physical development.
72. Children enter the school's reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. The class teacher is very skilful in providing work that effectively meets the children's needs and abilities. This ensures that the children are included in all activities and have equal access to the curriculum. The results of the assessments carried out as children begin school, show children have average skills in speaking, listening and mathematics. Most children are likely to meet the expectations of the early learning goals in language and mathematics by the time they begin work in Year 1. This represents good learning. It is a direct result of the patient, carefully structured and high quality teaching. The teaching is particularly good in promoting children's personal and social development. Adult interaction with children is stimulating and enthusiastic. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

73. The teaching and provision for this area of the children's development is very good. The class teacher and support assistant provide the children with good role models. They are calm, patient and sensitive to needs of young children. An example of this is when the teacher soothes and interests a child who is upset. The classroom is stimulating, interesting and welcoming. This level of planning provides these young children with interesting work areas. They flourish as they work and develop an increasing awareness of their own worth. All the children respond very well to adults and each other. They work cheerfully together, share equipment happily and talk together with good humour. This is particularly noticeable in when children work together at the computer. "It's your turn now. Mine next". The teacher encourages the children to choose their own materials and activities. They use them carefully and tidy away sensibly. This develops children's awareness of the need to care for and respect property. All the children work with a clear sense of enjoyment and purpose. This is a direct result of the high quality teaching. Most children are likely to exceed the expectations of the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development.

**Communication, language and literacy**

74. The teaching in this area of learning is good. Most children enter the reception class with average standards in their communication skills. The teacher ensures that the children learn to listen carefully and follow instructions accurately. At the time of the inspection, most children are already working at standards expected for their age. This is good progress and is a direct result of the skilful teaching. The teacher ensures that children have opportunities to see the value of reading and writing in most activities. For example, children learn to use correct terminology such as 'non-fiction'. This enables them to understand the different uses of books. The constant reinforcement of learning is one of the strengths of the teaching. It makes children eager to read and write. They often choose to write, for example practising how to write their names, and talk happily about their work. All children have regular opportunities to use the role-play area. There is an

effective and sensitive level of adult interaction to help develop children's speaking skills. Children of all abilities quickly develop positive attitudes to reading. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. The more able children are already beginning to form letters correctly. This good learning reflects the quality of teaching. Children in the Foundation Stage of learning follow the National Literacy Strategy for children of reception age. This contributes to the maintenance and development of sound standards in children's literacy skills. These standards reflect the findings of the previous inspection. Most children are likely to meet the expectations of the early learning goals by Year 1.

### **Mathematical development**

75. The teaching of mathematics is good. This has a positive impact on the progress children make in their learning and the standards that they achieve. At the time of the inspection, most children were achieving standards expected for their age. This represents good progress from their entry to school three weeks earlier. The teacher makes number activities interesting. She takes every opportunity to develop children's awareness of the sequence of numbers and their relationships. They quickly develop a secure knowledge of mathematical language. For example, they all know the word 'zero' and use it consistently and correctly when they count. The vast majority of children achieve the levels of accuracy expected for their age, as they match and count numbers. All children count confidently and recognise numbers up to ten. The more able children are beginning to understand the concept of place value in their practical work. Most children are likely to meet the requirements of the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

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

76. The teaching in this area is good. The teacher links work in this area of learning effectively with other areas of the curriculum. For example, children work at making numerals from modelling material. They explain how to roll and shape the material and what numeral they are making. This makes effective links with communication and mathematical skills. The good quality teaching ensures children use the computer confidently and accurately. An example of this is in a mathematics lesson where children show above-average mouse control as they click on to the desired program. The school provides opportunities for the children to use headphones to listen to and follow stories. This develops their interest in books and reading effectively. These opportunities and the high quality of teaching ensure that children have a well-developed understanding of the world around them. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

### **Physical development**

77. Teaching is good and the provision for the development of children's physical skills is satisfactory. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. They have ample opportunities to develop their ability to control pencils, scissors and brushes. Most children have skills in this area that meet expectations. They experience a variety of activities, such as cutting and using malleable material, that help them to practise and refine their manipulative skills. The teacher promotes children's physical skills well. Most children develop their awareness of moving in a large space effectively during physical education and dance lessons. They do not have access to an outdoor area as part of their normal learning activities. This restricts their physical development in this area of learning. The school is aware of this and plans for implementation are already under way. Most children are likely to meet the expectations of the early learning goals by the time they begin work on the National Curriculum.

