

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST GEORGE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Maghull

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104925

Headteacher: Mr L McKay

Reporting inspector: Dr B Blundell  
23868

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> October 2002

Inspection number: 246424

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dennett Close Maghull Merseyside
Postcode:	L31 5PD
Telephone number:	(0151) 526 1624
Fax number:	(0151) 288 6560
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Fr J Kelly
Date of previous inspection:	November 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23868	Dr B Blundell	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Educational Inclusion	What sort of a 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?
19430	Mr T Hall	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?
29261	Mrs P Ward	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language Art and design Design and technology	
22657	Mr M Madeley	Team Inspector	Science Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15474	Mr J Fairclough	Team Inspector	English Geography History	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. George's Catholic Primary School is a very good school for boys and girls, aged 3 to 11, situated in Maghull, Merseyside. There are 284 pupils on roll including 23 children in the Nursery. The school is bigger than most other primary schools. The ethnic background of the pupils is largely white with United Kingdom heritage, with a number of pupils being Chinese or having other heritages. One pupil is at an early stage in the acquisition of English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Both the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and the proportion with statements of special needs is below average. The nature of pupils' special needs includes emotional, behavioural, learning and physical difficulties. The majority of pupils join the school at the age of four and remain until they are eleven; pupil turnover is relatively low. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average.

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

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good. Current standards for pupils at the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is very good, as are the leadership and management. The school is providing good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science exceed national averages by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve very well.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body are very good.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good; lessons have clear learning intentions and pupils learn very well.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; they are enthusiastic and reflect the school's ethos well.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive; the school provides clear and comprehensive information for parents.

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

- Pupils' joined writing could be developed in the infant phase.
- Resources in the reception class are inadequate.

*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 2000, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. The overall quality of teaching has improved considerably, as have standards, by the end of Year 6 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The key issue to improve pupils' progress as they move through the junior phase has been fully addressed, with pupils making good progress. The issue to improve the quality of teaching for pupils aged seven to eleven has been fully addressed also; the teaching in all lessons was at least satisfactory with a high proportion of very good teaching. The issue to develop and implement a programme of monitoring teaching has been fully addressed. The governing body now has appropriate awareness of the school's performance. The school has made excellent improvement since the last inspection.

## 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	D	A	A	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

In the national tests in 2002 for pupils at the end of Year 6, attainment was well above average when compared with national averages in English, mathematics and science. Compared with schools of a similar type, pupils' results were also well above average in English, mathematics and science. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001 taken together, pupils have left the school six months ahead of pupils nationally in English, two terms ahead in mathematics, and under one term ahead in science. Results for 2002 show further improvement, with one hundred per cent of pupils obtaining Level 4, the nationally expected level, in science, and fifty per cent obtaining the higher Level 5 in mathematics. The results at the end of the junior phase, up to 2001, rose at a similar rate to results nationally. The school's targets are appropriately ambitious.

Standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were above the national average in reading and in line with the national averages in writing and in mathematics. Compared to schools of a similar type, pupils' attainment was well above average in reading and average in writing and in mathematics. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001, taken together, pupils aged seven have performed nearly two terms ahead of pupils nationally in reading, over one term ahead in writing and nearly half a term ahead in mathematics.

The work seen during the inspection indicated that standards for pupils by the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards for pupils by the end of Year 2 are above national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science. For pupils aged seven and eleven standards in design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education, music and art and design match national expectations. Standards in history and geography, by the end of Year 6 and, in history, by the end of Year 2, are above national expectations; there was insufficient evidence to judge standards in geography by the end of Year 2. The majority of children are on course to meet the majority of the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. (The Early Learning Goals are the nationally expected standards for children at the end of the Foundation Stage.)

Pupils' achievement is very good, overall. Standards at this school are now sufficiently high.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good; they are keen and enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of the classrooms, is very good. They are courteous and readily hold doors open for others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good; relationships are also good.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance has improved and is now in line with the national

	average in the last full reporting year. However, attendance was below the national average.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	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 in English and mathematics is very good; the skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught. Examples of good teaching were seen in every class in the school. In the foundation stage, teaching in the Nursery is particularly strong. Strengths in teaching throughout the school include the challenge in lessons, the sharing of learning intentions with pupils so that they know the precise purpose of lessons, the quality of teachers' planning and the brisk pace of work. A relative weakness in some classes is a lack of sufficient opportunity for pupils to work independently. Strengths in learning include pupils' interest and concentration, coupled with an awareness of their own learning. The school meets the needs of all its pupils well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good. The curriculum is enhanced by its geography, history and science provision relating particularly to the local area and by the good quality of writing opportunities provided in English.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils have appropriate individual education plans. At times, however, pupils are withdrawn for special educational support inappropriately, when support in class could be more effective in promoting their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for the one pupil with English as an additional language is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good and for their moral development it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's care for its pupils is good. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good.

The school works well in partnership with parents. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. The assessment of pupils' work and the procedure for tracking pupils' learning are being developed well and are now particularly good in English and mathematics.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher, together with his deputy, have worked hard to move the school forward. This school has a very clear educational direction; there is a very clear vision for the future.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors' fulfilment of their responsibilities is very good. The chairman of the governing body visits the school regularly and liaises very effectively with the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is very good. Pupils' results in external tests are meticulously analysed and areas needing improvement are reported back to teachers and support staff.
The strategic use of resources	The school's strategic use of resources is good. Resources, however, are insufficient in the reception class.

Levels of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good, overall, although the 'split' site does not foster a whole-school atmosphere. Classroom assistants work well with teachers. The school secretary is most efficient and ensures the smooth running of the school; she often works extra hours voluntarily. Dinner ladies and lunchtime assistants help ensure a smooth mid-day break. The caretaker and cleaners work hard to maintain a clean school and site.

A particular strength in leadership and management is the high quality of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching is good and children are making good progress.</li> <li>Their children like school.</li> <li>They feel comfortable approaching the school with problems.</li> <li>The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small minority of parents would like to see a greater range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>A small minority of parents are not happy with the level of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. It finds the range of extra-curricular activities and the level of homework to be appropriate.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.

##### **Strengths**

- By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards well above national averages in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' achievements are very good indeed when compared to those of similar schools.
- Pupils reach high standards in history throughout the school, and also in geography in the junior phase.

##### **Areas for improvement**

- Joined writing could be started at an earlier age for pupils in the infant phase.
2. Children enter the school in the Nursery. Their attainment on entry is broadly average, although there is a wide variation within the group. These children are making very good progress.
  3. Shortly after children enter reception, they are assessed to see what they know, understand and can do; social and physical skills are also noted. This is known as the baseline test. The intake in 2001 was judged to be average. An analysis of previous intakes shows that the intake in 2000 and 1999 scored similarly. The children in the current reception class have not yet been assessed, but inspection evidence suggests that overall standards are average.
  4. By the age of five, near to the end of their time in reception, children are again assessed against national standards known as the Early Learning Goals. The majority of the children currently in reception are on course to attain these goals.
  5. At the age of seven, close to the end of their time in Year 2, pupils take the end of infant phase national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils who sat these tests in 2002 obtained levels that were above the national average in reading and in line with the national averages in writing and in mathematics. Their attainment when compared to schools of a similar type was well above average in reading and average in writing and in mathematics. In 2001, results were well above national averages in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Those who took the tests in 2000 attained standards that were well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. Taking the results over the last three years from 1999 to 2001, averaged together, pupils' performance has been nearly two terms ahead of the national average in reading, just over one term ahead in writing and nearly half a term ahead in mathematics. In all three subject areas, boys have performed similarly to girls. The variation in results from year to year reflects differences in the cohorts.
  6. Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 2, who will take their national tests in May, 2003, are reaching above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Some pupils could start to do joined writing at an earlier age. Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education meet national expectations. In history, standards exceed national expectations; there was too little evidence in geography to make a judgement.
  7. By the age of eleven, near to the end of Year 6, pupils take the end of junior phase national tests in English, science and mathematics. Pupils' performance in the 2002 tests in terms of national curriculum points scores was well above average in English, mathematics and science compared

with schools nationally. It was also well above average in English, mathematics and science when compared with that of pupils in schools of a similar type. Taking the three years from 1999 to 2001 together, pupils have left the junior phase six months ahead of pupils nationally in English, two terms ahead in mathematics, and just under a term ahead in science. If we consider those pupils who took their end of infant phase tests in 1997 and then went on to sit the tests for eleven year olds in 2001; or those who sat their Key Stage 1 tests in 1996 and then sat their end of junior phase tests in 2000, the results show that pupils have made satisfactory progress. *The great improvement in science results in 2002 reflects the higher profile that this subject has received.*

8. Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 6 are working at well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Both the quality and quantity of work in their books show that they have made very good progress over the last twelve months in all three subjects. As with pupils lower down the school, standards in information and communications technology, physical education, art and design, music and design technology meet national expectations. Standards in history and geography are above national expectations.
9. Since the last inspection, standards have risen at the end of the junior phase in English, mathematics and science and have been maintained in information and communication technology. It is not possible to comment on improvement in other subjects, as judgements were not given. The key issues raised have been fully met. The need to provide more investigative work in mathematics and science has been addressed fully.
10. Pupils with special educational needs, including those who are gifted and talented and those for whom English is an additional language are achieving well.
11. All pupils are generally achieving very well, considering their prior attainments

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

12. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development and relationships are good. Parents firmly endorse the opinion that their children enjoy school and make good progress.

