



**OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION**

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stanford-le-Hope, Essex

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 115173

Headteacher: Mr John Peoples

Reporting inspector: Mr Selwyn Ward
9271

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 June 2002

Inspection number: 195811

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Flitcroft
Date of previous inspection:	7-10 July 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subjects	Aspect responsibilities
Selwyn Ward 9271	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Sally Hall 19693	Lay inspector		How good are pupils' attitudes and personal development? How well does the school provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Robin Coulthard 11746	Team inspector	English Geography History Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well does the school ensure equality of opportunity?
Marianne Harris 23288	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art	How well does the school provide for pupils with special educational needs?
Robina Scahill 27654	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information & communication technology Physical education	How well does the school make use of information from assessment? How well does the school provide for pupils learning English as an additional language?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school for boys and girls aged 4 – 11 years. With 265 pupils, the school is of average size. Most of the children are taught in mixed age classes. Most of the pupils are white and of United Kingdom heritage. There are no children at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average. Of these, most have language difficulties. Pupils are of broadly average attainment when they join the school. Although they come from a range of social backgrounds, and the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, there is some evidence that not all eligible parents claim free school meals.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Joseph's is a very effective school with a strong Catholic Christian ethos. The school is very well led and managed and the staff and governors, in very close partnership with parents, share a commitment to encouraging children to do as well as they can academically as well as learning to become confident and well-rounded young people. Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils learn and achieve well, and attain above average standards in most subjects. St Joseph's provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average and children of all abilities achieve well.
- The teaching is good and pupils make good progress in learning.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development and, as a result, pupils get on very well with one another, behave very well and are very keen to learn.
- A very effective partnership with parents and the community enriches pupils' learning.
- Children are looked after very well.

What could be improved

- Good teaching could be more consistent across the school.
- There is not enough time allocated to teaching history and geography.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to learn about other cultures.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

St Joseph's was last inspected in July 1997. Standards have improved since the last inspection so that they are now above average in almost all subjects. The quality of teaching has improved. The issues identified in the last report have been tackled very well, so that areas that were previously identified as weaknesses, including standards, the organisation of the curriculum, and the use of information from assessment, are now all among the many strengths of the school. This represents very good improvement, overall, since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the results attained at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in national tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	C	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	D	C	C	
science	C	C	B	B	

Schools are categorised as similar according to the number of children known to be eligible for free school meals.

Results in the tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were above average in English and science. In mathematics, results were average. The proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level was particularly high in English and science. This represents an improving trend that appears to have been continued this year. At the time of the 2002 inspection, pupils in Year 6 had taken the 2002 tests in English, mathematics and science, but their results were not available to inspectors. Examination of Year 6 pupils' work, however, indicated above average standards, with boys and girls of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, achieving well. The school has set appropriately ambitious targets for further improved test results over the next two years.

Children are of broadly average ability when they join the *Foundation Stage* (Reception). They make good progress, so that most attain and many exceed the nationally expected early learning goals by the time they join Year 1. In the tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2001, results were above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing. Again, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level was high. There is no national test in science in Year 2, but on the basis of assessments completed by teachers, all of the pupils last year attained the nationally expected level. Work seen in the current Year 2, indicated standards that were average in mathematics and above average in reading, writing and science. This represents good achievement.

In design and technology, history and geography, standards are in line with national expectations. In all other subjects, in both the infants and juniors, standards are above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and develop an enthusiasm for learning. They are attentive in lessons and work with concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils appreciate and respond well to the very high expectations that their teachers have of good behaviour and this contributes to the progress that they make. There have been no exclusions during the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are excellent, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. Children help each other and work very well together, happily showing initiative whenever they are given the opportunity. Boys and girls of different abilities and from different backgrounds get on well together and are all included in the full range of school activities.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils' good attendance contributes to the high standards they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Lessons seen overall	good	good	good

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

Teaching of English and mathematics is good, and the *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies* have been implemented well and have made a good contribution to raising standards. Lessons are generally appropriately planned, so that pupils build on what they have learnt before. Teachers assess pupils' learning during lessons, and adapt their plans well to focus on what it is that pupils need to learn. Good use is made of questioning, with care taken to involve all of the pupils. Pupils have learnt and routinely make use of good note-taking skills. Mostly, teachers have very good knowledge of the subject they are teaching. Teachers know the pupils well, relate very well to them, and have very high expectations of behaviour. In most cases, work is well matched to pupils' abilities so that it offers good challenge. Teaching assistants are generally used very well to support pupils' learning. The most effective lessons, which included some lessons that were excellent, made particularly good use of time, so that pupils knew exactly what was expected of them and were set challenging tasks against strict time limits. As a result, pupils settled to work quickly, worked with concentration, and got a lot done. In lessons that were less effective, pace was slow and work was not matched closely enough to pupils' abilities, so that it was too easy for some and too difficult for others. Teachers usually ensure that pupils know what it is they are expected to learn, but on occasion pupils undertook activities in lessons without knowing why. Marking is too inconsistent. The very best marking offers pupils good guidance on what they need to do to do better, but weaker marking does little more than acknowledge that the work has been done. Although pupils have individual targets for learning, most marking makes insufficient reference to them. Homework is generally used well throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is generally well matched to pupils' needs, and is enriched through very good links with the parish and community and by the good range of extracurricular activities, particularly for pupils in the juniors. The <i>National Literacy</i> and <i>Numeracy Strategies</i> are well established and have contributed to raising standards. The amount of teaching time in the juniors is below the recommended minimum and the amount of time allocated to learning history and geography is low.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and, as a result, they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very well for pupils' personal development, with very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development that contributes strongly to the ethos of the school and helps create a community where children grow in confidence and value one another. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own culture, but not enough to learn about others in preparation for life in multicultural Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teaching and non-teaching staff are very caring and supportive. Children's welfare is looked after very well. There are very effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and good systems for monitoring and promoting attendance.
How well the school uses information from assessment	The information from assessment is used well to plan teaching and learning and to keep track of how well children are doing as they progress through the school.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has developed a close and very effective partnership with parents that contributes positively to the standards children achieve. Parents are given good information about how well their children are doing, and, in turn, many parents play a very active part in the school and in supporting their own children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and management team provide very clear educational direction, with a strong commitment to maintaining and further raising standards within a school with a very positive ethos where all are made to feel valued. Staff with responsibility for managing subjects and other activities within the school do an effective job.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very strongly committed to the school, are exceptionally well organised and do an excellent job. They have a very clear appreciation of the strengths of the school and of what is needed to maintain and further improve the quality of education that the school provides.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has successfully adopted the principles of "best value" to evaluate for itself what it does well and what can be improved. Teaching and learning is satisfactorily monitored, but the school has recognised the need to extend this in order to ensure consistently good teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Spending closely follows the priorities set out in the school's comprehensive rolling three-year development plan, which is very closely monitored by the governors. Funding is properly used, and the school has taken the opportunity to seek additional funding, including small sponsorship donations, for the benefit of pupils.
The school's buildings and facilities	The buildings are satisfactory, and the school has agreed plans for a programme of further improvement. Although pupils in the <i>Foundation Stage</i> do not have their own outside play area, staff cope very well with this deficiency so that children in their Reception year are still able to make good progress in their physical development. Resources for all subjects are at least satisfactory, with some subjects, including English and information and communication technology, being well resourced.
Staffing	The school has benefited from relatively few changes of teaching staff. Teaching assistants work effectively alongside class teachers. Office staff provide efficient support to the school and the school premises officer does an effective job in looking after the buildings.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress. • The teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The children are well behaved and the school helps them to become mature and responsible. • The school is approachable. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some inconsistent practice between different classes.