## **Creative development**

78. The teacher has suitably high expectations of children's attainment in the area of creative development and the quality of teaching is good. As a result, children mix and use paint confidently and show good progress in their ability to observe objects closely. They have good access to areas for imaginative role-play. This helps them to develop and express their own ideas very effectively. The children have numerous opportunities to express themselves through singing and moving to music. They learn new words quickly and enjoy putting actions to songs. Their singing skills already meet the expectations for their age. This is direct result of the effective and skilful teaching. Most children are likely to meet the early learning goals by the time they begin work at Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

## **Summary**

79. The provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Although the provision has many strengths the provision for outdoor learning opportunities is under-developed. The most significant strength is the quality of teaching for these young children. The teacher plans adult-led activities very carefully. This ensures that all children have opportunities to express themselves as well as experience direct teaching. The procedures to review and identify developing and changing needs are very good and effective. The school analyses results of early assessments and uses these to plan work for groups and individuals. The reception class teacher has a clear understanding of how young children learn and develop. This ensures that all children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and learn very well.

## **ENGLISH**

80. Standards for the 7- and 11-year-olds have been maintained since the last inspection. They remain in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum. However, the pupils' speaking and reading skills at the age of 11 are good. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when they were satisfactory. The current Year 6 read at levels above average. Their research and referencing skills are satisfactory. Attainment in writing is in line with national averages, although some pupils underachieve in both creative writing and with the presentation of their work. The school has identified this as an area for development and is focussing on improving standards so that all pupils achieve at a good level.
81. Throughout the school, the vast majority of pupils have satisfactory listening skills. However, there is a small, but significant, minority of pupils whose listening skills are not well developed. This affects their learning, in that they do not always hear what it is they are to do, or miss vital information that the teachers give them. In lessons, pupils learn well and make good progress. Over time, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, make good progress. During the inspection, good teaching resulted in pupils learning well and achieving good standards, particularly in speaking and reading.
82. Throughout the school, pupils use their speaking skills well. The youngest pupils start school with an average level of vocabulary and most listen satisfactorily. The teachers encourage them to use complete sentences and correct vocabulary, when answering questions. This results in the pupils quickly and confidently joining in class discussions. By Year 6, these skills are well developed and pupils speak clearly in public and discuss issues in lessons maturely, using well-structured sentences and a good level of vocabulary. Teachers expect the pupils to listen to what is said to them. Mostly, pupils do listen satisfactorily. Consequently, the majority of pupils understand what they are to do and concentrate hard in their lessons. However, a minority do not listen carefully and consequently do not learn satisfactorily. Pupils' skills increase and improve as they get

older and, by the age of 11, the vast majority of pupils involve themselves in debates and explore orally the main issues of stories, retelling them in their own words.

