

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ANNUNCIATION RC JUNIOR SCHOOL

Edgware

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101342

Headteacher: Ms M McManus

Reporting inspector: Mrs R S Rodger
10347

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th June 2003

Inspection number: 246117

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Meads Burnt Oak Edgware
Postcode:	HA8 9HG
Telephone number:	020 89060723
Fax number:	020 8906 0377
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Nnochiri
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10347	Mrs R S Rodger	Registered inspector	English History English as an additional language Educational inclusion, including race equality	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19650	Ms S Thomas	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30441	Mr M Pritchard	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Geography Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23412	Mr A Jeffs	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Limited
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Annunciation Catholic Junior School is located in the London Borough of Barnet. The area is mixed socially and economically, with many families having a long association with the school. A significant proportion of pupils attend the school from within the area. There are 229 pupils on roll, 116 boys and 113 girls. This is a slight increase in numbers since the previous inspection. A low proportion leave or join the school at times other than in Year 3. The cultural mix in the school is diverse: white British, black British, black Africans and Irish are the major groups. Other cultures represented include black Caribbean and Asian British pupils. Twenty-three pupils have English as an additional language, but there are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. An average proportion of pupils are entitled to a free school meal. Twenty-four per cent of pupils have special educational needs, including two pupils with a statement of special educational needs, which is broadly average. A high proportion of the pupils with special educational needs have moderate and specific learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Attainment on entry to the school in Year 3 is above average. The school has received an achievement award in the last two years in recognition of the very good progress it has made in the national tests.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and high attainers achieve very well. This is because the school meets able pupils' needs very effectively. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are a strength of the school. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Leadership and management by the headteacher and staff are also very good. Taking into account the above average standards on entry to the school, the good achievement, very good quality of teaching and average costs for educating each pupil, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading and mathematics are well above average.
- Standards in writing, speaking and listening, science and history are above average.
- The leadership of the headteacher and staff is very effective.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school.
- The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are very good.
- Partnership with parents is very successful and parents hold the school in high esteem.

What could be improved

- The provision for music.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997. There has been very good improvement since then. Arrangements for the appraisal of staff are securely in place, the needs of the more able pupils in the school are met very effectively and they achieve well above their contemporaries in similar schools. Curriculum planning is effective and the school development plan is a useful tool to identify the key priorities for the school. There has been very good improvement in the overall quality of teaching

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	A*	A*	A*
mathematics	C	A	A*	A*
science	C	A	A*	A*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table above shows that the school performed exceptionally well when compared to all schools and to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds in the 2002 national tests.¹ Standards achieved then were in line with those achieved by the top five per cent of pupils nationally. Current standards in lessons are well above average in reading and mathematics. The results of the invalidated 2003 national tests in English, mathematics and science are above average. Standards are also above average in speaking and listening, writing, science and history. In all other subjects, they are average, with the exception of music where they are below average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in lessons as a result of effective support by classroom assistants, but achievement is only satisfactory when they are withdrawn from lessons for small group work. Higher attaining pupils achieve especially well in lessons. The school exceeded its targets in the 2002 national tests and met its targets for 2003. The school has made very good progress in the past five years. This achievement has been recognised nationally by the school being awarded an achievement grant for the past two years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very interested and highly motivated. They concentrate and persevere with their work. Their very positive attitudes contribute significantly to their very good rate of progress. Pupils enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are courteous and polite at all times. Teachers rarely have to reprimand pupils in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good between pupils, and staff and pupils. Pupils are tolerant of each other, listen to others and show very good levels of respect. A school council has started this year. This has helped pupils take on more responsibility.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is above average and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are prompt and lessons begin on time.

Pupils are confident and supportive of each other. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively.

¹ The comparisons are based on schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for a free school meal.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is very good. There is some excellent teaching in Year 3 and, overall, very little satisfactory teaching, with the rest being good or very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in the school. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good overall and a strength of the school. A high priority has been given to improving the knowledge and understanding of teachers in English and mathematics in recent years which is having a good impact on their teaching. Teachers have high expectations, prepare their work well and use resources effectively to interest and motivate pupils. The teaching of basic skills is given a high priority. Teaching in all other subjects, apart from music, is good. The specialist music teacher has recently left the school and there is currently a vacancy. Very little teaching of art and design and design and technology was seen. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons. Higher attaining pupils are challenged and learn very effectively as a result of very good teaching. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace and pupils are expected to work hard, and they do. They work well independently when tasks are interesting, although opportunities to do this are not as frequent as they could be.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Strategies to teach literacy and numeracy skills are very good. Provision for out-of-school activities is satisfactory. Statutory requirements for the teaching of music are not met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils are very well supported in lessons, but some of the withdrawal activities are less challenging.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are currently no pupils in the early stages of learning English or in the later stages of learning English. All minority ethnic pupils achieve as well as all other pupils in school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A strong sense of calm is promoted in assemblies and pupils' spirituality is very well fostered. Moral and social development is strong. Values are well taught through personal, social and health education lessons. An awareness of other cultures is effectively promoted through literacy, art and design and geography. There has been one recorded racist incident in school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. Assessment arrangements have improved since the last inspection and are now good.

Partnership with parents is very strong and a strength of the school. Parents are well-informed and hold the school in very high regard.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school that reflects the Catholic ethos very effectively. She is very well supported by her deputy and staff. Teamwork is very strong and staff work very hard. The headteacher delegates very effectively. A very high priority is given to teaching and learning and the school places very high value on maintaining and raising standards. The climate for learning is very strong.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is undergoing a period of change: several governors have left and, as a result, one governor takes responsibility for several aspects of the school's work. The governors are aware that this is a temporary situation to be rectified at the start of the new school year.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Staff work very closely together and much monitoring is informal. Subject co-ordinators have a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Although some have little opportunity to check the quality of teaching, they analyse assessment data and use the information very effectively. The deputy headteacher checks that sufficient time is allocated to the non-core subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Day-to-day financial administration is efficient and does not burden teachers. The headteacher has a clear view of the allocation of funds to support school priorities. As a result, the school is well resourced. The school applies the principles of best value effectively.

The number and experience of teaching and non-teaching staff are very good. The school is spacious and all space is used efficiently. Two halls provide good accommodation for a range of activities and classrooms are spacious with attractive, informative displays of pupils' work. The school is well resourced, especially for English. Recent improvements to the playgrounds and parking area have enhanced the school environment considerably.