#### **Strengths**

- The pupils show great interest in lessons and in the wide range of activities the school provides, including extra curricular activities.
- Behaviour is very good in lessons and about the school.
- Personal development is good. The pupils are thoughtful about others and respect one another's feelings. They have high moral and social standards.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average.

#### **Area for improvement**

- There could be a wider range of opportunities for pupils to show initiative and accept responsibilities.
13. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are eager to come to school and approach their lessons with enthusiasm. They settle down quickly at the start of lessons and maintain concentration very well to the end of the day. Pupils are very willing to talk about what they are doing and explain how they arrived at their answers. They collaborate well in groups, when encouraged to do so. They can display good qualities of independent learning when given the opportunity, particularly in the older year groups. All pupils listen very well and speak confidently. For example, in a Year 2 information, communication and technology lesson, pupils discussed their learning objectives very

clearly and set about their task with good maturity for their age. Older pupils quickly learn to allow each other opportunities to comment. They enjoy the short dialogues in lessons, making constructive contributions.

14. Behaviour is very good. This is directly due to the patience and dedication of the teachers, with the wholehearted co-operation of parents. The pupils are polite, courteous and trustworthy. Pupils know the school rules well and feel the systems of rewards and sanctions are fair. They are very orderly when moving around the school and look after their environment. Pupils enjoy lively conversation over lunch. Play is very good-natured, with a broad mix of small and large groups absorbed in lively activities. They co-operate readily with lunchtime supervisors who stimulate play with the younger pupils very well. Older pupils look after younger ones, as occasions arise, but regular interaction is limited, due to the separate play areas for the different key stages and also the different break times, which inhibit the development of a 'whole school' atmosphere. The pupils are thoroughly involved in the friendly competition of the House Points System for good behaviour, trying hard in lessons and for special achievements. They cheer on one another's successes. Pupils know how very seriously the rare instances of aggression, or tendency towards bullying or name-calling, are viewed. Exclusions are not part of the ethos of this school.
15. The pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions on others. This is particularly evident from talking to Year 6 pupils, who exhibit a very responsible understanding of sharing and caring and of what school is about. Some encouraging co-operative behaviour is developing through circle time amongst the younger pupils and through personal and social education, as pupils are progressing through the year groups. There is a strong moral code. All pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong, and share in the making of their own class rules. All pupils know well what is expected of them, in and out of school.
16. Pupils respect others' feelings and beliefs and have a growing understanding of one another's differences. They are learning to appreciate the vast world of resources and relationships around them, strengthening their spiritual awareness. They enter well into the atmosphere of assemblies and the sacraments, in songs and prayers and listen very respectfully to staff and visitors who lead them. They enjoy the opportunities to take part and can express themselves well in impromptu role-play. For example, in an infant phase assembly on Initiation, pupils acted out the sacrament of Baptism with sensitivity and understanding. Pupils have some good realisation of the diversity of cultures, which is revealed, for example, by the happy celebrations of one another's achievements in art, music and sport. They enjoyed celebrating the Chinese New Year. There is real enthusiasm for the after-school clubs, which are well attended. Pupils wholeheartedly appreciate the time that staff give to them.
17. Social development is good. Pupils can show initiative and take responsibility willingly when asked. All enjoy the daily routines, such as preparing for lessons, or supporting one another by sharing resources. Even the youngest know where to put their things. They are visibly content and purposeful. However, these roles are not yet integrated into a personal and social education programme to enhance their maturity as they move up the school. Pupils enjoy working through their learning objectives. They share development of their future targets with their teacher. However, they have no opportunity to view and add comment on their annual reports. Older pupils develop more independent skills in preparation for secondary education. They speak confidently about moving to their next school. A wide range of social and personal achievements is highlighted at the weekly celebration assemblies. There is much competition for the Class of the Week and the Writer of the Week awards. Those presented are warmly applauded at the weekly celebration assemblies. Pupils appreciate the work of the visitors, such as charity representatives, who come to talk to them. Pupils, working in pairs, may select their own charity and run their own events to raise funds. Relationships are good. There is generally happy companionship. Pupils are confident when speaking to staff and can share their concerns freely.
18. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average. Pupils and their parents know that regular attendance and punctuality are good habits to be fostered for the future. They are regularly made aware of the criteria for authorised and

unauthorised absence. Nonetheless, authorised absence remains too high. Occasional days off and holidays during term time are too common. Pupils enjoy school and many are always early, but a small minority are late too frequently. Pupils enter their classrooms, greet their teacher cheerfully and eagerly look forward to lessons. Registration is prompt and effective.

19. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to school. They are very well integrated within the school community. The level of support and encouragement that they receive has a significant impact on their self-esteem, their confidence to ask for assistance when they are not sure what to do, and on their achievements.
20. Every effort is made by the school to ensure that the pupil who is in the early stages of the acquisition of English is fully integrated into the life of the school.

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

21. There has been a very good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

### **Strengths**

- The degree of challenge in lessons is very good.
- There is a brisk pace to most lessons.
- The teachers' management of pupils is very effective.
- The sharing of learning intentions for lessons with pupils is most helpful.
- Pupils show strong interest in their learning.

### **Area for improvement**

- In a minority of lessons, pupils could be given more scope for independent learning.

22. The overall quality of teaching is very good; this school has a competent and committed team of teachers. Overall, teaching in the lessons seen was very good in the foundation stage, the infant phase and the junior phase. In all lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory. Overall, it was satisfactory in 18 per cent of lessons, good in 29 per cent, very good in 42 per cent and excellent in 11 per cent. Excellent lessons were seen in each of the three sections of the school.
23. The biggest strengths in teaching include the helpful manner in which teachers often share the learning intentions for lessons with their pupils, the skill with which they manage their pupils and the degree of challenge in lessons that are conducted at a brisk pace.
24. Teachers work very hard and know their pupils well. Pupils are aware of what is expected from them in terms of behaviour and respond appropriately. In an excellent numeracy lesson for pupils in the infant phase, in which the teacher showed excellent class management, the pupils mirrored the teacher's enthusiasm and they showed great enjoyment for the subject. These pupils made excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of odd and even numbers, using mini-football pitches to decide whether teams were evenly matched in terms of the number of players. The excellent class management enabled this challenging lesson to run smoothly.
25. The pace of lessons is very good through the school, overall. In the best lessons, pupils are reminded of the time limits on an exercise, as in an excellent Year 6 numeracy lesson. When pupils are given relatively short time spans to complete a piece of work and are reminded of this, it ensures that they focus on the work they have to complete.
26. Throughout the school, literacy and numeracy are very well taught. Lessons start with effective question and answer sessions, to revise previous work and set pupils thinking. For example, in an excellent literacy lesson for pupils in Year 6, the teacher asked probing questions that thoroughly assessed pupils' level of understanding and pupils' personal response to a shared text.

27. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are generally very good in all subject areas. The teacher of the Year 5/6 class has expertise in information and communication technology and, by spreading this to other staff, has made a positive impact on pupils' learning in this subject throughout the school. Staff have yet to receive the nationally-provided training.
28. In both the infant and junior phases, day-to-day marking of pupils' work is good and, in the foundation stage, it is very good. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly, with appropriate comments to praise pupils' efforts, together with comments to stretch pupils who have obtained full marks for a particular exercise. House points are awarded for particularly good efforts or achievements.
29. Lessons start with clear learning intentions and these are looked at again at the end of lessons, to see how far they have been achieved. This is having a major impact on improving pupils' learning, making them aware of both the purpose of lessons at the outset and exactly what they have learned at the end. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson in the infant phase, on the sequencing of odd and even numbers, pupils were left with absolutely no doubt as to what the purpose of the lesson was and, by the end, whether the purpose had been achieved. Appropriate reminders were given to pupils during the task to chivvy them along. Most literacy and numeracy lessons end with a worthwhile oral question and answer session. The use of homework is satisfactory, overall, and supports pupils' learning. At times, however, there are inconsistencies of approach to the setting of homework.
30. In a minority of lessons, pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves. This was particularly evident in some science lessons where, although they were carrying out high quality investigative work, they were sometimes "led" to a particular conclusion a little too early and before they had, perhaps, made one or two instructive errors.
31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator discusses and develops pupils' individual education plans with the class teacher and the learning support assistants. The school is implementing recent new initiatives and this is good practice. There is a good quality of support for pupils from nursery nurses and classroom assistants. The provision of targeted support to meet individual needs and group needs ensures that the pupils develop high levels of self-esteem and learn very well. Teachers plan and implement work specifically designed to match pupils' particular learning needs. They also use skilful questioning to ensure that pupils are fully included in lessons so enabling them to make consistent gains in their learning. At times, pupils are appropriately withdrawn from class to upgrade their skills. However, sometimes, pupils are withdrawn when support in class could be more effective in promoting learning.
32. The school provides a learning support assistant to give specific help to the pupil who is at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language. Good collaboration takes place between the parents, the bilingual assistant and the class teacher. The presence of the parent and the bilingual teaching assistant enables the pupil to participate in lessons. Unfortunately, funding for the part-time support is only for a short period. The school is exploring ways to maintain this support, to consolidate the very good progress the pupil has made in the acquisition of the English language. The language and learning needs of the pupil are well assessed and taken into account in the teaching provided.
33. Standards of teaching have improved very considerably since the last inspection. At that time, three in ten lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory or worse, and fewer than one in ten lessons were judged to be very good or better. In the current inspection, no unsatisfactory lessons were seen and just over half the lessons were very good or better. Teachers' planning, expectations and pace of teaching have improved appropriately. ICT is used well across the curriculum.