83. The school inculcates a love of reading in its pupils. As a result, many pupils, throughout the school, read at above average levels. Pupils use the library well, both to find information and for pleasure. Younger pupils enjoy sharing books with adults. They quickly learn key words and begin to read for themselves. Average and below-average pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds and this helps them to tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. Older pupils become adept at finding the information that they need from a variety of sources. They read competently, using good skills of skimming and scanning to access information quickly. The reading skills of the average and above-average pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most texts. Less able pupils achieve satisfactorily with their reading because they receive good support from teachers and support staff.
84. Writing is not quite such a positive picture. Standards seen during the inspection and in the scrutiny of pupils' work are satisfactory. Younger pupils begin to write in a legible, well-formed style, using capital letters and full stops correctly. Year 2 pupils, write for different purposes. For example, they write imaginative poetry using given sounds, such as 'ai'; for example, one lesson resulted in some credible rhyming couplets involving 'Daisy in the rain'. More able pupils write sentences spelling words phonetically. By Year 3, pupils begin to spell more complex words accurately and become more adventurous in their use of vocabulary. Pupils make good progress and, by the age of 11, they write more complex grammar and use well-defined sentence structures. Some good standards of work were seen in lessons and many pupils, particularly the more able, achieve well. Handwriting varies throughout the school. Younger pupils regularly practise forming their letters correctly and teachers encourage older pupils to develop their own style. However, standards in workbooks in other subjects are not consistently good. The majority of pupils take great pride in their work but this is not an important concept for all pupils.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well. They have good subject knowledge and use the National Strategy well to promote good learning. Very occasionally the plenary session is protracted and this limits the opportunities for pupils to share with each other what they have learned or to evaluate how well they have done. Teachers usually explain very clearly at the beginning of each lesson what they want pupils to learn. They revise previous learning very effectively. As a result, all pupils understand exactly what they are to do and know what is expected of them. Learning is noticeably improved when teachers return to the aims of the lesson in the plenary and recap on what pupils have achieved. Relationships, throughout the school are very good. All staff are very good role models and work together as a very good team. The majority of pupils respect the staff and want to please them. They are happy and confident in lessons and, therefore, learn comfortably. They are not afraid to ask when they are not sure. Neither are they afraid to make mistakes, accepting readily that this is part of the learning process.
86. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other subjects. For example, they encourage pupils to evaluate their own and other people's work in plenary sessions in most subjects. Pupils enjoy this and many use their speaking and listening skills well to comment on, and listen to, critical evaluations of the work that they have done. Pupils use information and communication technology satisfactorily to support their learning. They use computers to refine and edit their stories and produce final drafts of their work.
87. The literacy leader manages the subject well. She has clear data and evidence recorded which tracks pupils' attainment and progress. Resources are adequate for the current



curriculum and are used well. There is a pleasant, although slightly cramped, library which the pupils use well. It is satisfactorily stocked with fiction and non-fiction books.

## MATHEMATICS

88. By the time they leave school at 11 years of age, pupils' standards in mathematics are in line with the national average. They achieve well. This achievement is reflected in the school's improved performance in national tests for 11-year-olds over the last three years. These results, however, are still below those of pupils in similar schools.
89. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and build well on the good start that they have made in the reception class. The attainment of the current Year 2 pupils is above average for their age (Level 2)<sup>5</sup>. Most count to 100, many to 200 and a few to a thousand. They are confident in adding numbers up to 10 and some pupils add numbers up to 20. Pupils gain good knowledge and understanding of higher-level work (Level 3). They count confidently in twos and tens, both forwards and backwards, and the most able pupils are beginning to have good quick recall of their two and ten times tables. Results in national tests for 7-year-olds have varied from in line with the national average to well above over the last few years. The school can well account for these variations. It keeps good records of pupils' attainment and analyses results carefully. The school recognises the significant impact of the National Numeracy Strategy in this improvement in standards.
90. In Years 3-6 pupils make good progress. The good teaching of basic skills in Years 1 and 2 makes a significant contribution to the good achievement of pupils at this stage of their education. It results in the pupils' sound performance in national tests at 11 years. Standards in Years 3-5 are above average. Standards for the current Year 6 pupils are average. A few pupils work at levels below those expected nationally for their age and about a quarter are working at levels above. Number skills become more secure. Pupils have quick recall of the times tables, confidently work in decimals to two decimal places, know how to find the average of a set of data and are developing good problem solving skills. Given that this year-group has not had the benefit of the National Numeracy Strategy throughout their schooling, they are achieving well.
91. Pupils have good numeracy skills. They use these effectively in other areas of the curriculum, such as for graphical work in science and geography and time-lines in history. Teachers develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills well in lessons. They ask pupils to listen carefully to instructions and explanations and to explain their results to the class as a whole. Teachers make sure that pupils can read, write and understand key words such as 'multiple' and 'factor'. From Year 1, pupils are expected to record their work in their own mathematics books. This develops good presentation skills from an early age.
92. Throughout the school, there are no significant variations between the performance of girls and boys or in those from different ethnic groups. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Teachers' very good question-and-answer techniques and use of visual resources, such as number fans, help pupils to follow the lesson content and acquire new skills. Such teaching methods also effectively support pupils with special educational needs and these pupils also make good progress. Specific planning and support for pupils with special educational needs are good.
93. Most pupils enjoy mathematics and, as a consequence, are keen and enthusiastic in lessons and work hard. Year 6 pupils like mathematics because their teachers 'make it easy by showing them the best methods to use'. Year 2 pupils respond enthusiastically