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 very much, make good progress and work hard. • The leadership and management and the good teaching. • Children get enough homework and parents are well-informed about their children's progress. • The school works closely with parents, and parents are happy they can approach the school when they need to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of out-of-school activities.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive points made by parents. The range of out-of-school activities is typical of most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school in Year 3, based on the results of the 2002 national tests in Year 2, is above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are well above average in reading and mathematics by the time pupils leave the school. Standards in speaking and listening, writing, science and history are above average. In all other subjects, apart from music, standards are average. Standards in music are below average because the subject is not taught frequently enough. The school gives a high priority to English and mathematics which is why results are better than other subjects. Pupils exceeded the statutory targets in English and mathematics in 2002. The 2003 targets are more challenging. Based on inspection, pupils are unlikely to meet the challenging targets set for 2003 because of the number of pupils in Year 6 with learning difficulties. The invalidated results of the 2003 national tests show a predicted fall in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science and, overall, there is a reduction in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4. This confirms the school's view on their predicted results. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. There are no differences between the achievements of pupils from different ethnic groups. Black British pupils achieve well. Attainment in the past five years has been in line with the national upward trend.
2. The results of the 2002 national tests show that pupils achieved in line with the top five per cent of pupils nationally in English, mathematics and science. This is a very good rate of achievement, based on the pupils' above average attainment on entry. A high proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science compared to all schools and similar schools.
3. Achievement in English, mathematics and science throughout the school is generally good with some examples of very good achievement in those classes where teaching and learning are very good or better. Achievement in history and physical education is good as a result of the good application of literacy skills in the former and the impact of a specialist physical education teacher in the latter. Achievement in all other subjects is satisfactory, except in music which is unsatisfactory. Music is taught irregularly throughout the school, as a result of the long-term absence of the music co-ordinator who has now left. Very good attitudes towards learning contribute very effectively to the achievement made by the pupils.
4. Standards have improved year-by-year since 2000. This progress has been recognised nationally by the school receiving an achievement award in the past two years in recognition of the very good progress made by the pupils in the national tests. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Current standards are well above average in reading and above average in speaking and listening and writing. Pupils are articulate and contribute well in whole-class discussions. They talk confidently about books they have read. In mathematics, the National Numeracy Strategy and the effectiveness of implementation of this have helped teachers improve their teaching and, consequently, pupils' learning, resulting in well above average standards. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall with many achieving in line with national expectations in some subjects. Pupils from minority ethnic cultures achieve well also.
5. Standards in history are above average as a result of the good application of literacy skills, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and from minority

ethnic cultures, achieve well. For example, pupils wrote diary accounts of the conditions in which Anne Frank lived during World War Two. Standards in all other subjects are in line with national expectations, except music. Achievement is generally satisfactory for all pupils including those with special educational needs, with English as an additional language and from minority ethnic cultures. Standards in music are satisfactory in singing, but unsatisfactory in all other aspects of the subject because the pupils are not taught the subject regularly. Although attainment in information and communication technology is satisfactory, pupils have made a good rate of achievement since the last inspection when it was barely satisfactory. Control and modelling take place.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are a strength of the school. Pupils are well motivated and positive about their work. They listen attentively in class and are keen to improve. Year 5 pupils worked well in information and communication technology. They were eager to learn and corrected their mistakes as soon as they were aware of them. In Year 6, pupils confidently worked at their mathematics and literacy lessons. All took part in the lessons and worked well in pairs or small groups, supporting each other well. They take pride in the presentation of their work. Books are neat and carefully set out. All the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire said their children enjoy school.
7. Behaviour is very good. Pupils are polite. They hold doors open for others and move around the school carefully. They are aware that assembly is a time of worship and arrive and leave quietly and respectfully. In the playground, pupils play together purposefully. There was no evidence of bullying. Pupils are well aware of how they are expected to behave and usually keep to the school rules. There have been no exclusions this year.
8. Relationships between staff and adults and between pupils are very good. Pupils work well together. Minority ethnic groups mix well. No evidence of racist behaviour was observed. The school is very inclusive. It has created a climate in which all pupils grow and flourish, have a high regard for others and are respected in turn. All forms of equality are effectively fostered.
9. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are given responsibilities as they become older. Year 6 are responsible for the organisation of a fun day held in the summer term. They decide on the activities and, where necessary, obtain sponsorship from local companies. A school council has recently been established. This encourages all pupils to be involved in the life of their school. Pupils are learning to take responsibility for their work. In history, for instance, older pupils are learning how to research their projects. Pupils raise money for various charities. Pupils respond well to opportunities to show initiative. They are responsible and conduct themselves well when on visits to historical sites.
10. Attendance is above average. However, a significant number of children take holidays during term time. Unauthorised absence is low and below the national average. Most pupils arrive on time in the mornings and lessons begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school with examples of excellent teaching in Year 3. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in the school and very little teaching that was only satisfactory. Teaching was very good or better in 33 per cent of lessons, good in 50 per cent and satisfactory in 17 per cent. At the time of the last

inspection, there was some unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching in English and mathematics is generally very good throughout the school as a result of the high priority given to training and providing high quality resources for these subjects. As a result, pupils achieve well.

12. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Class teachers work hard to ensure that tasks are suitably matched according to the pupils' needs. Support staff are effectively used in the class and, as a result, the pupils make good progress and learn well. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides satisfactory support to class teachers and assistants and monitors the progress made by pupils. However, the small support groups that take place outside lessons do not always effectively build on the good work in classrooms. For example, a small group of Year 4 pupils completed mundane handwriting exercises at a lower level than they were used to with their class teacher.
13. Literacy and numeracy skills are very well taught and there are frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their oracy skills in other subjects. For example, in physical education the technical vocabulary such as 'sequence', 'quads' and 'routine' was introduced and used by pupils as they evaluated their learning. In history, Year 3 pupils vividly described their views as they wrote about life in the Anglo-Saxon period, 'while we were carefully trying to dig up the remains we found the most astonishing artefact... it had a fabulous intricate pattern'. Numeracy skills are applied well in history also, as pupils consider the way the Vikings faced and knew where they faced if turned in different ways. Information and communication technology skills are applied in many lessons as well as in the information and communication technology suite. Use of information and communication technology in history is especially strong. Its use in English, science and design and technology is less secure.
14. Probing questions provide very good levels of challenge in many lessons, especially to the higher attaining pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils were asked, 'Why did the character write in the present tense?' to encourage them to reflect closely on the story they had read and to understand the inferences and deductions that could be made and to give carefully thought out answers. Teachers have high expectations and use a variety of effective teaching methods successfully; for example, whole-class discussions in Year 3. At all times, pupils' behaviour is very good and teachers use effective control strategies. Classroom assistants are used effectively and contribute well to the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and others in the groups they support in lessons. Instructions and demonstrations are used effectively to help pupils learn. Along with their natural zest for learning and enthusiasm, they make very good progress.
15. In a small number of lessons, pupils complete the same work irrespective of their ability and, at times, the pace of learning is too slow because explanations lack clarity. Homework is a strong feature of the pupils' work. It is completed regularly and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Marking is good. For example, Year 3 pupils waited with baited breath to get their books returned to read the teacher's comments. Exclamations of glee accompanied the relief expressed by one special educational needs pupil who had made no spelling errors in the previous three pieces of work.
16. Subject co-ordinators have worked well to ensure there is a consistency in planning. Medium-term and weekly plans show that the guidance provided for planning the teaching of the national strategies has been well adhered to. Objectives for learning are identified and work is generally planned at different levels of difficulty to reflect the wide ability range in each class. Informal assessment takes place in the short plenary session as well as through thorough, detailed marking of pupils' work that helps them to improve their work.