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

34. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in this respect. It is now teaching investigative work in science and the use and application of mathematics well. The fostering of pupils' personal development has also improved and is now good, overall, with a strong emphasis on pupils' moral development.

## Strengths

- The school offers a broad curriculum, which is particularly enriched by the quality and relevance of the English, science, history and geography programmes.
- The school has extensive links with other schools and colleges.
- The strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy skills are very effective.
- The provision for pupils' moral development is very strong.

## Areas for improvement

- No major areas for improvement were identified.

35. The school offers a stimulating curriculum, which includes all the National Curriculum subjects. It is broad and balanced and is of greater interest and relevance to the pupils than is usually found, because of its focus, where appropriate, on the school's locality. The geography and history programmes use local resources well to give pupils a good sense of where they live and the science curriculum is designed in such a way as to stretch even the highest attainers, whilst supporting those pupils who need it. English offers a high quality curriculum, including significant works of English literature. Teachers' planning makes appropriate use of the national schemes of work or the local authority's adaptation of these. The school teaches good sex and drugs education for its pupils through science lessons on 'the healthy body' in Years 5 and 6. Parents are made aware of the courses' contents. Personal, social and health education has just started at the school and is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to each other.
36. The school has adopted the national literacy and numeracy strategies and uses them to very good effect to improve pupils' understanding of English and mathematics. The very high scores the school has gained in the end of key stage tests over the last two years from an average starting point in Year 1 are the best measure of their effectiveness.
37. The provision for extra curricular activities is good and includes music, language and sports, as well as opportunities to take part in concerts. The school offers an extensive range of sports activities and inter-school sports fixtures. Soccer, cricket and rugby are played regularly and tennis has just been added to the list. There is a flourishing recorder group and choir, as well as peripatetic music tuition, with pupils learning violin, cello and woodwind instruments and playing in assemblies. Other clubs include a sign-language club and a French club, the latter being run by an outside provider.
38. The school has very strong relationships with other educational bodies. The local authority has provided a significant amount of training and support. The local high school supports the school with the loan of resources, liaises well with pupil transfer at Year 6 and sends Year 7 pupils back to the school occasionally to help with reading. The school is well regarded locally and has links with teacher training colleges and colleges that train classroom assistants and nursery personnel. The school prides itself on assisting its own volunteer helpers to become fully trained in this field. Local primary schools work well together, both on a sporting front and on sharing expertise and resources.
39. Pupils' personal development is good, overall. The school's ethos is positive and supportive and shines through in many lessons. In Year 4, the teacher has gone to great lengths, including creating special displays, to make a new pupil feel welcome to the school and this is typical of the teachers' and pupils' attitudes. There are positive relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves, though the youngest and oldest pupils rarely mix because of the geography of the school. The monitoring of pupils' personal development, whilst at present only informal, is an area the school is developing well. There is equality of opportunities for all pupils, irrespective of their gender, race or prior attainment.
40. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and this is an improvement from the last inspection. Science lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the wonder of God's



world, whilst religious education and assembly sessions prompt them to reflect on their own beliefs and the beliefs of other religions. The whole ethos of the school is very positive, creating a climate in which everyone can grow and flourish. Teachers give pupils time to consider, think and pose questions and they answer pupils' questions honestly. Displays and writing opportunities allow pupils scope to think of others in a prayer or a wish.

41. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and this is an improvement from the last inspection. The school has a code of conduct, framed in the positive, which defines correct behaviour and which is displayed throughout the school. It is known to all pupils and is followed by all adults in the school. This consistency of implementation promotes fairness. All adults, especially the teachers, offer good moral examples to the pupils and encourage them to respect each other, their environment and property. Recent charity work and a wonderful 'jungle' display in the foyer of the school, made entirely by the pupils themselves, have greatly enhanced their understanding of environmental issues.
42. Provision for pupils' social development is good and this is an improvement from the last inspection. Pupils work well together, for instance in a dissolving experiment in science, or on the tennis team playing mixed doubles. They also work well in teams during outdoor and adventurous activities and help one another during the Year 6 residential visit. The school promotes pupils' thoughtfulness for others through its work for many charities. These events are initiated and carried through by the pupils, who have worked to raise money for a whole range of UK and overseas charities. However, opportunities to exercise leadership such as in a school council or to become more responsible are too limited.
43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good and this is an improvement from the last inspection. The school's own culture is well promoted through mini-altars in each classroom, displays and assemblies. Pupils are very well aware of what the school represents. The curriculum also provides very good insights into British culture, in particular through English literature, history and geography, with the studies of the poetry of Adrian Henri, Victorian Southport and the River Alt, for instance. There is a growing awareness of the multi-cultural society of Britain today through the recent visit of the African drummers and the study of the main world religions.
44. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The curriculum meets the recommended requirements and pupils follow the curriculum through tasks that are well adapted to their individual needs, which ensure that they make consistent gains in their learning. There are good arrangements for identifying pupils' needs and for checking the progress that they make. Occasionally, pupils are withdrawn for specialist help, but consideration needs to be taken as to whether or not the pupils' needs would be better met if this provision took place within the classroom. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Language development for the pupil at an early stage in the acquisition of English is integrated well within lessons, so that the pupil has full access to the curriculum. The school has an appropriate policy for gifted and talented pupils. It is developing a register for such pupils, and those identified as being potentially gifted or talented make satisfactory progress through the extension work set for them in class. Overall provision for gifted and talented pupils is currently satisfactory, but providing enrichment activities within the normal school week is at an early stage.

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

45. This is a caring school with a purposeful atmosphere; the children's individual needs are paramount.

### **Strengths**

- Provision for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare is very good.
- Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are well established.
- The school promotes self-discipline very well.

- Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and successful.
- Assessment procedures in English, mathematics and art are good.
- Individual support for the pupil's personal development is good.

#### Areas for improvement

- There is a need to develop assessment procedures further, particularly in science.
46. Pupils are welcomed in a secure, warm and clean environment. Teachers have a very good rapport with the pupils. They provide a happy working atmosphere in which the pupils can grow into rounded individuals. All the staff are aware of the strict criteria to be observed in child protection. The school has good access to educational, medical and social agencies. There is sensitive care for those unwell.
  47. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Monitoring is thorough and any unexpected absences are queried immediately. Regular attendance is strongly promoted, during registration, through assemblies and individual reports to parents and by Attendance Certificates. The criteria for absence, with positive comments on the past year's levels of attendance, are clearly stated in the school prospectus and the governors' Annual Report.
  48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting self-discipline are very good. The school's comprehensive behaviour policy is shared fully with parents and pupils. A wide range of strategies is used to encourage the very good attitudes and behaviour observed during the inspection. Guidelines are conscientiously shared with pupils, resulting in consistently high standards of self-discipline throughout the school day. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Bad behaviour or bullying is not expected. Parents' co-operation is promptly sought where necessary.
  49. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers show sincere concern for their pupils. They have high expectations of them, are always willing to listen to them and are very respectful of their individual needs. They promote an industrious atmosphere. Parents realise this and are pleased the school helps their children to mature. They are confident that teachers expect their children to work hard and do their best. Some parents are reluctant to approach teachers to discuss immediate problems at the beginning of the day. Notwithstanding, there is an open door policy to see the secretary or the headteacher all day and teachers are always available at the end of the day. Appointments are readily made for more formal matters. Parents are listened to and their views valued.
  50. The school has good procedures in place for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers assess pupils' progress and, if there is a need for intervention from an outside agency, the appropriate arrangements are made for specialist support. Appropriate arrangements are made to ensure that the requirements outlined in the pupil's statement of needs are met. They are reviewed appropriately with parents.
  51. The assessment of pupils' work and its use to plan future work is good overall, but could be more effective in science and the foundation subjects, in particular. Whilst progress in this area has been made since the last inspection and some tracking is now taking place, assessment is not consistently implemented through the school. For example, rather than pupils being identified as at a level 4a, 4b or 4c, they are generally assessed as being at level 4 in science and the foundation subjects. Since pupils nationally are expected to go up by only one full level every two years, two years could go by before it is realised that a pupil is not making sufficient progress. The school uses the optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 appropriately.
  52. The school provides a welcoming environment for pupils with English as an additional language. Members of staff and the school community have welcomed and supported the pupil who is presently at an early stage of acquisition of English.

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

53. The parents view the school very highly. They have great confidence in the headteacher and in what the school provides and achieves for their children. This is evident from comments at the parents' meeting, the extremely positive returns of questionnaires and the views of parents spoken to during the inspection.

## Strengths

- The parents have trust and confidence in the governors, headteacher and staff.
- Information to parents about their children's progress is good.
- Parental contribution to their children's learning at home, and their encouragement of pupils' learning in school are good, overall.
- The Parents, Teachers and Friends Association makes a very significant contribution to the life of the school.