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<sup>5</sup> The national expectation is that at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils should achieve Level 2 and at the end of Key Stage 2 they should achieve Level 3.

when the teacher informs them that it is time for their numeracy lesson. However, there is a significant minority of pupils in Years 3 and 4 who find listening and concentrating difficult. The result is that they are often unsure about what is required of them, show little urgency and waste time.

94. The teaching is good. The school has effectively implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and this has a very positive impact on the teaching of mathematics. As a result, pupils' learning in lessons is nearly always good, and sometimes very good.
95. Teachers use very good questioning skills to ensure that pupils in most classes fully understand the work that they are doing. They expect the pupils to answer questions and to explain how they worked out the answer. They discuss methods and give pupils a wide range of strategies to use. For example, in Year 6, the teacher discussed with pupils different ways to solve a number code puzzle. Pupils subsequently used the method with which they were most happy to complete the task successfully. The school is currently focusing on improving pupils' ability to read and understand problems as well as further developing number skills. Analysis of the summer 2001 national tests for 11-year-olds identified this as an area of weakness. In an effective Year 6 lesson, the teacher, through systematic questioning, helped pupils to solve quite complex calculations. Through structured tasks they gained skills in rounding and approximating, before completing the calculations required for the final answer. They worked at a good level for their age.
96. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Teachers demand high standards of work and behaviour. They set work that, although appropriate to pupils' learning needs, is not always easy. Most pupils respond well to the challenges and, hence, make good gains in learning. Homework is regularly set and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, especially in Years 5 and 6. Occasionally, the pace of learning drops in some lessons; for example, teachers spend too long on the mental arithmetic starter sessions and the introduction to the main activity. A few pupils then become a little less attentive and slightly restless. This also reduces the time left for pupils to consolidate and practise the skills that have been taught.
97. The subject leader has clear and appropriate priorities for future work in mathematics. She analyses test information very well and monitors standards throughout the school. The use of information and communication technology in mathematics is satisfactory and showing signs of further improvement. Numeracy skills are used well in other subjects to support learning; for example to record work in science and geography graphically. There has been a marked improvement since the last inspection.

## **SCIENCE**

98. By the ages of 7 and 11, standards of attainment are now above those for most pupils of similar ages. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. It is also an improvement from the 2000 and 2001 national tests. This improvement is a direct result of the initiatives implemented by the school. There is careful and detailed analysis of the national test results. The school uses this to plan work that effectively meets and challenges emerging needs. It is also a result of the improvement in the quality of teaching in science. Pupils of all abilities have well-structured opportunities to develop their enquiry skills and plan scientific investigations. This is having a noticeable effect on standards. The school has a good quality policy and scheme of work in place. This is increasing teachers' knowledge and skills and is an improvement since the previous inspection.
99. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the process of change as the body grows. Pupils of all abilities correctly identify important changes. Most pupils have above

average understanding of how an electric circuit works. All pupils show a high level of interest and enthusiasm for their work. They conduct investigations carefully and accurately and demonstrate above-average ability to work and think independently. All pupils show a suitable level of understanding of how materials change. For example, one pupil describes the change in popcorn: "It's just like it's gone inside out". The careful planning of lessons and the skilful teaching effectively develops pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers make very effective links with English. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher took great care to extend pupils' understanding and use of language associated with building materials.