The number of questionnaires returned by parents was extremely high, with close to three quarters responding. Parents' views were exceptionally favourable and there were no significant concerns expressed either in the questionnaires or at the meeting held with parents before the inspection. A few parents suggested that there were some inconsistencies between classes. Inspectors' findings confirm this, with inconsistencies, for example, over marking. Inspectors also agree with the very long list of positive views expressed by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Throughout this report, references to *Key Stage 1* relate to the infant years (Years 1 and 2) when pupils are aged 5 to 7 years. The junior years (from Year 3 to Year 6) are referred to as *Key Stage 2*, when pupils are aged 7 to 11. Children in the Reception year, who are aged 5 and under, are considered to be in the *Foundation Stage*. Schools' test results are compared with the national average, as well as against "*similar schools*". Schools are grouped as similar according to the proportion of children attending who are known to be eligible for free school meals. In making a comparison with similar schools, the Registered Inspector has taken account of evidence that there are some families at the school who are eligible for free school meals but who do not claim them. In judging standards, inspectors analysed results attained in the national standard assessment tests (SATs) taken at the end of Years 2 and 6, both in 2001 and in previous years. Although at the time of the inspection, pupils in Years 2 and 6 had completed the 2002 tests, results were not available to inspectors. However, inspectors looked at and judged work currently being done in lessons and at work done throughout the past year. They listened to children read and discussed children's work with them as well as with their teachers. Whereas judgements on attainment relate to comparisons with nationally expected standards, *achievement* relates to the progress pupils make and compares how well children do as against their prior attainment. English, mathematics and science are referred to as *core subjects*, and a degree of priority was given in the inspection to looking at these subjects. Other curriculum subjects are sometimes referred to as *non-core or foundation subjects*.
2. Children are of broadly average ability when they join the *Foundation Stage* (Reception). They make good progress and achieve well during their first year in school, so that most attain and many exceed all of the nationally expected early learning goals by the time they join Year 1. In the tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2001, results were above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level was high. Results have fluctuated a little from year to year, as might be expected in a school of this size, but test results over the last five years have always been at least in line with the national average and often above or well above average. There is no national test in science in Year 2, but, on the basis of assessments completed by teachers, all of the pupils last year attained the nationally expected level. Work seen in the current Year 2, indicated standards that were average in mathematics and above average in reading, writing and science. This represents good achievement, with girls and boys of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, making good progress throughout the infants.
3. Results in the tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were above average in English and science. In mathematics, results were average. The proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level was particularly high in English and science. This represents an improving trend that appears to have been continued this year. Examination of Year 6 pupils' work indicated above average standards in all three core subjects, with boys and girls of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, achieving well. The school has set appropriately ambitious targets for further improved test results over the next two years.
4. Ofsted inspectors did not look at standards in religious education as this was inspected separately. In design and technology, history and geography, standards are in line with national expectations in both key stages. In art and design, information and communication technology, physical education and those aspects of music seen during the inspection, standards were above average in both key stages. This represents good achievement overall.
5. Only in mathematics in the infants are standards below those reported in the last inspection, and these are still in line with national expectations and represent satisfactory achievement. Where the standards seen in the last inspection were above average, these high standards have generally been maintained. In addition, standards are now higher in *Key Stage 1* information and communication technology, art and physical education. In *Key Stage 2*, standards are higher than the time of the last inspection in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, art and music. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection.

6. Almost three quarters of the parents returned their questionnaires, which is an exceptionally high rate of response. Of these, 97 per cent expressed the view that their children made good progress at school. Inspectors' judgements confirm this positive view.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils have a very positive attitude to school. Almost all parents say that their children enjoy coming to school and they describe the children as enthusiastic learners. Because of the school's ethos of mutual respect, the pupils nearly always want to do their best for their teachers. They come into lessons ready to learn and settle quickly to their work. The teachers develop the pupils' sense of self-esteem and self worth and this means that the pupils are confident when contributing to discussions, and have no fear of ridicule. Pupils work hard and rise to the challenging tasks they are set and the brisk pace of lessons. Just occasionally, when the pupils have been sitting for a long time, or the pace of the lesson is too slow, some of the pupils lose concentration and fidget. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the activities within each class. They work well individually and in groups, and actively participate in all lessons.
8. At the time of the last inspection behaviour was good. It has now improved and is consistently very good. St. Joseph's strong Catholic Christian ethos and feeling of community provides a happy and harmonious environment to which pupils respond and contribute. The pupils know that the adults who work in school expect good behaviour and the pupils nearly always behave very well in lessons. Younger pupils quickly learn that they must put up their hand to speak and not shout out. The pupils behave sensibly at lunchtime and play well together in the playground. The pupils are trustworthy and show respect for the environment. They report that incidents of anti-social behaviour are rare. There have been no exclusions over the past year. Parents have a similarly positive view of behaviour. 98 per cent of parents consider behaviour to be good.
9. Children's personal development is very good and the pupils become mature and well-rounded young people. Because of the school's success in supporting and respecting all members of the school, relationships are excellent and this is a conspicuous strength of the school. The pupils work well together in class and they value each other's academic and personal qualities. A Year 1 pupil was heard to say *"That's a lovely painting. In fact I think it's better than mine!"*. Pupils wrote moving nominations for a recent Good Citizen Award, including *"She is always willing to help at all times"*. They show great sensitivity and concern for others. In the week before the inspection a pupil suffered a personal tragedy and the staff asked her classmates not to talk to her about it when she visited the class. However the next day many of them felt that they had not given her enough support. Through careful use of *circle time* (whole-class discussion), the class teacher enabled the pupils to express their feelings and discuss practical ways in which they could show their care and concern for the family.
10. The pupils have maintained the good attendance found at the time of the last inspection. The attendance rate of 94.9 per cent for 2000/01 is above the national average and the unauthorised absence rate of 0.1 per cent is much lower than that found in similar schools. The vast majority of parents bring their children to school on time and the school day starts promptly. Pupils' good attendance and punctuality have a positive impact on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. Part of the focus of the inspection was on literacy and numeracy, so some priority was given to observing the teaching of English and mathematics. Inspectors managed to see all classes being taught both of these subjects. A good sample of lessons was also seen in the other core subject of science, as well as in physical education, where it would be difficult to judge how well children were doing by looking at past work. In most cases, inspectors were able to observe full lessons and, in judging teaching, inspectors sought evidence that pupils were learning and making progress.
12. In all, inspectors saw 59 full or part lessons. Teaching was good, overall, in all three key stages (Reception, infants and juniors). 93 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better. Two thirds of the lessons seen were good or better, with around one lesson in six judged to be very good or excellent. This indicates better teaching than was seen in the last inspection, with a much higher proportion of

good and very good teaching. Teaching of English and mathematics is good. The *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* have been implemented well and have made a good contribution to raising standards.

13. Lessons are generally appropriately planned, so that pupils build on what they have learnt before. Teachers assess pupils' learning during lessons, and adapt their plans well to focus on what it is that pupils need to learn next. For example in a mathematics lesson in *Key Stage 1*, a teacher, having set the most able pupils some very challenging work involving negative numbers, saw that the children were struggling to use the numbers accurately and to understand the teacher's explanation. Rather than persisting with the task, the teacher acknowledged that it was too difficult for the pupils and set them an appropriate alternative exercise.
14. Teachers make good use of questioning. They ask mostly open-ended questions and encourage pupils to explain their answers. Teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils, not just the most confident, are involved in answering. A notable feature of pupils' learning is their development and application of note-taking skills. This was seen in classes throughout the juniors, and has become a natural routine for pupils, so that often children were seen appropriately taking notes recording the main points of group discussions without any prompting from the teacher. Mostly, teachers have very good knowledge of the subject they are teaching, although this is not always the case. In a few of the lessons seen, teachers used terms with a degree of inaccuracy: for example, when describing two- and three-dimensional shapes in mathematics, and in the use of connectives in English.
15. Teachers know the pupils well, relate very well to them, and have very high expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils are keen to please their teachers and so work and learn with enthusiasm. Homework is generally used well throughout the school, and pupils generally complete their homework with similar enthusiasm. In a *Key Stage 2* science lesson seen during the inspection, so many pupils had responded to the homework set and brought in such a wide variety of seeds for study that the teacher had, rightly, to modify her plan for the lesson to ensure that all the pupils' contributions were properly valued.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. The teaching assistants are very knowledgeable and support the pupils well. When pupils are withdrawn for specific support, the teacher makes good use of assessment information to ensure that the work planned meets the particular needs of individual pupils. The progress of all pupils with special educational needs is tracked well, ensuring that they all make good learning gains. In class, work is well-planned, building on what children have learnt before. This helps the children develop their basic skills well and ensures that all pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
17. In most cases, work set in lessons is well matched to pupils' different abilities so that it offers a good level of challenge to all. The most effective lessons, which included some lessons that were excellent, made particularly good use of time. A high standard of planning meant that pupils knew exactly what was expected of them and challenging tasks were set against strict time limits. As a result, pupils settled to work quickly, worked with concentration, and got a lot done. For example, in an excellent history lesson for older juniors, pupils learnt about the use of historical sources as well as exploring issues of morality and human rights. The lesson included literary analysis and very good opportunities for pupils to further develop their individual speaking and listening skills.
18. In lessons that were less effective, pace was slow and work was not matched closely enough to pupils' abilities, so that it was too easy for some and too difficult for others. In many lessons, the learning objectives are explained to pupils at the start, but teachers do not all routinely ensure that pupils know what it is they are expected to learn, so that on occasion pupils undertook activities in lessons rather mechanically without knowing why they were doing them. When this occurred, pupils generally made less progress in learning than in other lessons.
19. Marking is too inconsistent. The best marking offers pupils good guidance on what they need to do to do better, but weaker marking does little more than offer a tick of acknowledgement that the work has been done. Although pupils have individual targets for learning, these are rarely referred to in teachers' marking.
20. A very high proportion of parents expressed extremely positive views about the quality of teaching in the school. In their questionnaire responses, 96 per cent described teaching as good. All of the parents who returned the questionnaire indicated that they felt the school had high expectations of pupils to work hard and achieve their best. Inspectors agree with these very positive views.