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

17. The quality and range of the curriculum for all pupils are good. The school has responded positively to the key issue in the previous inspection in relation to the curriculum. Good schemes of work are now in place for all subjects of the National Curriculum and effective planning ensures delivery of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. These improvements have contributed to raising standards. The provision for music is at present unsatisfactory because of the lack of a teacher to co-ordinate this area, resulting in a lack of breadth and balance in the delivery of music. The school is aware of this and has plans to address this shortfall in the immediate future. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school has policies that ensure that sex education and drugs education are developed effectively. A programme for personal and social education, 'All That I Am', has recently been introduced and is proving very successful in addressing this area of the curriculum. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The teaching of both literacy and numeracy skills is very good.
18. There is a satisfactory programme of out-of-school activities for all pupils. Clubs include art and design, information and communication technology, drama, sewing and physical education. A residential visit to Oslington Bay for pupils in Year 6 provides enrichment of the curriculum, especially in physical education and geography. The school also provides 'booster' classes for all Year 6 pupils, which take place twice weekly for 10 weeks.
19. The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are totally integrated into the life of the school. Procedures for special educational needs have been changed to comply with the new Code of Practice. However, individual education plans do not fully reflect the requirements of providing specific short-term targets linked to success criteria. The use of information and communication technology for both special educational needs management and recording of individual education plans is underdeveloped. All relevant staff are fully involved in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, who consequently make good progress through the curriculum, effectively assisted by learning support staff. There is a good parent support network for pupils with special educational needs.
20. The school benefits from positive links with the local community. Pupils join others from the infant school to celebrate mass on Annunciation Day and sing carols at Christmas to the elderly in local homes and patients at Edgware Hospital. Constructive relationships exist with the local secondary school. Pupils from Year 5 make visits to take part in activities and staff visit the school as part of the induction process for Year 6 pupils. Very good support is given under the 'Leadership in Sport' initiative where a specialist gymnastics teacher from St James visits the school over a four-week period giving demonstration gymnastics lessons to each class.
21. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. This has improved since the last inspection. It is now a strength of the school. Catholic values are demonstrated through every aspect of the life of the school. Other key values are enhanced and underpinned by the school's good programme of personal, social and health education lessons. Collective worship makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness. Pupils eagerly took part in the celebration of Mass led by the local priest. Class prayers at the beginning and end of each day are valuable opportunities for meditation and reflection. Children are

encouraged to develop their full potential by aiming high. They create 'wish boxes' and 'dream trees'. Pupils' study of other world faiths is enhanced by visits to places of worship such as a synagogue and a Hindu temple. Pupils learn to appreciate art by the study of famous artists and visits to national places of interest such as the British Museum. Opportunities for spiritual enhancement through music are limited owing to the lack of a music co-ordinator.

22. Moral development is very good. Staff set good examples. Correct modes of conduct and behaviour are consistently enforced. Pupils understand the school rules well. The very good relationships which exist between adults and children mean that pupils feel valued and cared for. They are effectively taught to respect themselves and others. Parents value the high levels of commitment that staff encourage pupils to develop. In English, pupils are encouraged to explore questions of right and wrong in fiction. They are also taught to resolve conflict in their reading and in discussions. In science, informed discussions encourage pupils to rely on what they know and not their preconceptions when discussing investigations.
23. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils relate well to each other, regardless of their ethnic origins or educational needs. The school fosters a strong sense of community. Teachers emphasise listening to others and working together. Opportunities for responsibility within class and in other aspects of school life help pupils to develop maturity. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively. Pupils begin to understand how societies are formed in history lessons. They are encouraged to work in teams which effectively promotes collaboration.
24. Pupils' cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is a wide range of books in the library which introduce pupils to life in other countries. Extended writing exercises in English encourage pupils to reflect on other cultures. In geography, pupils study an Indian village and have the opportunity to handle artefacts from India. There are few opportunities to develop pupils' cultural awareness in music. Displays around the school celebrate the diversity of cultures and acknowledge the achievement of celebrities from minority ethnic cultures. As part of a geography unit on St Lucia, pupils found out about Caribbean art and made three-dimensional tiles redolent of the culture's vibrant colours.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

25. The school provides a very caring, supportive environment in which pupils learn effectively. Staff know the pupils well. There is a positive emphasis on developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils trust their teachers. They are confident about approaching them with any problems. Parents feel the school provides excellent pastoral support for their children. All the adults in the school know pupils and many of their families well. Clear guidelines for health, safety and welfare are laid down in all policies. Good account is taken of racial equality. The Internet policy is understood and appropriately implemented by all staff. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils in Year 6 are well supported through the good procedures to ensure a smooth transition into secondary education. Since the last inspection, monitoring of punctuality has improved as a result of the effective requirement for all pupils to report to the office on late arrival at school.
26. Day-to-day management of health and safety remains good. Classrooms are clean and tidy. Storage of equipment and pupils' belongings ensures there is no obstruction in corridors or teaching rooms. Pupils continue to be taught safe practices. However, formal records are not maintained as rigorously as they might be. The satisfactory child protection policy remains an outline policy. It does not provide clear, helpful guidance to staff who are unfamiliar with school procedures.