100. By 11, the majority of pupils have a good grasp of scientific vocabulary and an increasingly secure knowledge base. For example, by Year 6, they confidently explain the difference between solids, liquids and gases. They know that glass is not a solid and consists of constantly moving molecules. Pupils in Year 5 respond eagerly to the enthusiastic and well-informed teaching. They know and understand the need to repeat readings to come to an accurate conclusion. Careful questioning ensures that all pupils understand that science is based on evidence. All teachers build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge. This ensures a good level of progress in the development of scientific skills and concepts. Teachers make very good links with the pupils' work in English. Throughout the key stage, pupils explain and answer questions about their experiments and develop their learning very effectively. They have a good understanding of how the human body works and of the need to care for their bodies. The more-able pupils know how the solar system functions and understand the relative positions of the sun, earth and moon. Pupils are interested in and enthusiastic about their work. They respond positively to their teachers and listen carefully. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
101. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in developing their scientific skills and understanding. There is no significant difference between the attainment and progress of boys and girls. The teachers plan work carefully to ensure that tasks are challenging and meet the pupils' identified needs. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection.
102. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills effectively to support their work in science. They understand the specific scientific meaning of words such as 'conductor' and present their findings clearly and logically. The pupils use measurement increasingly accurately in their scientific investigations. They use information and communication technology satisfactorily to represent findings on charts and graphs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
103. The quality of teaching is consistently good. This ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning. Teaching in two fifths of lessons is very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers are secure and confident in their teaching and use their subject knowledge effectively to develop pupils' thinking. They make very effective use of questions to test pupils' understanding and develop a suitable scientific vocabulary. Teachers' planning places a clear focus on practising and improving key skills. The teachers ensure that these build systematically on what the pupils know. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the teacher carefully recapped on the pupils' knowledge about healthy eating. All teachers have realistically high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. An example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were asked to be precise about how to displace air. A very profitable question and answer session enabled the pupils to explain their reasoning logically and gave the teacher a clear insight into what the pupils knew. Teachers use lesson evaluations and assessments to guide them in what to teach next, in order to ensure good quality progress for all pupils. The regular setting of carefully planned homework gives effective support to work done in lessons. Teachers make every effort to support

pupils who have English as an additional language. This enables the pupils to participate fully in science lessons.

104. The school makes very good use of the information from assessment to plan the science curriculum. The subject leader has a clear vision for the direction of science and is totally committed to raising standards. The school monitors trends, planning and standards. For instance, it identified a difference in achievement between boys and girls. The school put strategies in place to address this difference. Current inspection findings show no difference in achievement. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. The school rotates the teaching of art and design and design technology on a termly basis and, during the week of the inspection, art and design was in focus. Too few lessons were seen during the inspection to form judgements about standards. However, the work seen indicates that standards are in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum. Discussions with staff and pupils together with a thorough review of the school's curriculum documentation and a small number of samples of completed work confirm that the school's provision for art and design meets requirements. The curriculum ensures that pupils experience a widening range of materials as they progress through the school and that skills are developed progressively year on year.
106. In Key Stage 1, pupils investigate and use a variety of materials to communicate their ideas and meanings. They use paints and other media to produce pictures and designs of a sound standard. Their pictures create a good feel for the subject and have good precision in detail. They use the work of other artists, such as Rousseau and Vincent Van Gogh to influence their own work. They produce good quality pencil and crayon drawings to illustrate stories and to paint portraits. These also contribute to the good displays around school; for example, the display on the theme of 'Owls' features pupils' sketches and paintings. Older pupils have opportunities to improve their use of paints and other media to produce pictures and designs of a good standard. They have learnt how to revise and improve their work to realise their intentions. In a very good Year 5 lesson, pupils selected and used pastels, charcoal, watercolours and pencils when producing designs for a container. However, pupils have limited experience of working in other materials such as textiles and other three-dimensional media.
107. Standards in design and technology throughout the school match those expected nationally. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. This is particularly evident in the skills of designing, constructing and manufacturing.
108. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to use their knowledge of a range of materials to produce ideas and plans. They explain their ideas and many select appropriate tools and materials. They have a satisfactory knowledge of how to join and assemble materials in a range of ways. Once their projects have been completed, they suggest ways in which they might be improved. Pupils in Year 2, design vehicles using their knowledge of wheels and axles. They make moving pictures. They also manufacture puppets using a pivot and a lever, posing the question "What happens when you pull the lever?" Teachers in Year 6 present pupils with a specific design and manufacturing task - to make a pair of slippers. This taxes their ingenuity but many produce designs of good quality and use appropriate manufacturing skills. Pupils learn to evaluate their work and many offer sensible suggestions for improvements. They use their literacy and numeracy skills well to record their work. They begin to use information and communication technology skills satisfactorily to support their learning.