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

21. The curriculum includes all of the required subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education. Teaching time in the juniors is around an hour a week below the recommended minimum. Nevertheless, generally appropriate allocations of time are made for each subject, although the time for history and geography is lower than usually found. The curriculum is of good quality, supplemented by worthwhile additional opportunities for learning. In Year 6, pupils have a short taster course in French. The curriculum meets the requirements for the early learning goals for the *Foundation Stage*. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is well balanced and meets the needs of the individual pupils.
22. Deficiencies noted in provision for geography, history, music, design and technology and some aspects of English at the time of the last inspection have been remedied, since which time the curriculum has undergone good improvement. Planning at that time was inconsistent between classes. Planning is now good, and teachers ensure that they provide appropriate learning opportunities for all pupils. Most classes contain pupils from two year groups. A two-year curriculum cycle ensures that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat work. It is a mark of the success of the school's planning for mixed age classes that in the very high number of questionnaires returned by parents, unusually few concerns were raised about the organisation of teaching groups. Careful planning ensures that pupils are suitably challenged for both their age and capabilities. Setting by ability for mathematics in the juniors allows pupils' needs to be met effectively. The school has adopted national guidelines for all subjects, and all subjects have up-to-date policies. Teachers plan together each week to adapt longer-term planning to current needs. Planning helps to ensure the methodical development of pupils' skills and understanding and enables appropriate initiatives to be arranged which link subjects together, for example in making use of information and communication technology for research.
23. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. The *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies* are well established. Writing and oral skills are developed well in English and most subjects. Number skills are developed in mathematics and in other subjects, such as geography, where pupils use bar charts and graphs for presenting data. Information and communication technology skills are developed well in specialist lessons in the computer suite and in the increasing opportunities that are planned in most subjects.
24. There is good provision for pupils personal, health and social education, which includes aspects of citizenship. Class teachers make good use of *circle time* where pupils have an opportunity to discuss their feelings, thoughts and ideas, and sex education and drugs awareness are appropriately taught.
25. The school provides a good range of extracurricular activities for pupils. These mostly after-school clubs are very well attended, despite the fact that many pupils travel to and from school in contract buses. Activities include the Rosary Club and a very good range of musical and sporting activities. The good range of clubs includes a very popular dance club, a puzzle club, an art club and a study club. The curriculum is also enhanced by very good links with the church and the wider community. Sport benefits from links with a local rugby club and Essex County Cricket Club, who provide coaching. Links with an environmental centre and a nature reserve contribute to the resources for geography and science. Pupils pay regular visits to museums, churches and other places in support of the curriculum. Visitors, such as an artist in residence and an author, regularly contribute to different subjects. The development of the curriculum is helped by regular contact with a local beacon school. Business sponsorship has enabled the school to take part in a Good Citizenship project. The school is also involved with local arts projects and has productive links with local arts groups and dramatic and musical societies. Links with other schools and local playgroups are satisfactory, providing a smooth transition from playgroup and transfer to secondary schools.
26. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and this has a very positive effect on many aspects of school life. The school has developed a strong mission statement, emphasising its Catholic Christian environment and the importance of respecting the individual. It is evident that all members of the school community, including staff, pupils, parents and governors share the same vision and beliefs as they work together to create a strong and supportive

learning environment. In their questionnaire responses, 97 per cent of parents indicated that the school is successful in helping their children to become mature and responsible.

27. The school has maintained the very good provision for pupils' spiritual development found at the time of the last inspection. This is provided through shared experiences where the school encourages pupils to reflect upon Christian values and the meaning of their life and work. Throughout the school day, there are very good opportunities for worship and prayer, for example in class assemblies, Mass, and whole-school acts of worship. There are regular times of prayer and the pupils are encouraged to add their own prayers of concern and thanks in these reflective moments. Displays, for example on the theme of Pentecost, make important contributions to pupils' spiritual development. In lessons, the teachers have a good understanding of making the most of opportunities to explore spiritual development throughout the curriculum. For example, in a science lesson in the juniors, the pupils were awed and amazed by the height and structure of a flowering onion plant, which went beyond their everyday experience of onions on supermarket shelves.
28. At the time of the last inspection the school's provision for moral development was very good. Again, this high standard has been maintained. Teachers and support staff respect the individuality and achievements of their pupils, and constantly promote good behaviour. Members of staff set very good examples by showing consideration for pupils and other members of the school community. Honesty and fair play are expected from everyone. For example, in a Year 2 physical education lesson, the teacher asked pupils to sit down if they missed a catch. The pupils naturally wanted to do their best, but no-one cheated. In lessons, issues such as racial prejudice and recycling of waste are explored, developing pupils' appreciation of moral values. The school encourages children to think of others. Pupils entertain housebound adults and enjoy raising funds for a good range of local and international charities.
29. St. Joseph's continues to provide very good opportunities for pupils' social development. The staff have very open relationships with the pupils, admitting their own apprehensions and mistakes, and often using humour to good effect when teaching. In the most recent edition of the school magazine, the then acting headteacher wrote a very moving and honest account of his interview for the headship and nervousness about the upcoming inspection. The school ethos encourages children to "*try your best*", and the atmosphere of mutual respect ensures that there is no fear of failure amongst the pupils. Several pupils were recently nominated by adults and by other children for the Good Citizenship Award, and this encouraged pupils to think carefully and sensitively about the particular qualities of their classmates. In many lessons, there are good opportunities for children to work together in paired and group work. Pupils' social awareness is further developed through residential visits and the good range of extracurricular activities. There are good opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility. For example, some take charge of the school office at lunchtimes and others help the younger pupils.
30. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory, but it is not as good as it was described in the last inspection report. The pupils' knowledge of their own culture is developed well throughout the curriculum, for example in art, history and music. In literature, the pupils' good knowledge of Shakespeare's style of writing enabled them to compose their own story in a similar manner. Pupils are given some opportunities to benefit from insights into the different cultures of others. For example, pupils have studied Japanese painting and learnt about Turkish dancing. The school provides too few opportunities, however, for pupils to learn about Britain as a multi-cultural society. This is particularly significant because almost all of the pupils are white and from a United Kingdom heritage.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school has very good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. The Catholic Christian ethos of mutual respect permeates all aspects of school life, and is particularly evident in the way the all members of the school community, including staff, pupils, parents and governors, show high levels of care and concern for each other. The pupils said that not only are the teachers "*always there for us*", but they "*notice when we are upset*". Other adults, including support staff, lunchtime supervisors and office staff, make significant contributions in caring for pupils. The school pays good attention to health and safety issues. The health and safety governors, one of whom is the premises officer, make regular and very thorough checks of the buildings and site for potential hazards. Any concerns then form the basis of an action plan, which the governors' premises sub-committee regularly

reviews. Through the “*Crucial Crew*” course, Year 6 pupils are given valuable guidance about their personal safety.

32. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils’ personal development are very good. The teachers keep track of pupils’ personal and social development and make notes each term about their progress. Parents appreciate the helpful comments about their children’s personal development, which the teachers write in annual reports.
33. The school makes appropriate arrangements for child protection. The headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection and carries out his duties effectively. Adults in the school have a good understanding of the school procedures, but the school’s policy on child protection does not reflect the current good practice. The arrangements for first aid are good. One member of staff is qualified in first aid and many others have received basic training. Pupils who are ill or injured receive good care and attention in an appropriately-equipped medical area. Full records are kept of accidents and parents are kept well informed.
34. The school’s procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. This is not a highly regimented community, but one where the school’s ethos of treating everyone with courtesy and consideration touches all aspects of school life. The staff have very high expectations of behaviour and are very good role models. Staff reward pupils’ good behaviour; and the school’s system of stickers and house points is effective. Innovative schemes, such as “*Top Table*” in the dining hall, reward pupils whose behaviour at lunchtime has improved, and the pupils are delighted to receive their invitations to dine there. Sanctions are rarely needed, other than dealing with problems through discussion. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Bullying is discussed in *circle time* and assemblies. Pupils are confident that rare incidents of anti-social behaviour are dealt with effectively.
35. There are good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Registers are marked correctly and office staff rigorously follow up any unexplained absences. The school works with the educational welfare officer on the rare occasions when attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern.
36. The school has improved assessment procedures since the last inspection. It now provides a regular cycle of assessments. For example, there are annual reading and spelling tests in addition to optional standard assessment tests. Children are tested when they enter the school in the Reception class and each year thereafter. Each pupil has an individual record file that gives a clear picture of their personal development and achievement in each subject. Their portfolios of samples of work are not annotated or levelled against National Curriculum expectations but celebrate pupils’ achievements and give an indication of the progress each child makes as they move through the school. The assessment co-ordinator keeps a careful record of the levels that pupils attain and tracks their progress effectively. Class and group targets are set based on these records. The information is also helpful in identifying those pupils who would benefit from extra support.
37. Data in English, mathematics and science is now analysed to look for trends and areas needing improvement. As a result of this analysis, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are set in ability groups for mathematics. The school has introduced a computerised system which identifies the needs of individual pupils and any areas of concern. For example, boys’ writing and the number of pupils attaining Level 5 in mathematics were two areas identified. These have been a particular focus this year and, as a result, the school has been successful in raising standards. The other subjects in the curriculum are assessed each year and progress is levelled against National Curriculum levels. Although teachers assess the progress pupils make in lessons and, in some cases, adjust their planning accordingly, marking of pupils work is inconsistent. Although work is marked, much marking gives pupils insufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The parents' and carers' views of the school are exceptionally positive. All the parents have made a positive decision to send their children to St Joseph’s, even though some live a considerable distance from the school. They recognise the school’s many strengths, and particularly value its Catholic Christian ethos through which every member of the school community is respected and supported. Close to three quarters of the parents returned the Ofsted questionnaires. This is an extremely high

response rate. There were no significant concerns about any aspect of school life. A good number of parents attended the parents meeting and they too were very positive in their views, with just a few concerns expressed about inconsistency between classes.

39. The school has very good links with its parents and carers. Parents feel that the teachers are very approachable and that staff will contact them if there are concerns. The chair of governors meets all new parents, and all parents have signed the home-school agreement. The school invites parents to class Masses, and events, such as a mathematics day, are well attended by families. The school values parents' suggestions, but has not surveyed the parents about improvements to school life.
40. The information that the school provides to parents is very good. New parents are well informed through meetings and visits. The prospectus is attractive and informative. Both the prospectus and governors' annual report contain all the required information. Excellent weekly newsletters inform parents of future events and celebrate the school's successes. The half-termly *Links* magazine has very readable, in-depth articles from staff and pupils, and gives parents and members of the parish good insights into school life. The school does not send information to parents about the topics their children will be studying and this limits the parents' involvement with their children's learning. The pupils' annual reports are very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when reports were described as too generalised. Reports now give parents very good information about how their children are getting on and how parents can help them improve their work. Termly consultations with teachers give parents good opportunities to discuss their children's progress.
41. The parents' involvement with the work of the school is very good. The parents are very supportive of the school and offer practical assistance which has a significant impact on many aspects of the school's work. The parent governors are very active supporters of the school and help to shape its future. The very strong parent teacher association regularly raises considerable funds for the school and working parties help maintain and improve the grounds.
42. The parents' contribution to their children's learning is very good. The school greatly values the help offered by many parents and members of the parish. They provide good support in the classrooms and help with school visits. The parents are keen to support their children and attendance at parent consultations is good. They help their children with work at home and listen to their children read.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. St Joseph's is very well led and managed. Parents clearly value the leadership and management of the school, with 97 per cent expressing positive views in their questionnaire responses. The headteacher, who has been appointed permanently to the position from September 2002, having previously been the deputy head and acting headteacher for the whole of the past academic year, has worked closely with staff, governors and parents to develop a very clear educational direction for the school. This reflects very well the school's aims and its very strong Catholic Christian ethos, so that the entire school community fully share in the commitment to encourage children to do as well as they can academically as well as learning to become confident and well-rounded young people. This ethos is also reflected in the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as the excellent relationships between pupils in the school. Staff with management responsibilities for subjects do an effective job, and this has contributed to the school's success in improving standards of attainment and ensuring good achievement throughout the school. The provision for special educational needs is well organised in the school. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues well and ensures that all statutory requirements are met.
44. Governors are very strongly committed to the school. Many, including the chairman, are frequent visitors to the school and are well known to staff, parents and the children. Governors are exceptionally well organised and do an excellent job. They very closely monitor progress in implementing the school development plan, with detailed analysis at each of their meetings of what has been achieved and what still remains to be tackled. They have a very clear appreciation of the strengths of the school and of what is needed to maintain and further improve the quality of education that the school provides. At meetings, they are not solely dependent on the headteacher and staff for information about the school and for initiating policies. Though uncommon elsewhere, it is common practice within the St Joseph's governing body for governors to write and submit their own reports. For example, at a recent governing body meeting, the chairman of the finance sub-committee submitted a report on financial strategy and

the governor with responsibility for special education needs produced her own report on the Government's new special needs Code of Practice. Governors have evaluated well how to make most effective use of their own time. Those visiting classes have always reported on their visit to the full governing body. Governors self-critically decided that these reports were becoming too bland and so introduced the notion of focussed visits, with governors looking for specific aspects of the school, such as the use made of displays and staff input into the school development plan. Recognising that some governors have been involved with the school for many years while others are only new to their role, the governing body has developed a succession plan, building on training and induction, with a view to ensuring a smooth handover of responsibility when longer serving governors ultimately stand down.

45. The principles of "best value" are well established within the school, so that St Joseph's compares how well it is doing in relation to other schools, and involves and consults with parents, although it has not formally surveyed their views. Practices within the school are regularly assessed and challenged, so that the headteacher, staff and governors do not merely look for value for money through comparing competitive quotations for purchases, but also check the effectiveness of what they are doing. For example, the school has evaluated the effectiveness of setting pupils by ability, not merely in terms of cost but also in relation to its effect on standards. Performance management arrangements are in place and have been appropriately linked to in-service training for staff. For example, having identified some weaknesses in the use made by teachers of information and communications technology, additional training was introduced to increase teachers' confidence in using computers with the aim of extending opportunities for children to use information and communication technology in a broader range of subjects. There are good arrangements for the induction of new staff.
46. Arrangements for monitoring teaching are satisfactory. Lessons are observed and teachers given feedback on strengths and weaknesses of their teaching. The school's own self-evaluation has, however, identified the need for more rigour in this monitoring to better identify inconsistent practice between classes, for example over marking, and to more widely spread the examples of good and very good practice in the school.
47. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning, and specific grants received by the school are used well. For example, the money received for special educational needs is well spent to ensure that the pupils are effectively supported and make good progress. Similarly, small donations secured from local businesses have been put to good use, for example in supporting a Diocesan citizenship initiative. The school has also been successful in securing specific grants and bursaries for imaginative schemes to enhance pupils' education, such as a school opera project. Spending closely follows the priorities that are set out clearly in the school's comprehensive rolling three-year development plan. The school office is run efficiently, and makes good use of technology. This is in the process of being further extended, for example to streamline report writing, and further improve assessment by making laptop computers available to more staff. The recommendations of the most recent local authority audit have been implemented.
48. St Joseph's has benefited from a relatively stable teaching staff, in that it has not suffered the recruitment and retention problems that have bedevilled many other schools in London and the Home Counties. Although examples were seen where there were some gaps in teachers' subject knowledge, the staffing is generally well matched to the demands of the curriculum. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning as they work effectively alongside class teachers.
49. Resources for learning are good, overall. All subjects are at least satisfactorily resourced, with some subjects, including English and information and communication technology, being well resourced. The buildings and accommodation are satisfactory. The number of classrooms is adequate and there is access to suitable playing fields for physical education. The school premises officer does an effective job in looking after the buildings. Pupils in the *Foundation Stage* do not currently have their own outdoor play area, but staff cope with this deficiency very well so that it does not adversely affect standards and the children make good progress in their physical development. Governors have identified a number of shortcomings in the present layout of the buildings and the way in which they are used, and have developed ambitious yet imminent plans for further improvement of the school buildings and site.
50. Since it was last inspected, standards at St Joseph's have improved, as has the quality of teaching. The issues identified in the last report have been tackled very well, so that areas that were previously identified as weaknesses, including standards, the organisation of the curriculum, and the use of