## Area for improvement

- There could be more opportunities for parents to share in the daily life of the school.
54. There is a comprehensive school prospectus covering all aspects of school life. The governors' annual report is equally full and informative. It gives very good insight into governors' responsible interest in the school, decisions taken and how they impact on the school. There are also regular memos and newsletters for parents, covering all the activities of the school.
  55. The quality of information given to parents about their children's progress is good. There are ample opportunities for parents to speak to staff through the year. Discussion on current achievements, further progress and target setting is shared with parents at consultation evenings. These evenings are extremely well attended. Written reports conform to requirements, are detailed, individual to the pupil, have some evaluation and pointers for future development. However, there is no provision for the pupils or their parents to comment.
  56. Parental contribution to school life and parents' encouragement of their children's learning at home are good. The Home, School Agreement has had a very good response. The Home, School Reading Records are largely well used. Many parents are perceived to encourage and help their children at home, particularly in the foundation stage and in the infant phase. Information about the curriculum is provided in most classes. However, there have been no curricular-related sessions or open days in recent years. A small number of parents and friends come in to assist in lessons. A good number are always willing to help with trips and visits. All this service is valued. Parents enjoy coming into school for the major festivals, concerts and leaving assembly. However, more opportunities could be made for parents to share in the daily life of the school. There is no tradition of parents coming in to encourage their children at assemblies.
  57. All parents are automatically members of the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association. A strong committee runs a wide range of highly successful events, which are extremely well supported. There are lively socials and discos for families and highly successful Summer and Christmas Fairs. Consequently, significant amounts of money are raised and used for the benefit of the children, providing resources such as pupils' individual white boards and new tables and chairs. The association also supports school events, such as Sport Days, by providing refreshments. All these varied occasions are extremely well supported on the day, bringing the whole family of the church, school, and local community together throughout the year. This is valued greatly by the school.
  58. The school has very good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are kept well informed, are actively involved in annual reviews and also in target setting.
  59. The class teacher is appreciative of the support she has received from the parent of a pupil with English as an additional language; the parent, in turn, has been welcomed into the school.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. There has been very good improvement in this area since the last inspection.

### Strengths

- The leadership and vision of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good.
- The governing body is conscientious and effective.
- There is thorough monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching.

### Area for improvement

- There is a need to improve the level of resources in the reception class.

61. The leadership and management by the headteacher are very good, in both academic and pastoral spheres. The headteacher is hard-working, committed and able and he knows exactly how he wants the school to develop. His leadership ensures very clear educational direction for the school and he is fully backed by the governing body. The headteacher wants the best for his pupils. The school's aims and values are easily seen in the daily routines of the school and the school's aims are re-drafted annually, following discussions with staff, governors and parents. The deputy headteacher, who is a very competent Year 2 teacher, has responsibility for assessment through the school. The senior management team is extremely competent. The subject coordinators manage their subjects appropriately, monitoring planning and marking and, in the case of literacy, numeracy and science, monitoring and evaluating teaching rigorously.
62. The governing body's fulfilment of its statutory responsibilities is very good. The governors want the best for the school and are determined that it should thrive. Their role in helping to shape the educational direction of the school is now very good. There has been appropriate and effective governor training. Governors visit the school regularly and have monitored the implementation of some of the curriculum appropriately, particularly numeracy and literacy. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses and, between them, the governors bring a broad range of expertise to the running of this school. The key issue raised about the lack of awareness of the governing body has been fully addressed.
63. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, along with the coordinators for the core subjects, have monitored and evaluated teaching in well over one hundred lessons since the last inspection. Teachers have been provided with very helpful written feedback on specific issues. This has contributed greatly to the improved quality of teaching in the school and has fully addressed the key issue raised at the last inspection. The issue to delegate responsibility to the deputy headteacher has been resolved.
64. The school's targets are appropriate and sufficiently ambitious. The targets for 2003 are on course to be met. The school analyses the results of external examinations rigorously and informs staff of areas needing greater attention. The school has a very good capacity to succeed.
65. Procedures for the induction of new staff are very good. The recently appointed teachers in Year 3 and Year 5 have been mentored constructively by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Appropriate policies and plans are in place for performance management. All teachers' performance management targets include three objectives on maximising pupils' progress; this emphasis reflects the school's overriding commitment to high standards.
66. The school's coordinator for special educational needs provides very good leadership and management. She works closely with the headteacher and the nominated governor to ensure that pupils receive very good quality provision and are fully included in school life. The headteacher and governors of the school have enabled the pupil with English as an additional language to receive the initial support that is required.

67. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is currently good. The accommodation is good overall, and is very well maintained. However, the 'split site' of the school does not help to foster a whole-school approach. The school's plans to relocate the Reception classes are appropriate. Classrooms have very attractive displays that effectively celebrate pupils' learning. Resources are generally satisfactory in quality and quantity, but they are limited in the reception class.
68. The effectiveness of the school's use of new technology is good; much of the current under-spend in money is intended to be used to improve facilities for the reception class. Finances are handled well and the school applies the principles of best value very well. Specific grants are used appropriately. The school development plan is a most useful working document that clearly prioritises the school's needs.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

69. In order to further improve the school, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:
- develop pupils' joined writing in the infant phase:  
*(Paragraphs 6, 95)*
  - improve resources in the reception class.  
*(Paragraph 73)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

70

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

15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	8	29	20	13	0	0	0
Percentage	11	42	29	18	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.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	261
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	32

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	16	15	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	13	15
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	30	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97(95)	90(93)	97(98)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	29	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(93)	90(95)	94(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)**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	22	19	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	16	16	18
	Total	35	35	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86(89)	86(85)	93(89)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	93(89)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	18
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	34	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81(70)	86(83)	86(85)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)



*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
242	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
0	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: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	24

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	29
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	648942
Total expenditure	641776
Expenditure per pupil	2165
Balance brought forward from previous year	28248
Balance carried forward to next year	35415

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	184
Number of questionnaires returned	111

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	21	4	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	72	27	0	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	45	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	40	8	5	2
The teaching is good.	74	20	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	23	5	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	11	2	0	7
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	24	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	21	2	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	66	24	3	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	32	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	53	10	0	1

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

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

70. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching and learning

#### **Strengths**

- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is very good, overall.
- Teaching has improved from being satisfactory to being very good, overall.
- There is an increased emphasis on children learning to be independent.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Resources in the reception class are inadequate.

71. Children enter the nursery class at the age of three. They enter the reception class in the year they are four, and move into Year 1 when they are five. Many of the children who attend the nursery transfer to the reception class. There are also some children from other pre-school provision. In the nursery, there is one full time teacher and a full time nursery nurse. In the reception class, there is a full-time teacher, a part-time nursery nurse and additional classroom assistance. The teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants have developed their expertise by attending appropriate courses to bring them up to date with the recent changes.
72. All staff have very good, caring relationships with the children. A secure and safe environment has been established. Planning of work in the foundation stage is very good and covers all the recommended areas of learning. Children with special educational needs are well provided for, and are fully included in every aspect of learning.
73. A carefully planned programme helps children to settle into school with ease. Parents and children are visited in their homes, and are also invited into school to learn about how children are taught. Parents and teachers share information to ensure that individual needs are met. Much emphasis is placed on the safety of children and is the reason why parents of children in the reception class are not encouraged to accompany their children into the classroom in the mornings. However, there are plans in hand to relocate this classroom, which will enable a closer working relationship with the nursery. In spite of this limitation, inspectors find that parents are always welcome and staff are pleased to be able to discuss any concerns as well as the progress that children make.
74. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery class and the reception class varies from year to year. The present children in the nursery and in the reception class have broadly average ability, with a significant minority attaining below what is usually expected of children of their age and a small minority above. Teachers' records, children's work and lesson observation in Year 1 show that children have made very good progress in each of the areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage and are well prepared to begin work on the National Curriculum.

### **Personal and social development**

75. Very good provision is made in this area of learning. Children have made very good progress and are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

76. Although the children have been in the nursery class for only a short time, they have settled quickly into school routines and are eager to learn. They are already making good relationships with other children, learning to share and to wait their turn. They play and work together well, show pleasure when given praise for collecting and returning toys successfully and for tidying up after themselves. They try hard to put on their aprons by themselves and show good progress in washing hands and placing their coat on the correct peg. When greeted, they respond politely and they do as they are told. Reception children show increasing independence in selecting resources, to use in imaginative play in 'the three bears' house'. When working in small groups, the majority show consideration for each other and work well cooperatively, taking turns to use the computer and building blocks. When preparing for physical education the majority change quickly. A small number require some adult assistance to ensure clothes are the correct way out and pumps are on the correct feet. Most children are very well behaved, showing respect for each other and adults, and have a growing understanding of the difference between right and wrong. A few children have difficulty concentrating for extended periods of time.
77. The quality of teaching in this area is of a high standard. Relationships between adults and children are friendly. There is clear expectation of children to grow in independence, to have good behaviour, await their turn and not interrupt. There are well-planned times to encourage children to discuss a wide range of feelings. In both classes, staff act as positive role models. Opportunities for both play and learning acknowledge children's backgrounds. There are very good opportunities for children to work alone, or in small or large groups. Children are taught to tidy up after themselves and to look after their own belongings. All these activities promote self-esteem and encourage children to form good relationships.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