109. From a limited sample, it is evident that teachers offer their pupils good opportunities to engage in a range of practical activities. Teachers effectively use a variety of ways to teach both subjects, including using the work of famous artists, demonstrating techniques and individually assisting them. This variety enables the pupils to learn well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and critically evaluate work as it progresses to help raise standards. Pupils are usually well motivated. They report that they enjoy their lessons as they like to be busy. The majority concentrate well on their work and try hard to do their best. This enables them to take advantage of the evaluations given by the teachers and to achieve well. Well-planned and structured teaching involving focussed practical tasks helps pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, to achieve well and attain sound standards.
110. The school is currently using QCA<sup>6</sup> schemes of work for the teaching of art and design and design technology. There are a limited number of displays of pupils' work around school but work on display helps to brighten the learning environment.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

111. The last time that the school was inspected, standards met the expectations of the National Curriculum at both key stages. Standards have been maintained and are average for pupils aged 7 and 11. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress.
112. By the age of 7, pupils have a good knowledge of local places. They talk knowledgeably about the warm climate in Australia at Christmas and know maps record the location of towns and countries. This is due to the good teaching that they receive which effectively brings together local geography and the experiences and cultures of pupils within the school community.
113. Older pupils extend this work well by studying how they can improve the environment. They study the local area and compare this with localities further afield in the Cotswolds. They use maps to locate countries where they have friends and families (such as Portugal). Teachers link the subject well to science through a study of the water cycle and by looking at the main features of rivers. This enables pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills satisfactorily to support their learning. It also means pupils learn in a 'joined up' and meaningful way.
114. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan many practical opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning. Pupils enjoy this and speak enthusiastically about their visits and their work. They relate their work in history or religious education to their work in geography and make sense of their learning.
115. There is an overall plan for the subject through which pupils cover all aspects of the National Curriculum in a continuous process, enabling them to make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6. Resources are adequate to meet the current curriculum and the school uses visits and visitors well to enhance the curriculum.

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<sup>6</sup> QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority)

## **HISTORY**

116. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection when they were in line with national expectations. They remain in line for 7- and 11-year-olds. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, make good progress.
117. By the age of 7, the pupils develop satisfactorily their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past; for example, by studying what life was like at the time of the Fire of London. Pupils compare old and new artefacts, such as teddy bears. Thus they gain a good understanding of 'now' and 'then', how life used to be and how times have changed.
118. This work is taken forward well in Key Stage 2. Teachers challenge the pupils well so that, by the age of 11, they develop a good understanding of chronology. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils were introduced to the idea of recording historical events on a time line. Using good questioning skills, the teacher encouraged the pupils to recall events they had learned about in Years 1 and 2. She then helped them place these chronologically on a time line. The pupils enjoyed this exercise and began to appreciate the time span between Anglo-Saxon and Roman invaders. By the age of 11, pupils talk knowledgeably about Tudor and Victorian Britain and have a good understanding of why people leave their own country to invade another.
119. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons well and make the subject come alive. They plan opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in lessons to support their learning. Consequently, pupils are interested and want to learn about the past and relate it to life today. They say that they enjoy their lessons and are eager to discuss what they have learned.
120. More emphasis has been placed on the subject in recent months. The long-term overview map now ensures complete coverage of the subject in a continuous way from Year 1 to Year 6. Consequently, pupils can progress through the scheme effectively covering all aspects of the National Curriculum. Resources are adequate to meet the current curriculum and include artefacts and books which cover a variety of historic periods.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. The previous inspection report indicates that pupils' standards in information technology met the expectations at the time. It is clear that there is good improvement in provision, standards and teaching since then. This is particularly evident over the past year. Standards are close to the levels that are currently expected for most pupils of 7 and 11 years of age. All pupils, including those with special educational need and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in their learning because of the effective teaching.
122. Since the previous inspection the school has made a significant improvement in provision for this subject. The priority given to information and communication technology is leading to marked improvements in teaching and learning. The school has a well-equipped computer suite, with modern equipment that provides pupils with a good range of resources. This gives very effective support to their learning in all subject areas. The impact of this facility is diminished this year because the room is also used as a classroom.

123. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to develop pupils' skills and their ability to link their work with other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 confidently access information to support work in history. The pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and are proud of their achievements. For example, pupils in Year 2 express delight when they apply their knowledge of punctuation to work on the computer. Teachers are confident in their teaching and this leads to increased confidence amongst the pupils. In a Year 1 lesson the pupils demonstrate and explain how robotic toys work. This is a direct result of the teacher's level of personal knowledge. All teachers take care to teach effectively the basic skills of how to use information and communication technology. Teachers build on these skills carefully and, by the time they are in Year 6, the vast majority of pupils have well-developed abilities in using computers. They control them accurately, are adept in their data-handling skills and learn how to use control and sensing. The vast majority of pupils responds positively to their work and are keen to learn. There is a significant minority of pupils in Years 3 and 4 who do not respond positively to their work. This reflects a lack of challenge in the activities offered. Where this happens pupils' learning and achievements are below what is normally expected.
124. This overall good quality of teaching is an improvement since the previous inspection. It is having a clear impact on pupils' learning, knowledge and understanding. No teaching is less than satisfactory. Teaching in three out of five lessons is at least good. The school has a comprehensive scheme of work with clear learning objectives and carefully planned steps of progress. This assists the teachers and gives them a good level of support and confidence. It reflects positively on the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make.
125. The subject leader monitors all lesson planning and, with the headteacher, gives considerable support to less confident colleagues. This has a positive effect on the quality of teaching and, in turn, on standards. The school keeps samples of work from each year group. These provide teachers with a clear picture of progress. They also give a secure base for planning future work. The planning ensures that all pupils use their skills effectively to support work in other lessons. This enables pupils to understand the wider use of information and communication technology.
126. There are many improvements to information and communication technology since the previous inspection. For example, in-service training has been undertaken, teaching is considerably better and there is a well-balanced curriculum. The school has a scheme of work that gives a very effective level of support and guidance to teachers and ensures all aspects of the subject, including Internet access are covered. The subject leader and the headteacher efficiently monitor planning and achievement. There are clear instructions for using the equipment. These are all significant improvements since the previous inspection and support the quality of teaching, learning and standards effectively.

## **MUSIC**

127. Good quality music plays an essential part in the life of the school and makes a major contribution to the spiritual development of the pupils. Well-chosen music is used particularly effectively in assemblies to extend pupils knowledge of composers and musical styles. It also contributes very effectively to the pleasant and thoughtful ethos of collective worship. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. They are in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum throughout the school. Standards achieved in singing are good.
128. During recent years, music teaching has taken a lower profile in schools as literacy and numeracy have become better established. This has necessarily affected the potential for improvement in standards. However, here, music plays an increasingly important part in school life and the pupils and teachers enjoy the musical interludes that they share.

Many pupils take up the opportunities offered to learn to play instruments, such as recorders, violins and flutes. The school encourages these pupils to share their talents with everyone in assemblies and concerts. Older pupils enjoy singing in the choir which contributes much to the school's musical spirit.