information from assessment, are now all among the many strengths of the school. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. With the close and effective partnership that has been forged between staff, governors, parents and pupils, the school has a shared commitment to and very good capacity for further improvement. The school is very effective, and, although its spending per pupil is high, it nevertheless represents good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. Inspectors have identified the following key issues for action. In order to further improve the standard of education provided for pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Ensure more consistent good teaching throughout the school by
 - (i) more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning
 - (ii) sharing of best practice within the school
 - (iii) further extending support and training for staff where weaknesses are identified in their subject knowledge
 - (iv) improving the quality of marking
 - (v) making sure that pupils are told what it is they are expected to learn
(*paras 13, 18, 19, 37, 38, 46, 48, 64, 69, 71, 76, 81, 90, 94*)

- (2) Review the timing and organisation of the school day to provide pupils with more opportunities to learn history and geography.
(*paras 21, 87, 90*)

- (3) Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about cultures other than their own.
(*para 30, 79*)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan. (*Paragraph references are in brackets*)

- A. Level portfolios of pupils' work against National Curriculum expectations (*para 36*)
- B. Ensure that the school's child protection policy is kept up-to-date and reflects the good practice within the school (*para 33*)
- C. Provide information to parents on the topics their children will be studying each term to better enable parents to support their children's learning (*para 40*)
- D. Consider formally surveying parents' views to ensure that these are fully reflected in school planning (*paras 39, 45*)
- E. Ensure that activities do not require children to spend too long sitting on the carpet (*paras 7, 52, 54*)
- F. Make fuller use of computers in classrooms (*paras 71, 94*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	30	15	4	0	0
Percentage	3	14	51	25	7	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 one 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)	265
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	75

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for 2001, which is the most recent year for which national comparative data is available.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	14	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	23
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	35	35	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (85)	95 (88)	100 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	23
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	37	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (83)	100 (93)	100 (98)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
	2001	16	19	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	16
	Girls	17	16	19
	Total	31	28	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (79)	80 (63)	100 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	16
	Girls	19	17	19
	Total	33	31	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (87)	89 (71)	100 (95)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	250
Any other minority ethnic group	7

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	29.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	155

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	581,097
Total expenditure	592,434
Expenditure per pupil	2,236
Balance brought forward from previous year	51,106
Balance carried forward to next year	39,769

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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

Number of questionnaires sent out	267
Number of questionnaires returned	189

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	37	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	38	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	35	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	44	13	1	1
The teaching is good.	62	34	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	41	12	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	25	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	39	7	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	74	23	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	34	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	39	14	2	3

(Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding)

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents expressed the view that there was some inconsistent practice between different classes.

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

52. Provision for children in the *Foundation Stage* is good. The children come into school with broadly average skills and knowledge and throughout their time in the Reception class make good progress. By the time they go into Year 1, the majority have reached all of the nationally expected early learning goals for children in the *Foundation Stage* and many have exceeded them. Teaching is good in all areas of learning. Most of the children have some pre-school experience and staff ensure that they settle into school quickly by providing opportunities for the children to visit the school prior to starting, either in September or January. The children bring with them their records from their previous pre-school groups and staff use these to plan activities that will interest the children. All staff, including the teaching assistants, are very knowledgeable about the needs of the children in the *Foundation Stage* and provide many worthwhile activities in all areas of learning. Planning is clear and manageable. Children that are in a mixed Year 1 and Reception class have access to appropriate activities and are not disadvantaged by having *Key Stage 1* lessons before they are ready. However, sometimes children are expected to sit for too long on the carpet and this leads to them becoming fidgety and distracted. The assessment procedures are very good. Staff make regular observations of the children to ensure that they are taking part in all of the activities and making suitable progress. Progress is carefully recorded and used to plan new learning. This results in the children making good overall progress. Staff form very good relationships with the children and their parents, many of whom help in the classes, especially hearing children read. Children with special educational needs are well supported in the *Foundation Stage* and they make good progress. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, where the lack of an outdoor play facility was judged to impede physical development. The staff have compensated well for this lack of a designated area, and the children now reach, and sometimes exceed, the standards expected in physical development.

Personal, social and emotional development

53. There is good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development and, through good teaching, the children make good progress in attaining the early learning goals. The children settle very quickly into the school's routines and they are very happy. They play together well and delight in the achievements of others. Staff set high expectations for behaviour and explain carefully to the children how to behave appropriately. Consequently, behaviour is very good. The children's personal development is encouraged effectively through well-planned activities, such as thinking about their own special place, so that the children are able to empathise with others. The staff provide a wide selection of activities and the children are able to make independent choices confidently. The children use their time well and are very keen to talk about what they are doing.

Communication, language and literacy

54. The provision for children's language development is good. All of the children are confident speakers and listeners, and are beginning to read and write well. When sitting in small groups, or as a class, the children are able to join in with discussions and listen appreciatively to their friends. They do, however, become fidgety when carpet sessions are too long. The children are beginning to write using the teacher's model of writing, and from the very start learn to write in a cursive script. They confidently write their names and read back what they have written. They are very confident when applying their knowledge of sounds to their writing, but there are few opportunities for them to write independently. All of the children know about books and how to use them. They read almost daily and enjoy the stories. There are many opportunities for the children to act out their own stories and the role-play areas provide good opportunities for the children to act out their experiences.

Mathematical development

55. The provision in this area of learning is good, with many opportunities for the children to learn to count confidently forwards to and backwards from 20 or more. Songs and number rhymes are used well to consolidate their learning. When exploring simple shapes, the children are able to identify two-dimensional shapes and are beginning to be able to describe them. There are many opportunities for the children to explore patterns, and many are able to create their own using printing and threading activities. The children are beginning to understand about adding up and taking away, and can use a wide range of mathematical vocabulary, such as *bigger* and *smaller than*.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

56. There is good provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of their growing world. The children learn how to use computers with appropriate programs, and they are very confident when using the mouse and the keyboard. The staff ensure that the children are able to use a variety of materials to build and make models, encouraging design skills appropriately. The children develop a sense of history by learning about old household items and have visited an education centre where they looked at the nature area and learnt about small animals in the garden. The strong Catholic Christian ethos in the school means that the children are encouraged to learn about their own religion, and to begin to learn a little about the beliefs of others.

Physical development

57. There has been great improvement in this area of learning since the last inspection. Although there is still no designated outdoor area, there is space for the children to use outside when the weather permits. The staff compensate well for the lack of outdoor space by using the hall for dance and movement. Small muscle control skills are encouraged well. The children can hold a pencil with control, and they all use scissors correctly and safely.

Creative development

58. The opportunities for children to develop their creative abilities are particularly good. The children mix their own colours for painting pictures. They make pictures from fabric and enjoy talking about them. There are many opportunities for children to play with large and small equipment in order to make up their own stories and act out their experiences, for example, in the role-play office in the Reception class. The children sing enthusiastically and are beginning to use musical instruments with enthusiasm.