27. Standards of behaviour are high. Pupils and parents are aware of the system of sanctions and rewards which effectively monitors behaviour. The updated behaviour and discipline policy includes an appropriate anti-bullying statement. Staff deal with incidents of inappropriate behaviour promptly.
28. The previous inspection identified assessment as good in English, mathematics and science, but 'not as well developed' in other subjects. As a result of good leadership in this aspect, assessment is now very good in English and mathematics, good in science and has developed well in all other subjects, apart from music. The use of assessment in planning lessons and monitoring individual progress contributes strongly to the high standards that pupils reach.
29. The school has a clear assessment policy and, as a result, all class teachers make good use of recording to adapt their planning. Marking is good, showing a real interest in moving pupils on by timely, regular and constructive comments. It also contributes significantly to identifying those pupils who may be experiencing difficulties and require additional help.
30. The very good assessment practices within English and mathematics are characterised by records which relate closely to what pupils are expected to achieve and the regular annotation of these by class teachers. Thus, the regular and very effective assessment of reading is used well to plan and adjust groups within class, ensuring that pupils are matched well to texts that interest and challenge them. Literacy objectives are monitored on a termly basis and the results used to modify work set. In mathematics, it is always clear what has been mastered and what requires further attention. Records in this subject are detailed, regular, dated and annotated by most teachers.
31. In other subjects, apart from music, there are clear learning objectives, which are regularly annotated on a similar basis, and teachers are developing good skills in assessing pupils at the end of each 'unit'. Occasionally, a teacher does not make the best use of the assessment data to group and re-group for different lessons and the assessment co-ordinator does not yet feed back to staff following monitoring. This would help in ensuring that the links between assessment and planning, which are already strong, become consistently so in every class. End-of-year reports use assessment information well to give a clear picture of how well a pupil has achieved and what the next targets are.
32. There is growing use of annotating and storing samples of pupils' work. In a number of subjects, such as mathematics and information and communication technology, leveling of work with other schools is used as a basis for identifying strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and the development of individual teacher's assessment skills.
33. Some imaginative work is being carried out, especially in mathematics and information and communication technology, with regard to pupil involvement in setting their own learning targets. However, there is not enough to ensure that all pupils are clear about what they are aiming for and to review this with their teacher on a regular basis.
34. Pupils with special educational needs have an individual education plan based on the guidance provided in the revised Code of Practice for special educational needs. However, the plans do not identify specific success criteria and targets are too general.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Partnership with parents is very good. The school has created a very effective partnership with parents. They are highly supportive of the school. Ninety-five per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire feel the school works closely with them. Parents are kept up to date by regular newsletters. The termly information they receive about the curriculum is detailed with advice on how to help their children at home. Pupils' annual reports give a clear picture of what their children can do. Appropriate targets are set for the next term. Ninety-six per cent of parents feel they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents feel welcome in school and are comfortable about approaching the school with any problems or concerns.
36. Parents hold the school in very high regard. They say that their children like school, make good progress and are expected to work hard. Behaviour around school is good and their children are expected to do their best.
37. There is no formal parent-teachers' association. However, the school has strong links with the local parish. This enhances fundraising or similar events. Parents support the school effectively and encourage children by their attendance at school events and the celebration of mass. Most parents help their children at home with reading and spelling. They also help on school outings and external visits.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good. They give a very high priority to improving teaching and learning with resulting high standards. The headteacher very effectively supports her staff through her encouragement and ready praise. All staff have a very strong commitment to the school and are hardworking. Responsibilities are delegated very efficiently and subject co-ordinators are very effective in their respective roles. The deputy headteacher takes overall responsibility for the curriculum. An audit of time allocations has taken place and adjusted to provide more time for some of the non-core subjects. This has been very effective. The headteacher has identified subjects that need to be improved and sought external support, with very good results, to provide training for staff. She also promotes a very caring ethos which strongly reflects the Catholic faith in all aspects of the school's work. The climate for learning is excellent. Parents agree strongly that the school is well led and managed.
39. Management is very good. The considerable talents of the staff are very effectively deployed. A strong focus on raising standards in the past three years through the priorities identified in the school improvement plan has resulted in the school being awarded a nationally recognised award for its high achievement in English and mathematics in the national tests. Arrangements for the appraisal of all staff are in place and working well to improve the overall quality of education throughout the school. The school improvement plan, based on guidelines provided by the local education authority, is a robust and secure evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement year by year.
40. Governors are well informed about the school and support it well. Statutory responsibilities are fulfilled appropriately. They are fully aware of the lack of music teaching in the school. The governors have an especially good overview of the school's budget position. There is a relatively high budget surplus that is earmarked for improvements to the building. Governors, with the support of the headteacher and senior staff, seek to apply the four principles of best value appropriately. The senior management team, with strong guidance from the headteacher, examines current practices to ensure that pupils are receiving the best education and the highest quality

of teaching. The school achieves very well and is secure in its knowledge of the weaknesses and areas for improvement. It compares its position in the local league tables with other schools. Governors have a thorough understanding of the national test data and how the school's results compare with other schools in the area and nationally. Services provided to the school are acquired by applying the best value principles.

41. Currently, as a result of an impending reconstitution of the governing body and recent changes to the composition of the governing body, one governor is taking temporary responsibility for several aspects of the school's work: special educational needs, literacy and numeracy. These responsibilities are taken very professionally. The governor concerned works with staff and has checked the work of the subjects involved through her own classroom monitoring. Detailed reports are made available to the curriculum committee of the governing body. The school keeps the governors abreast of school developments via regular reports by the headteacher and presentations to governors' meetings by subject co-ordinators.
42. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are carried out professionally and diligently by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has a very good strategic overview of the curriculum and staffing needs. Timetables are checked regularly to ensure that each class has the correct time allocations to the non-core subjects. The impact of this activity has led to an increase in time allocations to history and geography, which are now taught in line with national recommendations, and there is thorough coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Subject co-ordinators analyse performance data and develop action plans. Governors are involved in checking the work of the school. Feedback is given to the curriculum committee to keep the governors abreast of progress in school. Arrangements to check the quality of teaching are secure for the core subjects, but less time is available for co-ordinators of other subjects to check this.
43. Accommodation is very good. Classrooms are a good size and are suitably furnished. The large library has plenty of space for pupils to study privately or in groups. The tapestry room is a useful area for meetings. It is used regularly, to good effect, by the school for assemblies. The tapestry depicting the Annunciation of Christ's birth to Mary focuses pupils' minds on spiritual life. The large, well-used information and communication technology suite has recently been updated with air-conditioning. Pupils benefit from a large playing field.
44. The amount and quality of learning resources are good. Stock is well organised and, in most curriculum areas, is easily accessible to staff. In English, resources are very good. The range and number of books support teaching very well. Resources for personal, social and health education are well developed to follow the syllabus agreed with the diocese and local education authority.
45. The management of special educational needs is satisfactory. The part-time special educational needs co-ordinator takes steps to ensure that staff carry out the procedures she has identified. Good liaison has been established between the co-ordinator, support teacher, assistants and parents. Class teachers regularly check on the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. Support for pupils is provided both within the class and on a withdrawal basis, where pupils work in small groups on specific, identified learning strategies. Effective in-class support by classroom assistants ensures that pupils are kept on task and appropriate assistance is given. The special educational needs governor meets regularly with the co-ordinator and is well informed, effectively involved and reports regularly to the governing body. The school has adopted the new Code of Practice and has identified

pupils in line with the new criteria. However, there is little evidence of the use of computer systems to help the management of special educational needs. The school is aware of the need to increase the use of computer technology within the management of special educational needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the provision for music throughout the school by:
 - providing training for staff to teach music;
 - appointing a co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the provision;
 - providing a scheme of work to support teaching that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

(paragraphs 1, 5, 17, 40, 90, 91, 92, 93)

Other issues the governors may wish to include in their action plan:

- improve the formal record-keeping relating to health and safety and monitoring attendance;
- provide guidance to staff on the procedures for child protection in line with the expectations in the policy;
- improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs in their withdrawal lessons.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	14	24	8	0	0	0
Percentage	4	29	50	17	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	229
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	30	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	29	30
	Girls	25	24	26
	Total	54	53	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (97)	93 (92)	98 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	30	30
	Girls	25	24	26
	Total	54	54	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (97)	95 (92)	98 (98)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
87	0	0
40	0	0
18	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
7	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
4	0	0
45	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
10	0	0
3	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.1
Average class size	29

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136.5

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	640,520
Total expenditure	633,353
Expenditure per pupil	2,707
Balance brought forward from previous year	81,239
Balance carried forward to next year	88,406

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	229
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	25	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	30	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	31	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	34	8	0	1
The teaching is good.	80	20	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	31	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	21	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	21	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	56	3	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	78	20	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	22	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	38	12	1	6

Other issues raised by parents

There were no other significant issues raised by the parents.