129. The school covers the listening and appraising and performing elements of the subject well, enabling pupils to reach satisfactory standards consistently. However, opportunities for pupils to compose and perform their own music are not as well developed as other areas of the curriculum. Teachers enjoy music and share their own expertise generously. Thus, pupils receive a wide range of musical experiences and learn well. The quality of teaching is good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in developing their musical skills. Teachers adopt an enthusiastic approach and encourage pupils to participate fully in lessons. They work with pupils to develop listening and performing skills, encouraging pupils to co-operate, persevere and enjoy their work. Pupils respond well to the good levels of teaching and enjoy lessons.
130. Throughout the school, pupils sing well. They sing tunefully, with clear diction. Younger pupils sing a good variety of songs and rhymes. They enjoy familiar tunes and lyrics. Older pupils sing more complex songs and use a good variety of instruments to accompany themselves. Teachers use correct technical language in lessons. This means that the pupils discuss their work using accurate terminology, such as 'lyrics' and 'chorus' and hence, enhance their understanding of musical structures.
131. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to listen to a good range of music. They use these opportunities to encourage pupils to improve their listening skills. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils learn to listen carefully and form their own impressions about the music they hear. Occasionally a few pupils choose not to listen or concentrate. This inhibits their learning. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss and appraise the music that they hear. For example, Year 5 listened to two pieces of music and then discussed at a good level the way the music made them feel. They empathised well with 'Candle in the Wind' and used a good level of vocabulary to explain the meaning of the lyrics.
132. The subject leader manages the subject well. She has a clear view of how she would like music to develop. Resources are adequate for the current curriculum. They are used well and stored to be easily accessible. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development; for example, they use their singing skills well in assemblies. It also adds much to pupils' cultural development because they listen to music from other traditions and they use, and become familiar with, instruments from around the world.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

133. By the age 11, most pupils achieve standards above national expectations for their age. A significant number achieve good standards in dance, games, swimming and athletics. There has been an improvement in standards since the last inspection when standards were judged to be satisfactory. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress.
134. All pupils dress appropriately. Assessment of pupils' performance is a strong feature of lessons seen. The school now provides for its pupils in Year 5 to participate in a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities at a residential centre. It provides an impressive range of out-of-school sporting activities. The curriculum is currently based on national guidelines, which the subject leader is currently reviewing. The school is well placed to bring about further improvement.



135. Throughout the school, pupils learn about the importance of warm-up when taking part in exercise. They understand very well the heart's function and the health-related benefits of exercise. Teachers teach the value of health and safety; for instance, how to bend the knees with feet together when landing after jumping. Pupils learn to play games and understand the need for rules. In school swimming lessons, older pupils develop their water competence via a series of exercises designed to improve their basic swimming strokes. By the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils achieve the national standard of swimming of 25 metres unaided. School teams participate in a large number of competitive sporting events against other schools, with much success.
136. There is equal access for all in all activities and the majority of pupils make good progress as they develop and improve their skills. Progress in dance lessons leads to refinement of movements, improvement in physical control and appreciation of space. In athletics, pupils benefit from a range of well thought out activities, each designed to offer them further challenge. The school provides a very impressive number of extra-curricular opportunities. Both boys and girls have the chance to make progress in developing appropriate skills in out-of-school clubs and team activities; for example in soccer, netball, cricket, hockey, rugby, tennis, cross-country and rounders. Pupils also perform in dance festivals. They receive much acclaim and win awards for the standards they achieve in dance and athletics.
137. Pupils' response in physical education lessons is usually good. The vast majority of pupils enjoy their lessons. They participate fully and high levels of enjoyment are evident in the activities seen. Pupils work hard to develop their skills and the majority work co-operatively during group and team activities. They are happy to demonstrate and take pride in their physical prowess. However, a small number of pupils do not understand the need to listen carefully to instructions. They then make little progress because they fail to make a concentrated effort.
138. The quality of teaching is good. In the most effective lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, plan their lessons effectively and have high expectations of their pupils. They give the pupils every opportunity to practise and to improve. Activities are well planned and ensure the progressive development of skills. They have a high level of challenge, which inspires pupils to work hard. Teachers are determined to achieve high standards and will settle for nothing less. They use pupil demonstrations very effectively to assess performance and to help pupils to improve. For instance, pupils in a Year 6 class demonstrated their interpretation of feelings through dance. Their teacher and the other pupils effectively pick out the strong points of the demonstrations to show them how to improve. In all lessons, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of safety. Teachers also consistently point out the benefits of regular exercise on the body. Very young pupils explain how exercise makes the heart beat faster as it pumps oxygen to the muscles.
139. The school has good facilities for physical education with a good-sized hall, large playing field and hard play area. It has its own swimming pool, which operates during the summer months. However, at present, limitations in the school's storage space means that much equipment and furniture is stored around the sides of the hall. This not only presents a hazard but also impedes the range of physical education activities that can be offered in the hall.