ENGLISH

59. Test results in 2001 for pupils at the end of Year 2 were average in reading and writing. They were also average when compared with similar schools. Attainment in Year 2 during the inspection and in written work analysed was above average overall, as were standards in reading. Pupils' achievements are good overall and the school has made good progress in raising standards since the last inspection. For pupils at the end of Year 6, results in English were above average. The trend of improvement has been broadly similar to that reported nationally. In comparison with similar schools, results were well above average.
60. Standards in speaking and listening are above average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils listen attentively to the teacher and each other. They are very attentive on formal occasions such as assemblies. They listen carefully to instructions from the teacher. From an early stage, they explain their ideas well. Teachers' good questioning techniques encourage pupils to develop their ideas orally. Speaking is good in *circle time* and across the curriculum. In drama, Year 2 pupils eagerly discussed their imaginative ideas of what shapes they could see in the clouds and what they might find on a fantasy island. Pupils readily show interest in lessons. They ask questions as well as answering them

thoughtfully. In Year 4, when examining a war-time car headlamp, a boy asked whether white lines on roads could be seen from enemy aircraft. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of styles of English. In history, they understood the impact of the “*I have a dream*” speech of Martin Luther King, and several who read it aloud declaimed it with sensitivity and understanding. Pupils are unusually good conversationalists; during the inspection pupils regularly initiated conversations with inspectors to point out something interesting.

61. Pupils’ reading is above average. They achieve well and make good progress because they regularly read to adults in school and at home. Parents are very supportive of their children’s reading. Pupils enjoy reading fiction. They learn in the infants to use books to look up information and pupils at the top of the school are skilled at using reference books when carrying out research. By Year 2, pupils easily recognise many basic words. They confidently sound out words they do not know, and instinctively look for clues in illustrations. A very accomplished infant reader pointed out both the relevance and the quality of an illustration to the inspector to whom she read. Older pupils read fluently and confidently. They reflect punctuation and character when reading aloud. Pupils make good and often very good progress in their reading because reading is carefully organised. Gifted readers are encouraged to advance to appropriate levels of difficulty. Pupils are helped to develop their reading methodically as well as cultivating their own tastes in literature. Most pupils heard reading are members of local public libraries and use them for researching topics and for extending their reading of fiction. Pupils have definite tastes in literature and are familiar with terms such as *index* and *glossary*. Pupils are familiar with a good range of authors, which is an improvement on the situation at the last inspection. The school’s attractive library, which also houses the computer suite, is a good base for research and reading. The ablest pupils, when reading or downloading information during research, for instance in history and geography, are discriminating in their use of material, which shows they can analyse as they read. Reading is better throughout the school than at the time of the last inspection.
62. From their earliest time in the school, pupils develop and practise regularly a good style of joined writing. They learn the basic rules of grammar - the use of full stops and capital letters - and pupils of all levels of ability produce good amounts of written work. By Year 2, they plan their stories carefully, and write for a good range of purposes. These include retelling and writing stories, book reviews and *blurb*, character descriptions of themselves and poetry. More able pupils can use speech marks accurately. The interesting tasks they do encourage pupils to do well in their written English. In the juniors, pupils increase their skills and knowledge, for example by practising letter writing conventions and they understand how personal and formal letters are written differently. In the juniors, pupils write neatly and at a good speed, and produce a good volume of work. They learn such skills as writing information as bullet points. Creative writing develops well in the juniors. By Year 6, pupils understand the structure of a sonnet and they write their own, modelled on “*Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?*” They further develop their knowledge of Shakespeare by re-telling the story of *Twelfth Night*. Pupils are clearly enthusiastic about writing. Amongst the interesting tasks that have helped bring about an improvement in boys’ written work has been the devising of dialogue in the style of Shakespeare. This stimulated pupils to write with enthusiasm and great care, resulting in imaginative written dialogue in which the pupils had paid great attention to grammatical accuracy. Pupils have clearly enjoyed other tasks, such as creating science fiction and translating parts of *Mr Tom* from dialect into conventional English. The overall quality of work is enhanced by the careful planning of written work and regular redrafting. Pupils have some opportunities to use information and communication technology for redrafting and presentation.
63. Pupils are enthusiastic about English. They behave well in class, working together productively. They listen attentively to the teacher and each other. Older pupils are capable of lengthy periods of sustained, hard, individual work. Their very good attitudes mean that they listen well to each other and are keen to contribute orally to lessons. They evaluate each other’s work constructively.
64. English is taught well, and more consistently so than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers’ subject knowledge is generally good. Planning is thorough and caters well for all pupils, successfully meeting the needs of pupils in mixed age classes. The good range of resources enhances pupils’ learning. Teachers have clear and challenging lesson objectives which they make clear to pupils. Learning is efficient because teachers impose time limits on activities to ensure a good pace of working. Teachers provide a good level of individual help in class. They work closely with teaching assistants to provide effective help for pupils with special educational needs so that they make good progress. Marking is inconsistent in quality and in general it does not tell pupils how they may improve their work. In the juniors, pupils have specific targets in English, which is good practice, but teachers make

little reference to these targets in marking. Occasionally, teachers' knowledge is imprecise, for example, their understanding of which connectives can be used to join together sentences.

65. The planning for literacy is good, both in English and other subjects. Teachers carefully analyse pupils' attainment and use this as a basis for planning subsequent work. Resources are very well organised. The curriculum was recently supplemented by a visit from a successful children's author. Pupils prepared very well for this visit, devising questions to help them find out about being a writer. Teachers take full advantage of local opportunities to develop their skills further, including links with a beacon school, and they share the results of this training with colleagues. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the plans for developing co-ordination of the subject are good.

MATHEMATICS

66. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have dropped slightly from those at the time of the last inspection. In 2001, all pupils attained the nationally expected standard and results remained above the national average and above the average for similar schools. Overall, standards seen during the inspection show pupils to be in line with national expectations. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, with work well matched to pupils' abilities.
67. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated since the last inspection and dropped below the national average in the intervening years. In 2001, they were in line with both the national average and with those of similar schools. The progress of this group of pupils was below what is expected, as their results at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average. The school has identified the low numbers achieving the higher levels as the reason for this and has taken steps to resolve the problem. Over time, there has been no significant difference between the standards reached by girls and boys. Standards in *Key Stage 2* vary. Some younger pupils are not completing sufficient work at a high enough level. Older pupils achieve high standards because of the setting arrangements and the high expectations of their teachers. The standard of work seen in Year 6 was above average. Overall, pupils now achieve well, with a good number attaining higher levels at the end of Year 6.
68. Pupils have good basic mathematical skills and, as a result, are confident in their approach to all mathematical tasks. Although the attainment of pupils with special educational needs is below national expectations, they achieve well because they are well supported in lessons. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards broadly in line with national expectations. They make steady progress and their achievement over time is satisfactory. They are taught to explain their methods of working from the outset. This helps them to develop their mathematical thinking and to have a clear understanding of the concepts they learn. In Year 2, pupils have a secure knowledge of addition and subtraction. They compare two three-digit numbers, say which is greater or smaller and give a set of numbers which lie between them. They know their 2, 5, and 10 times tables. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 solve word problems involving money and show a good understanding of simple fractions. More able pupils work with older pupils, which gives them the opportunity to work at a higher level. Standards in Years 5 and 6 are above average. Pupils show good understanding of the work covered and use a variety of methods when solving problems. They can read graphs and use them to accurately interpret data. More able pupils respond well to challenge and solve multiplication problems using their good understanding of multiples, factors and prime numbers. Pupils achieve well in lessons because they concentrate and work hard. In Years 5 and 6, classes are taught in groups according to their ability and the less able pupils receive extra support. This not only gives them the help they need but also enables the other groups to do more challenging work. Some gifted and talented pupils in Year 6 are taught work at levels most commonly seen in secondary school.
69. Overall, the teaching observed was good, with three quarters of the lessons seen judged to be good or better. Teachers' planning takes into account pupils' different abilities and work is set for different groups. However, in some lessons pupils were told what they were going to do rather than what they were expected to learn by the end of the lesson. Pupils respond very well to working in groups or pairs and co-operate when working together. Teachers give clear explanations and emphasise mathematical language. However, in two lessons some terms were not used accurately. Pupils are expected to solve problems using their own strategies and explain their reasoning and to use the correct terms when talking about their work. This has been developed throughout the school and pupils have acquired a good understanding of number and number patterns.