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

ENGLISH

46. By Year 6, the standards achieved by pupils are well above average in reading and above average in writing and speaking and listening. On entry to the school in Year 3, pupils' standards are above average. They make good progress as they go through the school with very good progress made in several classes. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be above average. Leadership and management by the subject co-ordinator are having a strong impact on raising standards. Resources are plentiful and there is very good use of literacy skills to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum, especially history. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as all other pupils as a result of the support they receive in lessons from the well-skilled classroom support assistants. Achievement in withdrawal sessions is less secure as pupils sometimes complete low-level tasks that fail to challenge them. It is likely that many of the pupils with special educational needs will achieve the nationally expected Level 4 in the 2003 national tests. The attainment of pupils from different ethnic groups is no different from other pupils, in fact they generally achieve as well as their higher attaining peers throughout the school. Nor are there any significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Boys attain slightly more than girls in the national tests.
47. The results of the 2003 national tests are lower than 2002 because of the lower number of higher attaining pupils in Year 6. However, 27 per cent of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 and 87 per cent the nationally expected Level 4. This is good achievement.
48. Pupils enjoy reading. Throughout the school, teachers make very effective use of the short session allocated every day to guided reading. Year 6 pupils complete a transition unit to help prepare for work in the secondary school. Pupils read with enthusiasm and begin to understand how emotions are portrayed in different texts. They explain the differences in texts from different cultures in a mature manner, drawing well on extracts from the text to illustrate different literacy devices. Reading together as a whole class, with the teacher taking the lead and pupils taking on different roles as they read with accuracy, fluency and very good understanding is a frequent strategy used. Pupils are well motivated to read with good expression as a result of the consistent praise for high quality reading. Year 6 reading journals have a challenging sequence of activities for pupils to complete independently, such as questions to an author or comparison of story openers from different genres.
49. Pupils' writing skills are well developed. In an excellent Year 3 lesson, pupils demonstrated the devices used to capture the interest of readers, 'Suddenly I heard the HOWL, L, L ! ! '! Pupils write with high levels of accuracy, use punctuation correctly and write in a well-formed cursive style. Story openers are modelled by the teacher, leading to imaginative story openers and good descriptive phrases, such as 'the cloud growled'. Dictionaries and thesauri are used as a matter of course. A lower attaining pupil showed very good levels of skills as he searched for 'mysteriously' in the dictionary to include in his story opener, 'It was a stormy night when a burglar mysteriously...' By Year 6, pupils interrogate high quality texts at a very sophisticated level, drawing on prior knowledge of personification to write, 'the gibbons howled their accusations at me' and, 'the entire forest cackling and screeching its condemnation'.
50. Speaking and listening skills are very effectively fostered. In all year groups, pupils listen attentively and take part in discussions with teachers about all aspects of their

work, as well as that in English. Pupils' responses show that they listen to the views of others. For example, Year 6 pupils made a range of relevant and thoughtful responses to explain why a biography they were reading was written in the present tense.

51. Pupils learn effectively as a result of very good, and sometimes excellent, teaching. They have excellent attitudes to their work and are incredibly keen to take responsibility, work very hard and achieve well as a result. Objectives are shared with pupils and, in good or better lessons, pupils are encouraged to explain their understanding of an objective to ensure they understand what they have to learn. Challenging questions enable pupils to give plausible reasons, for example why a story is written in the present tense. Pupils respond confidently, encouraged by supportive praise and clarity in what they are expected to do. Lessons are generally well organised and the pace is brisk, enabling pupils to respond at a high level to the penetrating questions asked. Classroom assistants are effectively deployed and make a very good contribution to supporting pupils with special educational needs. Teachers make learning intentions very explicit. They set and refer to targets in lessons and generally when marking pupils' work so they know what to do to improve. The organisation and management of lessons are very effective.
52. Planning is very good. The elements of the literacy hour are woven into lessons, focusing on a particular story well, thus enabling the pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding of sentence and word-level work to the books they are reading. The quantity and quality of resources, particularly reading material, make a very good impact on pupils' attitudes to their work.
53. Pupils learn very effectively as a result of the high levels of interest, concentration and independence fostered in lessons. The teaching of basic skills is given a high priority, with the result that good literacy skills contribute to the above average standards achieved in history. Systems for recording progress in reading and spelling are very effective. Pupils take good responsibility for recording their spelling errors in a spelling log and checking that they know them at later times. Assessments of how well pupils have read, their attitudes to reading and the higher level reading strategies used are made and used effectively to plan the next stages of learning. A sample of pupils' work is tracked throughout the year.
54. The co-ordinator has made a significant impact on the work of the subject. She has a very good idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and the reasons why standards will be lower this year than in the past. She is provided with time to check the progress made in her subject through classroom observations. Staff are given written and oral feedback, which is a useful way to improve teaching. Book checks have identified that factual writing is an area for improvement. The co-ordinator is fully aware that information and communication technology needs to be developed.

MATHEMATICS

55. By Year 6, the standards achieved by pupils are well above the national average in mathematics. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. It reflects the very detailed and valuable work undertaken by the mathematics co-ordinator, the commitment of the senior management team and the governing body. It also results from the effective way in which all class teachers have implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. Results of the 2003 national tests confirm the school's view that standards will not be as high this year as last year because of the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, 38 per cent of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 and 86 per cent achieved the nationally expected Level 4, which is

a good achievement. Pupils of all abilities, with English as an additional language and ethnic groups, achieve well.