78. The children make very good progress in the development of their communication, language and literacy skills. The majority are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals.
79. In the nursery, a small number of higher attaining children are beginning to initiate conversation and are able to express their needs well. Some children who are very young and have only been in school for a few sessions are more hesitant to express their thoughts and to talk about what they are doing. Their listening skills, however, are better developed and when listening to the story, 'Farmer Duck', the majority sustain concentration and demonstrate enjoyment, many joining in with the short repetitive phrases. Reception children are more confident when speaking. They are beginning to recognise letter sounds and to write their names and simple captions. They are able to share stories and suggest what may happen next. They show growing knowledge of the difference between an author and an illustrator. The detailed records of stages of learning for individual children, as well as examples of previous work, show clearly that the reception aged children have made very good progress during their time in the nursery. They are able to identify the main characters in a story. When sharing books, they hold their books correctly, take good notice of the pictures and use these to assist them in answering questions about the story. The higher-attaining children are able to write their names and simple sentences with very little assistance. Lower-achieving children require more adult help in the correct formation of letters. Higher and average attaining children, who have only recently left the reception class, are able to read simple stories. They use their knowledge of letter sounds and the pictures to assist them. They write their news, stories and lists with increasing accuracy.
80. Teaching in this area is very good, overall, and in the nursery is excellent, the teacher exploiting every opportunity to extend children's communication skills. There is very good support from nursery nurses and classroom assistants. In both classes, the varied and very well prepared activities encourage children to communicate their thoughts and feelings. There are carefully planned opportunities to investigate, share books and develop writing skills, enabling children to make very good progress. Staff enhance children's listening and speaking skills by chatting with them and challenging them to explain what they are doing and what they will do next. The staff also take care, when directing their questions, to ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved. During shared reading time, the teachers' very good interaction increases children's vocabulary, their knowledge of letter sounds and simple rhyming

words. In the reception class, children are challenged to explain what they have been doing to the whole class.

## **Mathematical development**

81. Children make very good progress in their mathematical development. Most children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the foundation stage.
82. When children enter the nursery, the majority are in the early stages of developing a mathematical vocabulary. Children show interest in numbers. They play games and are beginning to use number names correctly in play, counting the number of squirrels displayed and matching them to the correct number. In reception, most children can count from 1 to 10, and the higher attaining children beyond. They put number symbols in the correct order. When children line up, they show growing knowledge of positional language, such as 'in front', and 'behind'. By the time most children leave the reception class, they can count forwards and backwards to 20, can count on from a given number and are able to work out simple addition and subtraction sums.
83. This area is very well taught. In both the nursery and reception classes, children are encouraged to learn about mathematics through a good range of activities. There are very good opportunities for children to count, sort, match and sequence, enabling the acquisition of mathematical language and the development of their mathematical skills. Mathematical understanding is developed through very well-chosen stories, songs, games and imaginative play, as well as during activities such as cooking - making jelly and dough in the nursery and making porridge in the reception class. In all these activities, staff intervene to develop children's thinking through appropriate questions, such as 'How many?' 'What do we do first?' 'Who used the most?' 'How did you work out that missing number?' When formal registration takes place, children are included in counting the number of those present, absent and how many all together. In the reception class, good use is made of computers to reinforce children's skills of counting and number recognition. In the nursery, there is excellent use of resources to stimulate interest and to increase children's mathematical skills.

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

84. The majority of children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals.
85. Children make very good progress in this area of learning. When nursery children make jelly, they discuss the flavour, changes in colour and show growing understanding of what happens when hot water is added. They investigate fish, feeling, smelling and describing their observations confidently. They show growing knowledge about Autumn when talking about seeds and squirrels and they celebrate the harvest. Reception children show confidence in using the computers, higher-attaining children demonstrating good control of the mouse and knowledge of how to print out their number tables. Others investigate the on-screen prompts with adult assistance. In both classes, children discuss the differences between when they were babies and now they have grown. Reception children are eager to learn about different countries in the world and are interested in looking at pictures of the countries Barnaby Bear has visited. When making puppets and models with construction toys, they demonstrate developing techniques and skills to build constructions and join materials together.
86. Teaching is very good, overall. In the nursery, there is excellent teaching and interesting and attractive resources are provided to stimulate children's curiosity. Children are encouraged to talk about photographs, discuss the ingredients in the cakes they make, knead dough, investigate seeds, ask questions and find out information. Both classes offer exciting and interesting experiences to extend children's knowledge, such as visits to the park, the farm, and the fire station and visits from grandparents, health visitors and musicians, but resources in the reception class are limited. The staff ensure that children's own customs and faiths are celebrated and increase children's knowledge and understanding about other people's cultures and beliefs. The children have celebrated the Chinese New Year and participated in the nativity play. Teaching also supports children's spiritual development well, enabling children to celebrate the Catholic faith and to grow in awareness of others' beliefs.



## **Physical development**

- 87. Children make very good progress in physical development and are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals.
- 88. In the nursery, children's skills in building with construction toys and modelling materials are developing well. They move with increasing agility when playing 'the farmer's in his den' and 'ring a roses'. In the reception class, children move with good confidence. They are growing in understanding of why they need to change for physical activities, and follow the teacher's instructions to investigate different ways of travelling well. They run, jump and hop, with good agility, demonstrating sensible use of the space and an awareness of others. In both year groups, children use a good range of small apparatus and are growing in confidence in handling tools and objects, such as the mouse that they use with increasing control to find and move information on the computer
- 89. Teaching in this area is very good overall. The teachers, nursery nurses, classroom assistants and students encourage children to try new experiences. Children are taught to move and play safely. Staff teach skills, such as throwing, catching and how to use equipment, such as scissors, safely. They provide well-planned opportunities for children to work individually, in pairs, small groups, or teams and to learn to have consideration for others. Skilful questioning challenges and extends children's knowledge of what is required and teacher demonstration increases their skills. The school action plan contains details to improve facilities for outside activities

## **Creative development**

- 90. Children make very good progress in their creative skills and most are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area.
- 91. Children join in singing nursery rhymes and songs from memory and also move with a growing sense of rhythm. Even the youngest are able to accompany their singing with actions. In both classes, children use their imagination in their drawings and paintings, exploring the use of paint, pencils, crayons and collage and applying paint carefully. Older and higher-attaining children experiment with mixing colours.
- 92. Teaching is very good. A wide variety of activities is provided for children to develop their imaginative skills, including art, music, dance and imaginative role play. The displays of work and teachers' planning, as well as earlier work, show that there are carefully planned opportunities for children to explore, experience and respond through their senses, feeling textures, mixing paints and listening to sounds. Cheery songs create a sense of happiness, so children are eager to join in. Very good attention is paid to children's cultural beliefs and to the individual needs of children in the choice of music. Time is used well to enable children to explore, develop and finish their work and constant praise makes children aware that their efforts are valued.

## **ENGLISH**

- 93. The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection, when progress in English through Years 3 to 6 was considered to need improvement. Skills of speaking and listening needed development, writing needed to express ideas through extended narratives and advanced skills of reading and comprehension needed development through the study of a range of literature. Teaching needed improvement in providing work that was sufficiently challenging in lessons that moved with pace and were based on a clear assessment of what pupils already knew. All of these issues have been very well met and the pupils now achieve standards that are well above expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress, as a result of the very good teaching for pupils throughout the school. Standards

of writing are high in work that explores a wide variety of writing styles and uses high quality literature to develop the pupils' imaginative work. Pupils demonstrate good skills of speaking and listening to respond to challenging questions from teachers, with answers that include reasoning and explanation. Lessons are planned well, with clear objectives. Teachers have high expectations and lessons move along with a strong sense of purpose.

#### Strengths

- Standards of attainment for all pupils, particularly those in Year 6, are well above average.
- Pupils are offered a wide and imaginative range of writing models, many drawn from classic literature.
- Skills of speaking and listening are well developed, with pupils using reason and explanation in their answers.
- Teaching for pupils of all ages in the school is based on very good planning, with clear objectives and a strong sense of purpose during lessons.
- Good use is made of the skills of literacy in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education.

#### Areas for improvement

- Some reading resources are no longer fresh and inviting.
- Pupils' joined handwriting could be developed in the infant phase.
- Greater use could be made of the skills of information and communication technology for writing at the drafting and editing stage.
- More opportunities could be made for older pupils to respond to the opinions of others during discussion.

94. Standards in national tests of reading and writing for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were above national averages for reading and in line with national averages for writing. They were well above those of similar schools for reading and in line for writing. This performance has improved regularly over recent years. Pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2002 achieved standards that were well above the average for both national and similar schools, at both average and higher levels of attainment. This improvement in performance comes from the setting of ten and eleven year old pupils into groups of similar attainment, from the support of classroom assistant for eleven-year-old pupils, from increased time for writing and from training for teachers to improve their teaching of writing.
95. Inspection evidence found good standards of Year 2 pupils' work that are likely to be above national averages by the end of the current school year. Higher attaining pupils write at length and retell stories accurately with good detail and accurate punctuation in sentences that have interesting structures. For example, the humour in a story about a dog that had six dinners a day was effectively expressed. Spelling is mainly accurate, with difficult words phonetically correct and handwriting even and regular with well-formed letters. However, this writing is not joined and the pupils have little awareness of this level of skill. Average attaining pupils use simple ideas in a meaningful order and sometimes write at length. However, sentences are not yet consistent in the use of capital letters and full stops and handwriting is uneven, with weak letter formation. Lower attaining pupils have a lot to say in their writing and the spelling of basic words is accurate, but their ideas are not yet organised into clear sentences. Handwriting uses clear letter formation, but control is not yet sufficient for size of letters to be consistent. Pupils of all attainments enjoy reading and most pupils read with confidence and some expression. They use illustrations well to increase their understanding of stories and higher attaining pupils anticipate events and outcomes. Average attaining pupils use punctuation and read with expression, but do not use the other words in a sentence to help them identify difficult words in the story. Lower attaining pupils have some difficulties in blending letter combinations to read new words, but do link pictures and story together for better understanding. Pupils listen well in lessons and use a good range of words when answering questions. They answer in sentences and give reasons that relate accurately to the question. When groups are reading aloud, they use expression well when speaking in different 'voices' for different characters in a simple story.