70. In the best lessons, the pace and challenge are very good and teachers use different activities and time targets to ensure that the pupils stay focused and work quickly. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and, as a result, children are confident when asking or answering questions. The work of teaching assistants is well planned, and they are fully involved in supporting pupils who need their help. The *Numeracy Strategy* is well used and in most lessons the challenging mental starters provide a lively warm up to the main part of the lesson. There is good ongoing assessment during the lessons through teachers' observations and questioning. During the inspection, several teachers made good use of this assessment and adapted the lessons appropriately.
71. Marking is not consistent and although most work is marked, teachers' comments offer insufficient guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve their work. In some classes the presentation of pupils' work is unsatisfactory, as they are not encouraged to organise or take a pride in their work. In several lessons, individual whiteboards were used very effectively and ensured that all pupils were involved in recording their working as the lesson progressed. Pupils are given homework, which reinforces the work they have been doing in class. Numeracy is promoted well in other subjects, such as geography, science and design and technology. Computers are used effectively to support mathematical learning in information and communication technology lessons, although the computers in classrooms were not used in mathematics lessons during the inspection.
72. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The introduction of the *National Numeracy Strategy* has provided a good structure for both teaching and learning. The co-ordinators support colleagues through staff meetings and training days. The recent introduction of a computer system for recording and analysing pupils' results gives teachers useful information on pupils' achievements. Regular assessments are carried out and the information is used well to keep track of pupils' progress as they move through the school. This information is also used to group pupils according to their ability and progress, to identify those pupils who need extra support and those more able mathematicians who would benefit from more challenging work.

SCIENCE

73. In the 2001 national tests, pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were above those found nationally and above those of similar schools. There was little difference in the standards attained by boys and girls. This represents good achievement as pupils are of average ability when they start at school. In work seen during the inspection, standards were similar. All aspects of science are covered well and pupils are able to carry out many investigations to support their learning, use scientific language appropriately and record their findings systematically.
74. There are no national tests for pupils in Year 2 but teacher assessments show that in 2001, by the end of Year 2, pupils attained standards that were above those expected, both nationally and when compared to similar schools. Again, pupils cover all aspects of science well and use good scientific vocabulary. This represents good achievement for all pupils.
75. The teaching of science is good. Clear planning and an overall scheme of work mean that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils in mixed age classes are not disadvantaged as the staff ensure full coverage of all aspects of science and that pupils make good progress. Good planning and the use of assessment information to provide relevant work means that by Year 6 pupils have made good progress. Teachers use investigations well to enable pupils to become independent and think scientifically. Work is made interesting. A good example of this was seen in Year 5, when pupils carried out investigations into insulators and conductors. In order to make it understandable and relevant, the teacher, with the pupils, cooked *Baked Alaska* to demonstrate that ice cream could be put into a hot oven and still remain frozen. Teachers' knowledge of science is good and this results in pupils being able to explore the use of information and communication technology to support their learning. In Year 4, for example, pupils classify small animals using a database to record their findings. In Year 6, pupils have made good progress and are able to design and use their own investigations recording sheet using the computer. Teachers have high expectations of learning and behaviour and pupils respond accordingly. Lessons are well paced so the pupils get a lot done. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs, and, as a result, these pupils make good progress.
76. Work in books is generally neat and well presented. Teachers mark work systematically with encouraging remarks, but there is little indication of what the pupils should do next to improve. Teachers have commented in pupils' exercise books on the few examples of incomplete work, but

comments have not subsequently been followed up by the pupils or the teacher, and the work remains unfinished. In lessons, pupils are very interested in science. They work together well, especially when carrying out investigations, and make suggestions on how things could be improved. Behaviour is very good.

77. Science is well organised in the school. The two co-ordinators work well together and have produced a curriculum plan for the whole school. This means that knowledge and skills are systematically taught so that all pupils, including those in mixed age classes, have good access to science. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

78. Pupils attain standards in art that are above those normally seen. Throughout the infants and juniors, pupils make good progress and achieve well. There were few lessons seen during the inspection and so inspectors were unable to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, but analysis of work shows that art is systematically taught in the school with a wide range of experiences for the pupils.
79. The whole school has taken part in the *Little People Project* that involved all of the pupils making clay models inspired by looking at the work of artist Antony Gormley and firing them in the school kiln. Pupils learn to mix colours and to paint pictures, such as self-portraits, to display around the school. Pupils in the juniors learn about other artists, such as Rousseau, and begin to paint in his style. There are also some opportunities for pupils to look at multicultural art. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 design their own Indian patterns. However, not enough opportunities are taken to look at art from non-European cultures. There are effective links with other areas of the curriculum, such as design and technology. Pupils have made their own picture frames as well as designs to go in them. There are also plans to write an opera, which will involve preparing all the artwork needed for the sets.
80. Art is well organised and co-ordinated. The well-attended after-school art club has a significant impact on the standard of art in the school. All pupils in *Key Stage 2* are welcome and they learn many artistic techniques. For example, they learn about water colours and blending oil pastels. They also learn about Fauvism and the use of bright clashing colours. This results in many attractive pieces of art that are well displayed and appreciated by others. There has been good improvement since the last inspection as the high standards have been maintained

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

81. Few lessons were observed and so inspectors were unable to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, but inspectors had the opportunity to look at the work produced by children over the past year and to discuss pupils' work with them. Standards in design and technology have improved significantly since the last inspection. Standards are now in line with national expectations by the end of both the infants and juniors. This compares very favourably with the last inspection when standards were judged to be well below national expectations, and it represents satisfactory achievement for pupils in both key stages.
82. Year 2 pupils spoke with confidence about the pop-up cards they had made for Christmas cards. They understood how to make the necessary mechanisms. They showed a good awareness for hygiene when making "gingerbread men" and clearly understood that the gingerbread men would have tasted better with less ginger: an appropriate evaluation. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils in both key stages had few opportunities to make their own judgements. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the processes involved in design and technology. In their work designing and making slippers, pupils had carefully considered materials to be used and produced good, annotated sketches of their initial designs. They made prototypes from paper and amended their designs before making the final products. They amended their designs when they seemed to be too ambitious for the time available. For instance, they were generally unable to add their planned decorations to the slippers. In their evaluations, they found the stitching hard and identified that the slippers would have been more comfortable if a softer material had been used for the innersole.
83. In all year groups there is evidence that pupils are taught the importance of initial design, then modification, improvement and evaluation of their work. For example, pupils in Year 6 talked in detail about how they could improve structures to be used to make shelters. There are only a few instances

when written evaluations were lacking. In some cases, where pupils find writing difficult, teachers assist with the evaluation. This helps to ensure that pupils across the ability range are fully involved. Pupils talked of good opportunities provided for them to plan their work and could explain how they assemble and join a range of appropriate components and materials. Teachers encourage all pupils to try things out for themselves. In all year groups, teachers provide pupils with appropriate frameworks for recording their design and technology work. The subject is well led and managed, and there are good resources available to support pupils' work.

GEOGRAPHY

84. No geography lessons were seen in the infants. However, judging from pupils' written work, standards are in line with what is expected nationally by the end of Year 2. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study their local area. They carry out surveys of local shops and devise a map of their route to school. They have carried out a survey of the range of shops in their town and presented their findings as bar charts. They are familiar with the world map and have identified some of the principal countries.
85. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectation. In work in progress in Year 4, pupils were learning about moral aspects of geography, such as conservation and recycling. They collected the contents of school waste baskets and analysed them. Good development of mathematical skills resulted from their estimating the weight of bags of waste before weighing them. By Year 6, pupils have good map reading skills. They are familiar with scale and can work out distances on maps. They have completed a research topic on Devon, using books and information and communication technology as sources of information. They learn key geographical terms and use them accurately in writing and discussion. They make good use of evidence by thinking in advance what sort of things they need to find out.
86. Teaching is good. Teachers prepare lessons well. They have good subject knowledge. They lead discussions well and question pupils effectively to extend and check their knowledge. Pupils learn well, collaborating efficiently for group work. They listen attentively to the teacher and concentrate hard when working independently. Pupils enjoy lessons and have very positive attitudes. When a boy in Year 5 gave a talk on Derbyshire that he had researched thoroughly from a range of sources, classmates listened very attentively and spontaneously applauded at the end.
87. Geography is well led and managed. The scheme of work reflects national requirements, makes good use of the local area, and allows pupils to acquire an appropriate range of skills and knowledge, despite the low allocation of teaching time for the subject. Literacy skills are developed well through geography, which also provides good opportunities for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