56. Pupils enter the junior school with good skills in all aspects of mathematics. They make good progress throughout their time and reach standards that are well above the national average by the time they leave. Although the standard within Year 6 this year is not as high as the previous year, all but two or three pupils have reached the level expected nationally in the skills of mathematics and their application. A significant percentage, up to 30 per cent, will exceed this target. The school has identified problem solving as an area for development and there are already signs that this aspect is much stronger.
57. The quality of teaching overall is very good. Two lessons exemplified the way in which a wide range of sophisticated teaching skills are contributing to the steady rise in mathematical standards. In an excellent Year 3 lesson, the teacher had two major learning objectives; to revise place value, hundreds, tens and units, and measure angles of turn. She began with a giant dice game, producing a three-digit number. Pupils were asked to work out the biggest and smallest numbers possible from these digits. Pupils were highly motivated and eager to respond. The excellent use of questions and the clarity of instruction on the part of the class teacher meant that all pupils were suitably challenged and felt really involved. The pace and very efficient use of time set a good pattern for the whole lesson. Working on angles of turn, the teacher involved pupils by asking them to physically turn, which reinforced both the concept of right angles and also of clockwise and anti-clockwise. Evocative use of language aided all pupils' understanding. For example, one pupil who was turning rather haphazardly was told to 'Turn like a robot'. Immediately this ensured precision and added quickly and memorably to his learning. Group work saw a wide range of teacher-produced materials and a very imaginative use of other subjects. Thus, one activity revised involved a Viking who had to turn to face the ship or the monastery. During the plenary, one pupil called out 'It's like a game Miss!' The whole lesson had been a game, but well managed and sharply focused on the developing skills of every pupil.
58. In a very good Year 6 lesson on percentages, the pace with which the teacher began was breathtaking, but all pupils followed her quickfire revision questions on multiplying by tens and hundreds. It set the scene for the pupils, ensured their minds were fully active and gave them a chance to succeed at the very start. The standards of calculation reached by a few of the higher attaining pupils was most impressive. One pupil, when asked how he had worked out what 85 per cent of a number was indicated that he had halved the number, halved it again, worked out ten per cent and added the three together. Given that his answer had been almost instantaneous, these strategies were of a very high order. The teacher's emphasis on the development of as many strategies as possible was the key to success in this lesson. Every pupil, whatever their level of attainment, was asked 'How did you reach that?' or 'Can you think of another way of doing it?' Group work on percentages saw the lower attaining pupils coping quite comfortably with percentages in multiples of ten, while the higher attainers quickly learnt and implemented mental skills for calculating the value added tax on a range of prices. Within this class, nearly 90 per cent of pupils reach and exceed national expectations and this is indicative of the overall levels reached in mathematics in the current year.
59. The last inspection report indicated a lack of co-ordination and scheme of work in mathematics. Both have been in place for some while and have had considerable effect. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well indeed. All staff use the three-part lesson well. They emphasise the importance of mental facility and the value of calculators for checking estimates and results, and devise group

work which builds on the skills each group has developed, using a wide range of imaginative and helpful resources. The plenary is used very well in most classes to re-visit the learning objectives or to present a problem that allows pupils to employ the skills they have learnt. In the few instances where teaching was only satisfactory, there was insufficient involvement of pupils and the challenge for some pupils was low. In general, teaching assistants use their skills well, although there were a number of occasions when they could have been better involved during the whole-class elements of the lesson.

60. The increasing success of mathematics within the school is largely due to the very good co-ordination of the subject. A broad and balanced curriculum is now firmly in place in every classroom, ensuring the effective learning of shape, measurement and data handling in addition to calculation skills. The co-ordinator has used data collection and analysis very effectively indeed to identify strengths and weaknesses within the curriculum. Initiatives, such as 'Springboard', have been used to top up skills for pupils who have difficulties and extend those who are moving on quickly. She has developed a very good link with the assessment and information and communication technology co-ordinator and this partnership has resulted in very good and accurate recording of mathematical skills.
61. There have been a number of instances where pupils with special educational needs have made very good progress indeed. The good matching of individual and group work to pupils has been very beneficial for those experiencing difficulties with computation and other aspects of mathematics. It is rare for a pupil not to meet national expectations in mathematics but, where this happens, there is still a high level of confidence and enjoyment.
62. There is still not enough pupil involvement in target setting, but this is developing and is likely to further enhance standards in the coming year.

SCIENCE

63. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards at the end of Year 6 are above the national average, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and from minority ethnic groups, achieve well, with some very good achievement by higher attaining pupils. This is in line with the standards judged at the last inspection, but there has been an improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5. This improvement in standards is a result of more effective co-ordination, monitoring and teaching of the subject.
64. By Year 6, pupils learn good investigational skills. They identify key factors to be considered when carrying out a 'fair test'. For example, in an investigation about shadows, pupils understood the variables involved and were able to identify that if they moved the object, they must not move the light source distance or angle. Pupils know how and why an electrical circuit works, understand that gravity and up-thrust are linked to the compression of a spring and use scientific terminology to describe change, for example 'evaporation' and 'condensation'. In a Year 4 lesson about skeletons, pupils use their previous knowledge effectively to conclude that skeletons gave shape to an animal, and that some skeletons could be external. All pupils use their good speaking and listening skills during the science lessons and are able to explain clearly, using the correct scientific language, reasons for their deductions when carrying out investigations. Achievement overall is good, with some very good achievement by higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress when supported by an assistant.

65. The quality of teaching is good, with some examples of very good teaching in Year 6. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and use correct scientific vocabulary when explaining tasks to the pupils. High expectations are set and the pace of the lessons is brisk. Clear learning objectives are shared with the pupils and good use is made of plenary sessions at the end of the lesson. Resources are used well to stimulate pupils' learning, and an effective combination of worksheets and free writing combine to produce neat and accurate written work. All teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and good classroom control. As a result, pupils learn effectively.
66. The planning for the teaching of science is good. Opportunities for investigations are clearly identified and build on the pupils' previous knowledge. Pupils use their good literacy and numeracy skills in their work, and information and communication technology is effectively incorporated into all lessons. However, information and communication technology is not used sufficiently in the areas of data handling and graphical representation. The assessment of pupils' work is good and is clearly linked to future planning.
67. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and takes a positive role in the monitoring of science throughout the school. Yearly tests are fully analysed and significant outcomes are built into current planning guidance. Assessments are undertaken on the completion of each teaching unit and these are used to inform future planning. Centrally held resources are good, clearly labelled and available to all staff.

ART AND DESIGN

68. During the week of the inspection, there were few opportunities to observe the teaching of art and design. However, evidence gathered from the lesson observed, scrutiny of work and teachers' planning, talking to the pupils and from displays around the school, shows that by the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards expected for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and from minority ethnic groups, achieve satisfactorily. This standard has been maintained since the previous inspection. However, there is more evidence of three-dimensional work in the subject. This improvement has resulted from better curriculum planning and effective monitoring procedures.
69. Pupils in Year 6 employ a range of methods appropriately in order to present observations, ideas and feelings. For example, they use oil pastels to produce pictures in the style of Turner, pencil sketching to make action pictures of people, and use information and communication technology well to produce computer-generated patterns. In Year 5, pupils make papier-mâché masks celebrating a carnival in St Lucia and good quality colour images using graphical modelling. Printing techniques, using potato cuts and polystyrene, are used by pupils in both Years 3 and 4 to produce displays of high quality. Sketchbooks are used by pupils and show satisfactory development in skills involving fine line patterns in pencil and observational drawings. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with effective support.
70. The good teaching in the one lesson observed had a positive impact on pupils' response to art and design. They worked with care in a purposeful way, quickly became engrossed in their task and were justifiably pleased with their results. Good use was made of models displayed in the classroom to inspire the pupils to use different techniques when working by themselves. Effective praise and encouragement promote the pupils' confidence in their work. They co-operate well in groups, sharing ideas and resources.