96. The standard of Year 6 pupils' work is very good and is likely to be well above the national average by the end of the school year. Writing is now strong in the school and standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils' work shows a wide range of writing skills. Passages of classic literature are used as a source for practising handwriting, which is well formed and mature for most pupils. However, lower attaining pupils still show some uncertainty in their script. There is a wide variety of writing and ideas; giving creatures human characteristics and creating imaginative stories, such as 'Conversation with a Ghost', are used alongside the retelling of Shakespearean works in modern language, as well as documentary and explanatory passages. Writing skills are used well in other subjects, such as 'peeping into the diary' of famous people in history and this writing effectively conveyed the characteristics of the famous people. Pupils' poetry about autumn captures the effects of autumn well. Higher attaining pupils make good use of imagery to create suspense. They paragraph logically and speech is used well to record conversations between characters. They use mature sentence structures, with a variety of introductions and connecting words and use effective describing words to maintain interest and develop style. Although average attaining pupils use speech and write at length, they do not develop conversations and use mainly simple words and phrases to connect sentence, but they do use paragraphs and an interesting variety of words to start their sentences. The writing of lower attaining pupils has a simpler structure and mainly factual style, but imaginative ideas are still found in stories of length.
97. Pupils of all prior attainments read with confidence and expression. They use good skills and ideas from the text to understand difficult passages. They enjoy their reading and speak of favourite authors such as Michael Hardcastle, C S Lewis, J K Rowling and Sarah Warburton. They know how to use reference sources and can scan text when looking for key words and ideas. However, only the higher attaining pupils take ideas such as 'banging downstairs' in a story as the character awakens, to signify that parents are packing furniture in preparation for moving house. Most pupils use good skills of speaking and listening as they ask questions freely, make suggestions, offer reasons and respond to ideas in the lesson. They are confident, speak clearly and extend their answers readily with supporting explanation when required. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
98. Teaching and learning is very good overall for pupils from Year 1 to Year 6, with excellent teaching in Years 1 and 6. Most of the teaching was good or very good, and no teaching was less than satisfactory. The excellent teaching was based on good planning, good knowledge of the pupils and of the skills to be taught and very clear explanation. Lessons move along at a positive pace and it is clearly expected that pupils will meet the high challenge of the work. As a result, very good learning takes place, as seen in a Year 6 lesson when pupils developed deeper understanding in response to the probing questions of the teacher. They listened intently and so were able to offer many descriptive words and phrases that could be used to establish the character of the individual in a story. They are able to draw out the essential facts from a narrative poem and create the concise phrases and a punchy style of a newspaper report with headlines such as 'Daughter dies for Thief' and 'Killed by Musket at Midnight'. Year 1 pupils were very eager to learn, as a result of the good teamwork of the teacher and the classroom assistant. Pupils with learning difficulties were fully included in the lesson and made very good progress in the development of reading and comprehension skills. Skilful use of questions involved all pupils and excellent explanation meant that pupils could give very good reasons for the use of capital letters and exclamation marks to increase the effectiveness of writing. Almost all teaching and learning challenges the pupils at a high level and is matched well to their previous learning. Year 2 pupils responded with great enthusiasm to work on connecting words such as 'also', 'then' and 'next', for linking simple phrases and sentences to develop longer sentences with greater interest value. Skills of speaking and listening were developed well in another Year 2 lesson, when pupils are asked to speak in the style of characters such as 'mother', 'father' and 'monster' when reading a class story. Teaching for Year 5 pupils developed explanation and reasoning with questions such as 'How do we know that' and 'What is different?' so that pupils gave reasoned answers and supported their answers with explanations. A wide range of writing opportunities is provided for pupils and the interest level of the work is improved significantly through the use of classic literature, giving interest and challenge to all pupils. Because of this, pupils work hard and develop

a wide vocabulary. Year 4 pupils, for example, find themselves explaining the word 'glossy' and the phrase 'without compromise'. Year 5 pupils suggest phrases like 'the cat meandered' and 'a fascinating smell' when looking at story openings. However, when teaching was less successful, the lesson proceeded too slowly and pupils were asked to read a difficult text without preparation or supportive development from the teacher. As a result, pupils lost concentration and did not follow the lesson closely. When planning a poem, pupils were shown how to generate descriptive ideas about a wolf and then asked to use the process to describe a tiger. However, most pupils did not have the skills to 'transfer' the process and so generated simple and basic ideas such as 'sharpness of a knife' and 'whiteness of an eagle's feathers'. Only the higher attaining pupils succeeded with good images such as 'the softness of a falling leaf' and 'the pattern of a tree trunk'.

99. Attitude and behaviour are very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard at their writing. Presentation of work is good and shows pride. There is a good quantity of work from the majority of pupils and they are eager to learn. Year 6 pupils work well as a group. They co-operate, discuss their ideas and evaluate the effects of the words when writing newspaper accounts from a poem about a highwayman. Year 2 pupils give their full attention and enjoy the learning experience. They help and support one another and so gain maximum benefit from their lessons. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. They are confident in the use of their writing skills, their work is celebrated in attractive displays and they experience much high quality literature in their lessons.
100. The management of English is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has responded well to the issues of the previous report. A clear and positive focus on writing has resulted in very good improvement in standards. The performance of pupils is evaluated and targets are set through discussion with individual pupils to improve aspects of their work. Teaching is monitored and focus points are used to develop skills. Opportunities to use literacy skills in other subject areas are developed well. However, although lessons in information and communication technology link well with lessons in English, there is insufficient use of these skills for drafting and editing work in pupils' writing. The skills of speaking and listening develop through drama and improved use of questions by the teachers, but there are few opportunities for older pupils to respond to the views of others during class discussion. Resources, overall, are satisfactory and teachers prepare good and effective materials for use during lessons. However, some of the reading resources have become shabby.

## **MATHEMATICS**

101. There has been very good improvement in this subject since the last inspection.

### **Strengths**

- Consistently, well above standards are achieved by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- There is clear sharing of learning intentions with pupils in all numeracy lessons.
- Lessons are characterised by a high degree of challenge, brisk pace and effective planning to maximise learning.
- There is now a greater focus on investigative mathematics.
- There is a planned, whole-school approach in the use of mathematical vocabulary.

### **Areas for improvement**

- There could be even greater emphasis on pupils' instant recall of their multiplication tables.

102. On the basis of 2002 national test results, based on average national curriculum points scores, pupil attainment matched the national average at the end of the infant phase. The percentage of pupils obtaining level 2, the expected level, was above the national average; the proportion obtaining the higher level 3 at the end of the infant phase was in line with the national average.

Pupils' performance in the infant phase mathematics test was average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The average attainment of pupils in the three years 1999 to 2001 was above the national average in these tests. On average, pupils leave the infant phase nearly half a term ahead of pupils nationally. The performance of girls and boys in the tests has been similar.

103. In the 2002 national tests at the end of the junior phase, pupils' attainment in terms of points scores was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining level 4, the expected level nationally, was well above average, as was the proportion reaching the higher level five. When compared with pupils from schools of a similar type, standards were also well above average. The performance of boys has been similar to that of girls over the last three years. Over the years 1999 to 2001, averaged together, pupils have left Year 6, approximately two terms ahead of pupils nationally.
104. For the current groups of pupils, evidence from the lessons observed, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that attainment is above average at the end of the infant phase and well above average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of the junior phase. This is true of pupils, irrespective of their gender or ethnicity. Within the range of mathematics work seen during the inspection, many pupils in the infant phase demonstrate a good level of attainment related to investigative mathematics and number. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in the junior phase do not all have sufficiently good knowledge of their multiplication tables, because the tables are not always practised in class with sufficient regularity. Pupils aged eleven can use trial and improvement methods effectively to solve number problems such as "find two consecutive numbers whose product is 16002". They can read and plot coordinates in all four quadrants and have the mental confidence to recall properties of quite complex shapes appropriately. Pupils use correct mathematical vocabulary throughout the school and this greatly helps their learning. They develop appropriate strategies when solving problems in their heads, can interpret charts appropriately and are familiar with different ways of presenting data. Pupils aged seven are appropriately familiar with block graphs and pictograms. They can formulate rules for predicting the results of adding odd or even numbers. Many realise that "odd" plus "odd" plus "odd" gives odd. There was no discernible difference in the performance of girls and boys in the lessons seen. Standards in mathematics, currently, are higher than those at the time of the last inspection for pupils at the end of Year 6; there is now a greater emphasis on investigative work. Higher attaining pupils are paired with older pupils, where appropriate, to enhance learning. To raise standards of attainment further in both key stages, there is need to ensure that all pupils have instant recall of their multiplication tables.
105. Overall learning of pupils in mathematics is very good in both infant and junior phases; this includes those pupils having special educational needs and the pupil for whom English is an additional language. Factors aiding progress include the enthusiasm of the pupils and their liking for mathematics, the behaviour of the pupils and the overall very good standard of teaching. The teaching observed was excellent in three of the eleven lessons seen, very good in seven lessons and good in the other one. The features that made the best lessons excellent and contributed to a very high rate of learning, were the highest possible expectations on the part of the teachers, coupled with a brisk and purposeful pace in which the teachers set time targets for pupils. Such lessons clearly explained what the learning intentions were at the outset, and re-visited these at the end of the session to see how far they had been achieved. All these facets were present, for example, in an excellent Year 3 numeracy lesson on developing pupils' knowledge of right angles. Teachers in most numeracy lessons begin with effective question and answer sessions, to revise previous work and set pupils thinking. In numeracy lessons, the likeliest time for pupils to lessen their rate of working is in the "independent learning" sessions. In the best lessons, however, teachers are aware of this and set appropriate time targets, as in, for example, an excellent Year 1 lesson. Pupils' achievements are very good.
106. The coordinator for mathematics has monitored and evaluated teaching through the school and has provided teachers with worthwhile feedback. Assessment procedures are good; the subject is appropriately resourced and makes effective use of ICT on a regularly programmed basis.