HISTORY

88. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment in history is in line with national expectations. Pupils' attainment is better than at the time of the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to look at historical evidence and ask questions, for example about what the clothes worn in an illustration tell us about the social standing of the characters. Pupils learn to make notes, for instance after watching a video on seaside holidays in the past. They discussed photographs of Victorians on holiday and listed similarities and differences between holidays then and now. Making very good use of the techniques pupils had learnt in mathematics, the teacher ingeniously recorded their conclusions on the whiteboard as a Venn diagram. History provides good opportunities for developing pupils' speaking skills. Imagining life as an evacuee gave pupils in Years 3 and 4 good opportunities to write imaginatively in "letters home". By Year 6, pupils investigate topics very thoroughly. They had researched human rights, using computers, and were gaining a very good understanding of the work of Martin Luther King, carefully analysing photographic evidence and recordings of his speeches.
89. Teaching is good overall, and sometimes excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan carefully to challenge pupils suitably over the whole range of ability. Pupils learn well. They make very good use of interesting resources to gain as much information as possible from them. Teachers are aware both of the skills and knowledge that are to be developed and the very good opportunities history offers for developing pupils' literacy. Teachers lead discussions well and pupils respond enthusiastically. In the excellent lesson observed, the pace and depth of the lesson were excellent and

the pupils' learning was enhanced by the teacher's enthusiasm for the human rights topic. In an unsatisfactory lesson, the pupils were not focused enough on the lesson's objectives; some worked inefficiently, and some spent too much time drawing.

90. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection. Pupils achieve good standards in much of their work, but overall attainment is limited by the low allocation of teaching time for the subject. Co-ordination of history is good. However, the co-ordinator has insufficient time to monitor her colleagues' work. Plans for the further development of the subject are appropriate. The scheme of work is appropriately based on national guidelines. Resources are good and supplemented by carefully planned visits to places of historical interest.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

91. Since the previous inspection, there has been a considerable improvement in resources for information and communication technology and standards have risen accordingly. The new computer suite provides good opportunities for pupils to practise skills and to increase their knowledge and understanding of computer software and the possibilities created by the internet. Throughout the school, pupils' achievements are good and standards are above those expected for their ages.
92. Pupils in Year 1 build effectively on the good introduction to computers they receive in the Reception class. They use menus, indexes and key words to search for information as they follow straightforward lines of enquiry. This work is developed in Year 2 where pupils use a CD-Rom encyclopaedia. They use the index and return to the main menu to find information on different subjects. They use computers confidently and independently, with well-judged support enabling them to get on with their work quickly. In *Key Stage 2*, pupils' work shows that they continue to use a wide variety of programs and develop their skills effectively. Pupils in Year 6 operate computers confidently and use them to investigate other aspects of their work. They use word-processing, data-handling and control and research skills to enrich work in other subjects of the curriculum. This work is saved to their own file, which they access through the class file. The work in the classrooms shows how they have used data-handling to solve mathematical problems and display their results in various graphs and charts.
93. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers throughout the school have mostly good knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology and plan interesting and well-designed activities to promote good learning in each lesson. They use the computer suite confidently and well, and have an exceptionally good working relationship with teaching assistants, who are often able to teach individual pupils and groups to a very good standard. Teaching has benefited from effective training and co-ordination, and this leads to good learning. Through the very good use of the interactive whiteboard, pupils learn the skills they will need to apply during lessons. Teachers give very clear explanations and the well-prepared worksheets help to focus pupils' attention on the skills they need to practise as well as the subject they are studying. In the three lessons seen, classes were very well organised, with a good balance of demonstration, practical work and discussion. Work is carefully planned to meet the needs of all of the pupils in each class. Pupils are grouped sensitively so more able pupils work with less able. Children behave very well, sharing ideas and taking turns appropriately. Work in information and communication technology makes a very good contribution to the application of mathematical skills through investigations of the uses of different types of graphs in databases. It contributes well to literacy, through word-processing and the attractive presentation of written work.
94. The subject is well led and co-ordinated. A suitable action plan identifies strengths and areas for development in the subject. These include some teachers' lack of confidence and expertise as new equipment and software is introduced. Suitable training has been planned to overcome this. The computer suite is timetabled and used well by all classes. However, for most of the time, computers in classrooms are under-used. Planning has improved since the last inspection and the scheme of work put in place. Planning and assessment procedures have recently been reviewed. The quality of computers is good and, there are enough for pupils to work in pairs in the information and communication technology suite with additional computers in each classroom. The wide range of software ensures that all areas of the curriculum are covered and pupils benefit from exciting and stimulating lessons.

MUSIC

95. It was not possible to see enough music lessons to judge either the overall standards attained by pupils compared with what is expected nationally or the overall quality of teaching. Pupils achieved well in the lessons observed indicating that standards are likely to be above national expectations for the end of Years 2 and 6. One infant lesson and one junior lesson were observed. In the infants, Year 2 pupils understood the difference between rhythm and pulse and two groups clapped contrasting rhythms, based on the names of mini-beasts, while a third group maintained a steady underlying beat. In Year 6, pupils were composing with the use of computers. When devising in pairs a contrasting section to follow a given opening, they showed ingenuity and imagination in the sounds they chose to combine. They used the computers confidently.
96. The school maintains a very strong tradition for extracurricular music. A regular programme of concerts in the school, music festivals and events in the community provides pupils with very good opportunities for musical development. The specialist tuition available helps interested pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, to achieve appropriate standards. Singing at assemblies and in the infant class observed was above national expectation. Sixty pupils learn violin, guitar, keyboard and percussion from visiting instrumental teachers. An accomplished recorder group adds to the accompaniment of hymns in assemblies. The enthusiastic orchestra, which contains a substantial string section, rehearses weekly and performs regularly.
97. The school benefits from the services of a visiting specialist teacher of class music, who teaches classes in rotation, and provides opportunities for class teachers to participate to improve their own skills. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a scheme of work that covers all of the requirements of the National Curriculum. All deficiencies noted at that time have been remedied and planning indicates that the subject has undergone good improvement. The scheme of work contains good opportunities for using information and communication technology. The curriculum is enhanced by the good level of resources available for use in the classroom.
98. Music is co-ordinated well by the headteacher, who is a music specialist. Music makes a significant contribution to the school's worship. The wide range of music studied in the school makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The award of a bursary has enabled the school to embark on a project to compose an opera during the coming school year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

99. Standards throughout the school are above average, and all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress and achieving well. Boys and girls do equally well, and gifted and talented pupils have good encouragement to develop their skills, both in lessons and in after-school clubs and competitions. The range of work seen during the inspection was inevitably limited, but teachers' planning showed that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. The standard of work seen was above average, with some well above average standards in swimming. Pupils in Year 2 develop throwing skills using small balls. Most are very accurate with underarm throwing and are beginning to master overarm throws. More able pupils throw and catch on the move. The school makes very good use of specialists to teach the correct techniques and skills to pupils. Year 6 pupils listened and watched carefully as the visiting cricket coach demonstrated how to bowl. They concentrated well and with practice most made very good progress. All pupils leave the school with the National Curriculum swimming award as a minimum. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 were confident in the water, and even the weakest swimmers managed to swim five metres. The high standards seen in the juniors in the last inspection have been maintained, and standards in the infants are better than described in the last report. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.
100. Teaching is good. Teachers manage their pupils very well, and use time effectively to help them learn new skills. Lessons are energetically presented, making very good use of resources. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and remain focused throughout each lesson. A brisk and appropriate warm-up at the start of each lesson is followed by a main learning activity that is well planned to build on what pupils have already learnt. Pupils dress correctly for lessons, and teachers pay due attention to health and safety.
101. Physical education is well led and managed across the school. The co-ordinator is both keen and knowledgeable. Each element of the National Curriculum is focused on at different times of the year.

There is a good range of sports on offer, including netball, football, rugby and basketball. The strong emphasis on dance ranges from country dance to group compositions, and the school has established a Dance Festival. There are many opportunities for the pupils to enter local competitions, including in athletics and netball, where success has been achieved and is celebrated. Professional training courses are arranged for pupils and staff. Additional and exciting opportunities for outdoor activities are provided during the residential trip to Devon. The school's accommodation and learning resources support teaching and learning well. Although the school does not have its own playing field, it makes effective use of a neighbouring school's field.