71. Colourful displays around the school effectively celebrate pupils' work. However, some displays do not indicate either the names of the pupils or their year group. Displays are also used effectively to reflect the spiritual dimension of the school.
72. The policy for art and design provides an overview of the aims and scope of the subject. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of skills and techniques required to teach the subject, and shares these with colleagues who are less confident. She monitors planning and observes teaching of the subject throughout the school. She ensures that the resources for art and design are of good quality and range. An after-school art club successfully gives pupils the opportunity to extend their skills and learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

73. Few lessons were available for observation during the inspection. Judgements are made from the lesson seen, scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and discussions with pupils and teachers.
74. Standards by Year 6 are in line with national expectations. This is the same as judged at the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and from minority ethnic groups achieve well. There has been a good improvement in pupils' design skills. This improvement has resulted from a revision of the planned curriculum and improved monitoring and assessment.
75. Pupils in Year 6 work with a variety of materials, paying attention to the quality and finish of the product. They generate ideas by collecting information and consider and modify their designs reasonably effectively as their work progresses. For example, in an introductory lesson about designing a tapestry, the school's own Annunciation tapestry was effectively used as a stimulus. Pupils were able to suggest reasons for the design, shape, colour and texture of the tapestry, and offered a variety of methods of producing their own work. Year 3 pupils study packaging and made a variety of good models following their own design sheets, and considered food ingredients when planning and making sandwich snacks. Pupils in Year 4 combine their scientific knowledge about electricity when they design a torch that is controlled by a switch, and pupils in Year 5 design and make moving 'pop-up' toys that incorporate a cam mechanism. These are good examples of finished products.
76. In the lesson observed, teaching was good. The teachers have a good knowledge of the learning objective and effectively use good questioning skills to direct the pupils' responses. The interest of the pupils was maintained by good pace and challenging ideas. Pupils' previous knowledge was used to take their learning forward and high standards of behaviour were expected and achieved.
77. Co-ordination of this subject is good. The co-ordinator for design and technology has good subject knowledge and monitors the teachers' planning. She also observes the teaching of the subject throughout the school to ensure continuity and progression. Assessments are undertaken at the end of each teaching unit and these are used to inform future planning. A good portfolio of work is kept that includes plans and photographs of finished products. Adequate resources are stored in two work areas and are easily accessible.

GEOGRAPHY

78. Standards of attainment are satisfactory, which is the same as indicated from the previous inspection, and pupils achieve satisfactorily. All pupils, including those with

special educational needs and from minority ethnic groups, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.

79. Pupils in Year 6 know and explain about river courses and identify rivers around the world effectively. They understand geographical patterns and identify mountain ranges on world maps accurately. Pupils have a good understanding of the ways people damage the environment. For example, Year 6 pupils studied photographs of two contrasting areas and were able to compare the similarities and differences by comparing rivers and buildings from each environment. They suggested plausible reasons for the differences based on their geographical knowledge of the two areas. Pupils in Year 4 used their research skills effectively to find information about Chembakolli and identified cash crops and food crops from textbooks.
80. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of what they have to teach and share the learning objectives with the pupils. Resources are used well to enrich the lesson, and tasks set give exciting opportunities for good learning to take place. For example, in a Year 3 lesson about places to go on holiday, following a short video introduction, pupils used world globes, maps and computer programs to select a suitable destination. Tasks are well matched to the wide range of abilities and pupils are successfully challenged. For example, when considering the need for recycling, Year 5 pupils were challenged to produce a leaflet, poster or 'rubbish monster', highlighting the need to care for the environment. Each of these tasks is well matched to the different abilities of the pupils in the class, and all are challenged to produce work of high quality. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good, they listen well and co-operate when sharing ideas and resources.
81. The co-ordinator of the subject has a good understanding of geography, and the quality of resources is satisfactory. Good planning ensures that the subject follows the National Curriculum Programme of Study and end-of-unit assessments are undertaken to check on pupils' learning. The co-ordinator monitors the teaching of geography throughout the school. Occasionally, because the subject is timetabled into 30 minute teaching units for some of the classes, practical sessions run out of time before the pupils have completed their work. Consequently, plenary sessions are cut short and the well-planned practical activities are not fully exploited. The area of environmental change is a focus for development within the subject and the school has plans to address this. Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance learning and Year 4 pupils perform a short play at the end of their work on Chembakoli. A residential visit by older pupils to Osmington Bay, extends pupils' understanding of this subject.

HISTORY

82. Standards of attainment are above average for pupils' knowledge and understanding of all periods studied throughout the school: Ancient Greece; Britain since the 1930s; the Vikings and the Victorians. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and from minority ethnic groups, achieve well. The subject is used effectively to apply literacy skills. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the subject is well led; continuity through the National Curriculum Programme of Study is secure and the subject is well resourced, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. Visits to sites of historical interest are a strong feature of the subject.
83. Standards by Year 6 are above average. Pupils learn effectively and with enthusiasm as they find out about the conditions faced by Anne Frank. They learn successfully to interpret events from the period and to understand them from a variety of perspectives. Good use is made of the Internet to research independently and gather information about life in Ancient Greece. As a result, pupils show a high level of

knowledge and understanding about the period and understand the difference between primary and secondary resources. Good attention to chronology, especially in Year 3, helps pupils set the period within a time context. This aspect of the subject was generally weaker in other year groups.

84. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are keen and very interested in the subject. Basic literacy skills are applied effectively, and planning, based on a commercial scheme of work, is well targeted on the above-average attainment of the pupils, especially in the classes of younger pupils. For example, role-play is used creatively in classes of younger pupils to help them understand the role of a scribe in Egyptian times. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that, at times, too much work is based on pre-written exercises or is copied. Staff are very secure in their knowledge and understanding of the periods taught and the subject is well resourced. Information and communication technology is used regularly throughout the school.
85. Leadership of the subject is effective. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has a clear view of the ways in which the subject needs to develop through her checking of the subject in all classes. Assessment arrangements are compatible with the recommendations in the nationally recommended scheme of work and provide appropriate information to inform pupils' reports. Good use is made of visits to key historical sites, such as the British Museum to observe the Egyptian artefacts, the Air force museum at Hendon to explore life during World War Two and Hatfield house where pupils met 'Henry VIII'.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