## SCIENCE

107. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in this subject, because teachers' planning has improved, they focus on investigative work well and because teaching in Years 3 to 6 now offers pupils appropriate challenge.

### Strengths

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Teaching is consistently strong across all years.
- All staff emphasise investigative work in lessons.

### Areas for improvement

- A written action plan for science is required.
- Some investigations could be less teacher-directed.

108. The school's results in the teacher assessments and national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 are high and have been rising over the last few years (1999 to 2001). In 2002, they were exceptionally high, compared with all schools and also similar schools and a very high proportion of pupils gained the higher level. Inspection evidence substantiates these judgments. Because of the good quality of the teaching, pupils achieve very well in science at this school.
109. The school could make available only current pupils' work and a few books from the previous Year 6, so limited evidence was available to the inspection team. Standards by the end of Year 2 are likely to be above the national average and pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2. They have a good knowledge of the factors needed for plant growth, which they discussed in depth. They make thoughtful predictions as to what might happen if any of these factors were removed and organise their experiment well, showing an emerging knowledge of 'fair testing'. Higher attaining pupils use the correct vocabulary, such as compost and oxygen. All pupils use their observation skills well in a walk around the school to identify different 'habitats' and to draw the creatures that live in them, with higher attaining pupils producing quite accurate diagrams and well-written labels.
110. Standards by the end of Year 6 are likely to be well above the national average and pupils have made good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. Pupils have a very good idea of 'fair testing'. All know the parts of the body and higher attaining pupils have a clear idea of the function of the main organs and how the blood carries oxygen and 'food' to the muscles. They are all aware of what causes their heart rate to increase - exercise – but more able pupils were also able to suggest fear and stress. Pupils' knowledge of food groups, such as protein and fat and their effects, is sound, as can be seen in their café menus, which were produced, using the computer, although they do not practise these positive ideas in their lunch boxes! They have good prediction skills, use computer simulations to gain more information about the heart and use textbooks increasingly to gain further knowledge. They were not entirely accurate in measuring their own heart rates, but knew the reasons for this experimental error.
111. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to succeed in this subject by being given extra explanations and slightly less wordy worksheets. The one pupil at an early stage of acquisition of English as an additional language is making very rapid progress. He knows how to do much of this work and benefits from a translator, so that he can access the language.
112. Teaching across all classes is strong. Teachers plan their lessons in some detail, providing additional support for pupils identified as lower attaining and challenge for higher attaining pupils. Lessons are well structured and resources are used very well to amplify teaching points; for instance, the use of real animal hearts in Year 5 and 6 lessons brought home to the pupils the complexity of their own bodies. Pupils are usually attentive in these lessons and work very hard. Year 5 pupils have done 8 pieces of work already this year, which is a remarkable output. There is appropriate emphasis in all classes on careful observation and investigative work, as in Years 1

and 2 who considered growing plants with and without water and Years 3 and 4 who looked most carefully at trying to dissolve solids. Pupils are asked to predict 'what might happen', then to observe the experiment closely and discuss what did happen and why. All pupils are fully involved in lessons, handle equipment with care and are diligent in attempting the experiment. Note taking is accurate, though a little teacher-directed and uses pupils' mathematical knowledge well, as in Year 6 graphs on heart rate. Pupils' individual targets are used well in the younger classes to stimulate pupils and give them a focus to their learning, but do not feature sufficiently in Years 5 and 6.

113. The coordinator has done a remarkable job in raising standards so rapidly, culminating in all pupils reaching the anticipated level in Year 6 last year. She has organised training for colleagues, monitored planning and teaching and analysed the school's test results. The subject must continue to move forward so a written action plan is required.

## ART AND DESIGN

114. It is not possible to grade the improvement in this subject, as it was not referred to in the last inspection.

### Strengths

- Standards in teaching are good, overall.
- Planning is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to work are very good.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are good.

### Areas for development

- Monitoring of teaching and learning within classrooms has yet to be fully effective.

115. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards of work match the levels expected nationally.
116. By the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils followed their teacher's demonstration and instructions very well, mixing paint successfully to make lighter and darker shades. They also completed self portraits, following the teacher's guidance in how to draw hair and facial features. Pupils were able to explain the process and discuss how they might improve their work. Work displayed does not contain such individuality, although there is evidence that pupils are developing techniques. They use sponge painting and silhouette to complement each other in their pictures of the Great Fire of London and pupils in both Years 1 and 2 use collage well in their portraits of the queen. Paintings of musical instruments, observational drawings of seeds and fruits and computer art to form portraits are used well to support their work in other areas of the curriculum. In all these undertakings, pupils have used colour and design to satisfactory effect.
117. In the lessons seen, pupils by the end of Year 6 generally make good progress, reflecting the good teaching observed. However, the earlier work in pupils' sketch books and in displays indicates that progress in the development of skills has not been consistent. The school has, during the last two years, introduced a nationally recommended scheme, which is assisting teachers well in their planning and the teaching of a wider range of skills. However, there was less emphasis on skills in the previous scheme and the older pupils have missed elements of development further down the school. The new skills have not yet filtered through to the pupils in the older classes to match the demands of the new syllabus.
118. Techniques are better developed. Individual work, such as pupils' posters portraying the local football team and The Mersey Ferry, which are displayed in the school and 3D masks are of a satisfactory standard and contribute to the cultural development of Year 3 pupils. There is some good work in Years 3 and 4, where pupils have investigated the local environment and

photographed and developed their settings for their work on dreams. The ideas in their sketch books are at an earlier stage of development, however, but their felt tip patterns and 'Roman' tiles have been completed with meticulous care. During the Year 4 lesson, pupils used their investigations of texture well, to create printing blocks with individual designs and experimented with these to reproduce pattern. Previous work this term includes some good evaluations of their efforts in reproducing pattern, using a computer program. Pupils also study the style of famous artists. Year 5 pupils arrange their own still life display, which they record, imitating the techniques and style of Cezanne. They are growing in knowledge of the history of art, the use of correct technical terms and in understanding how to create light and shade. Their careful drawings of hearts, which are on display, do not reflect such technical skill, but do contain spiritual and moral messages that enhance their learning in those areas, as well as their writing skills. Year 6 pupils complete paintings to reflect events in World War 2. They make satisfactory use of colour in their individual interpretations; however, their painting skills are restricted by the size of brushes they have chosen to use. The higher achieving pupils in Year 6, when completing observational drawings of a skeleton, are beginning to be able to reflect shape, line and shade. Many pupils have not yet developed the observational skills to record the finer detail accurately.

119. The standard of teaching is good, overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and are able to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. Lessons are very carefully planned. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to experiment, using a satisfactory range of tools, media and techniques. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of their classmates. The pace of lessons is good, there being a brisk review of earlier work to consolidate knowledge and a sharing of what pupils are to achieve within the lesson. Time is used well to enable pupils to experiment and develop their work. Effective questioning encourages pupils to review and to improve their work. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work in pairs and independently. Teachers value and celebrate pupils' achievements through taking the time to display their work in an attractive way, in classrooms and corridors.
120. There are examples of very good teaching throughout the school, where teachers are implementing the new scheme well, by demonstrating techniques, teaching skills, introducing vocabulary associated with art and providing challenging tasks to build on pupils' previous knowledge and skills. Pupils with special educational needs and the pupil at an early stage in the acquisition of English receive good support, enabling them to participate fully.
121. Pupils show very good attitudes to learning. They work attentively and show good persistence when the task is difficult. They are enthusiastic, help each other and complete their work carefully, with a sense of purpose and pride.
122. The coordinator has contributed well to the development of art, through helping staff to understand, plan and implement the nationally recommended guidelines. These are in the early stage of implementation. Although there is monitoring of planning, there has been little opportunity for the coordinator to monitor teaching and learning within classrooms and the progress pupils make as they move through the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

123. It is not possible to grade improvement in this subject, as it was not referred to in the last inspection.

### **Strengths**

- The introduction of the new scheme is assisting teachers in their planning of activities that build on previous learning.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Assessment procedures are in need of development.