86. In the previous report, progress in information and communication technology was judged to be 'variable' with controlling, monitoring and modelling being poor. Teachers' knowledge was felt to be 'insecure, with most staff requiring some form of training in the subject'. The report also recommended more effective use of time for work in the subject. As the result of good co-ordination, the development of a very effective computer suite and teachers building on good training, the subject is now far more successful in every aspect. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good.
87. By the end of Year 6, pupils meet national expectations in all aspects of the subject. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and from minority ethnic groups, achieve well. They are very confident and use information and communication technology widely for writing and reporting in a number of curricular areas, such as history, geography and science. They have had experience of control, for example with model cars, and are involved in making decisions and solving problems for the imaginary race of 'Zoobinis'. They show very good collaborative skills and are developing a good knowledge of the way in which databases, spreadsheets and graphs represent information.
88. In a very good Year 3 lesson on simulations, the class assisted 'Zoobinis', creatures they themselves had designed, to overcome a number of problems, including crossing rivers and mountains. A very good discussion helped pupils make choices. The teacher's good knowledge of computing and clear explanations helped pupils remember the key points. When the class settled well in pairs, she and her assistant provided very good roving support which avoided delays and kept all pupils motivated and on task. The pupils had no difficulty whatsoever in logging on, starting programs and moving from section to section of the program. Higher attaining pupils willingly gave advice to others. All were challenged to think and solve problems as quickly and logically as possible. The lesson was characterised by a sensible attitude to work on the part of pupils, a willingness to ask for help but, above all, a confidence in trying out

their own solutions. This confidence arose from the very good relationships between adults and pupils within the suite.

89. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils were asked to develop spreadsheet skills to buy items at a fair, but not to exceed a budget of £10. Instructions were clear, good support was provided by teacher and assistant and, as a result, attention from pupils was good, as was the wish to succeed and improve. One pair, who found it difficult to budget under £10, were shown how to reduce expenditure by reducing the number of items and how this translated into the overall total. They quickly implemented this and were soon within budget. One or two pupils experienced difficulties in the early stages, but good classroom assistant support provided sensible and clear advice which both encouraged and assisted in the pupils' progress. The lesson ended with a good recap of the learning objectives and all pupils' work was then saved to disk for recording purposes.
90. There is now a full curriculum in place. The earlier concerns over control and modelling have been overcome with good software programs. Pupils have good experience of directing floor-based robots and are beginning to use information and communication technology for a wide range of mathematical skills, such as data collection and the generation of graphs.
91. Although some subjects still have some way to go, a very real strength of the information and communication technology curriculum is its developing use across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils use wordprocessing to write book reviews and use materials downloaded from CD-Roms. Year 5 pupils use graphical modelling software to design a plan of their classroom. Younger pupils build up graphs and pie charts from questionnaires relating to the recycling of cans. Elsewhere in the school, work on St Lucia, the development of colourful art patterns and the history of papyrus are a few examples of the growing use of information and communication technology as a tool and source of information. Although classroom usage of computers is inconsistent, a number of staff are now using this well as a demonstration tool and for ongoing mathematics programs during the week.
92. The development of a very effective suite, with air-conditioning, assists greatly in the good progress that pupils make, as does the purchase of good quality software. Although the use of the subject in some subjects, such as English and science, still has some way to go and recording is still at an early stage, this subject has overcome its earlier weaknesses and is well on the way to ensuring good attainment for all pupils.

MUSIC

93. The school does not meet statutory requirements in the teaching of music. The lack of a co-ordinator, an effective scheme of work and opportunities for pupils to participate in activities other than singing, mean that pupils leave the school with a below average level of knowledge and awareness. Achievement for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and for those from minority ethnic groups, is unsatisfactory in all aspects of the subject, apart from singing which is satisfactory.
94. Music is taught irregularly throughout the school, as a result of the long-term absence of the music co-ordinator who has now left. However, pupils have a weekly half hour singing lesson. Pupils' experience of music is restricted to hymn practices and occasional performances. Some pupils learn the flute, violin and recorder, but this is not experienced by all. There is a flourishing choir which has a strong reputation locally, but this is made up of a small percentage of pupils only.

95. The school has no recognised scheme of work, although until recently it used an appropriate published scheme. As a result, the Year 6 pupils interviewed during the inspection showed very little knowledge of composers, musical dynamics or types of song other than hymns. However, they expressed considerable interest in the musical facilities seen at the secondary school and indicated that, if given the opportunity, would be very interested in composing and experimenting with a range of instruments.
96. The school has rightly identified the subject as a key area for development in the school improvement plan and has already provided some training for staff to teach the subject. The school is in the process of appointing a co-ordinator, but must look also to the development of classroom teacher skills for the overall benefit of staff as well as pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

97. The standards reached by the end of Year 6 meet national expectations and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and from minority ethnic groups, achieve well. Pupils have developed good gymnastic and games skills. They link movements and routines together creatively and show a good awareness of space, tactics and the need for healthy exercise. At least three quarters of pupils meet national expectations in swimming. All of this success occurs with the subject being mainly taught by visiting specialists. The quality of teaching and learning is good.
98. A visiting gymnastics coach currently works with all teachers and their classes under the 'School Sports Co-ordinator Programme'. One of his lessons indicated the added quality this brings. An extended warm-up was followed by the skilful demonstration of different forms of balance. The Year 4 pupils paid close attention and copied the balances when told. Clear rules and boundaries were set for movement and behaviour. The teacher's planning was detailed and his instructions clear and well staged. This aided both pupil memory and performance. From single balances, pupils moved to linking them and did so with care and enthusiasm. Throughout the lesson, there was also a very good development of literacy skills. Pupils were introduced to the technical vocabulary, 'quads', 'routine', 'repertoire' and 'sequence', and expected to remember them. At the end of the lesson, they were told 'I want you to find out how to spell arabesque and tell me next week'. A highly effective lesson from a skilled specialist had contributed to good progress for all pupils in the class.
99. A second coach worked with a Year 6 class on ball skills in hockey. Equipment and instructions were used very effectively to give each pupil the opportunity to dribble and pass a hockey ball. A third of the lesson was intensive practice. This was followed by a game where these skills were put into effect. Behaviour and attention were at a high level because of the skills of the coach, but also the good relationship between himself and the pupils.
100. Very good swimming facilities and the commitment of the school mean that all pupils receive high quality swimming training every year. Progress is good for all pupils, as the result of skilled instruction. Progress for all pupils is also good to very good in overall confidence in the water. Similarly, the visiting Gaelic football coach produces good progress in Years 5 and 6 pupils by very good rapport, a high level of expertise and well-structured teaching sessions.
101. The co-ordinator has managed the subject well. She has used a series of funding initiatives and a good network of local contacts to build up a curriculum which is delivered skilfully. In addition, she is now working on the dance module of the

curriculum. Adventurous pursuits occur during a residential week for Year 6 pupils. The programme is excellent, with all pupils having the opportunity to abseil, canoe, pothole, go-kart and orienteer. Descriptions by pupils and the valuable digital camera picture records indicate a high level of both enjoyment and progress for all pupils. The strength of the subject is also its weakness. Teachers currently watch visiting specialists to learn physical education skills. From September, the visiting specialists will observe the teachers deliver the lessons. This is valuable, and will need to be pursued on a regular basis if staff are to keep their own skills up to date.