- Monitoring of work within classes and the progress pupils make throughout the school require development.
124. Owing to the way the timetable is organised, it was not possible to observe lessons in design and technology during the inspection. Judgements are, therefore, based on a small amount of earlier work, teachers' planning and discussion with the coordinator and pupils. No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching as none was seen.
  125. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' standards meet the national expectation and pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
  126. The school provides a good range of opportunities for the development of design and technological skills. The recent use of nationally recommended guidance is beginning to influence planning. This takes account of pupils' varying learning needs and provides opportunities for pupils to design what they make.
  127. There is good provision for the pupils with special educational needs, who are fully included. There is now an increased emphasis on pupils being encouraged to work together co-operatively and also to act on their own initiative.
  128. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experienced a satisfactory range of opportunities for them to develop their designing and making skills. Year 1 pupils have discussed their ideas and created a puppet that reflects the character of Florence Nightingale. Work involved making a papier mache head, joining two pieces of fabric together with stitching and discussing the design reflectively. Pupils found the stitching element difficult, all but the higher achieving pupils requiring much adult assistance. They had more success in adding the features, which reflect their individuality. Year 2 pupils have designed seed packets. They have measured, cut and joined their work successfully. The decoration on the front is of a satisfactory standard and the finished product is fit for purpose.
  129. Work collected from the previous term demonstrates that pupils throughout the junior phase have successfully designed, measured, marked out, cut and shaped a satisfactory range of materials and assembled and joined components satisfactorily. Photographic evidence of pupils in the previous Years 3 and 4 shows them making metal candlesticks. They have also designed and made paper bags with handles that bear weight, as well as designing and making sandwiches in their healthy eating project. Year 5 designed a garden and also slippers, which they made from felt. There is some interesting work involving willow sculpture and lantern making. Year 6 pupils have designed and made wind up toys and investigated how mechanisms can be used to make things move. The quality of this work is satisfactory, pupils having used a range of appropriate joining techniques in their work.
  130. Pupils in years 1 and 2 say they enjoy design and technology, demonstrate keen interest and show pride in what they have made.
  131. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject and guidance for teachers in using the new scheme. A good range of visiting experts gives pupils the opportunities for first hand experience. The planning document is of a good standard. It includes learning intentions, activities and classroom management, with particular reference to safety issues. There has not yet been any monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning within classes; however, teachers' medium term plans are checked for appropriate content. The school is aware that assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress need development in order to increase pupils' knowledge understanding and skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

132. There was no report on geography at the time of the last inspection and, so, improvement since that time cannot be judged. However, inspection evidence shows the subject to be developing well. It was not possible to observe any lessons for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, and so

standards, teaching and learning have been judged for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6, from lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work in books and on display.

#### Strengths

- Standards are above expectations by the end of Year 6.
- There is good teaching and learning for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6.
- Emphasis is placed on positive and effective teaching of the skills of enquiry, explanation and comparison.
- Good use is made of literacy and numeracy skills in geography.
- A very good scheme of work has been devised, which makes very good use of the local area and is enhanced by visits to locations.

#### Areas for improvement

- No areas for improvement were identified.

133. Standards achieved by pupils who will be at the end of Year 6 at the end of the school year are above those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils know about the water cycle and explain this with illustration and explanation. They know the main features of a river and have developed a detailed diagram to show these features on a local river, the River Alt. Information from a field visit shows measures of depth, water levels and width at different points. These are indicated on a cross-section diagram of the river. A well-planned investigation into water flow identified an average rate from the time taken by different floats to travel a set distance. Good links with other curriculum areas, such as mathematics and science, are evident as the pupils also did a river dip and identified the creatures found. Although this work was a class project it is possible to note appropriate levels of attainment as average attaining pupils used less detail in their explanations and lower attaining pupils used prepared worksheets and basic explanation.
134. Good teaching and learning are evident from the lesson observed and the analysis of pupils' work in books and on display. A full range of skills and experiences are taught and this curriculum is developed to a high level of interest through the study of locations close to the school. This scheme covers all aspects of the programme of study and develops the skills of enquiry and explanation very well. Teachers and pupils respond well to this structure. Pupils enjoy their lessons and use factual information in explaining and discussing land use and pollution. They use photographs and locational skills of mapping to place the topic in a geographical context. Mapping skills include the use of scale, contour lines, 3 figure grid references and latitude and longitude. There is a high volume of work and pupils have studied natural disasters such as forest fires, volcanoes, and tornados. Good planning, preparation and explanation were features of the teaching when pupils were assembling a fact file about rivers of the world. Pupils were given opportunities for independent research within a structured framework. Very good teaching at this point made all pupils aware of geographical features such as land use, energy, water use, irrigation, transport and industry, so that they were well informed in preparation for their task. A wide range of sources was used and the majority of pupils produced informative details about rivers such as the Thames, the Ganges and the Nile. Almost all pupils selected only relevant facts without any unnecessary detail. All pupils were interested and enthusiastic; they identified with the tasks and were keen, ready and willing to learn.
135. The subject is led well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. The scheme of work is used well and teachers have been trained in its best use, so pupils in all year groups benefit from a sound curriculum. All topics are evaluated and the resultant information is used to influence future teaching. Sound use is made of information and communication technology skills and the school has resources for developing mapping skills, studying rainforest environments and researching data bases. However, more CD ROM resources would be beneficial. Teaching and learning are monitored through scrutiny of pupils' books and some lesson observation.

## HISTORY

136. There was no report on history at the time of the last inspection, and so improvement since that time cannot be judged. However, inspection evidence shows the subject to be developing well.

#### Strengths

- There are good standards of attainment for pupils at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.
- Inspectors observed very good teaching and learning for pupils in Years 1 & 2, with good teaching and learning for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6.
- Effective use is made of literacy skills in history.
- There is good teaching and learning of the history skills of enquiry, explanation and comparison.

#### Areas for improvement

- No areas for improvement were identified.

137. Standards of attainment for pupils who will be at the end of Year 2 and for those who will be at the end of Year 6 at the end of the school year are above those expected for pupils of these ages. Year 2 pupils know about facts in history and are able to use these facts to explain events. They link events and identify cause and effect. They can place events in a correct order over time, and they use their skills of reading and writing well in collecting information and in writing about their learning. When studying the Great Fire of London, higher attaining pupils explained in their independent written work that the fire spread because of the wind, the closeness of the buildings and the lack of a fire brigade. Diary accounts of the Great Fire showed a clear understanding of the sequence of events. Other pupils completed worksheets and did less independent writing, but they were able to show a grasp of the basic facts and make simple explanations. Lower attaining pupils used mainly copy writing and placed illustrations in order of event, but were able to make basic statements such as, 'It started in Pudding Lane' when writing independently. Year 6 pupils evaluate sources of evidence for accuracy and establish the difference between facts and a point of view. They explain situations and compare conditions in the past with those of the present. They research information for their topics and develop reasons to explain events in history. Although average and higher attaining pupils use these skills well in their work, other pupils offer mainly factual information and use limited reasoning in their explanations. For example, in work about the effects of bombing, pupils used a variety of sources such as maps, illustrations and factual information in their interpretation and explanation of events from the last world war. This work used skills of mapping from geography, evaluative reading and writing factual accounts from literacy.
138. Teaching and learning are consistently very good for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 and good for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. Teaching was never less than good in the lessons observed. The most valuable factor about all of the teaching was the development of the study skills of history. Pupils are presented with factual information and a variety of sources. Important learning is made possible as the pupils are required to use this material in writing accounts through the eyes of a person of the time. This challenge is present for the youngest pupils as well as the oldest. Pupils in Year 2 write diaries in the style of Samuel Pepys and study statements about the work of Florence Nightingale to establish links of cause and effect that prompted her work. Pupils in Year 1 discuss the accuracy of newspaper reports about the conditions faced by Florence Nightingale in Scutari. Pupils in Years 3 & 4 use factual knowledge well when writing about Boudicea and link their knowledge of the Iceni tribe, Colchester, Catus and London to the conflict between the Roman Emperor and Queen Boudicea. Year 6 pupils used reading and writing skills from literacy well as they evaluated accounts of the evacuation of children from cities during the last war. They made good links with ideas from other lessons, such as stories in literacy about wartime and made a number of perceptive observations about the good and bad features of evacuation. They supported their observations with facts and reasons and made good use of their skills of explanation. However, although they looked at the evidence from different points of view, opportunities were missed to develop the literacy skills of speaking and listening. Groups were

not asked to put forward a point of view from one position and so use the good and bad points to support a view that might be taken by country people, politicians, children or parents.

139. Pupils have good attitudes to their history lessons. They enjoy their work and take pride in its presentation. Year 1 concentrated well for lengthy periods of time, Year 2 pupils worked with a real sense of purpose and Year 6 pupils co-operated well in discussions. The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator and the government suggestions about the curriculum for history have been developed, so that they offer a wider range of learning opportunities. Planning focuses on the development of the study skills of enquiry, comparison, explanation and evaluation. Resources are satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

140. The subject has made good, overall, improvement since the last inspection.

### **Strengths**

- The school benefits from a new state of the art ICT suite.
- Every class has two timetabled lessons in the suite each week.

### **Areas for improvement**

- No area identified

141. Standards at the end of the infant phase and at the end of the junior phase meet national expectations; they are set to rise as the programme of regular lessons in the new ICT suite makes its impact. By the end of the infant phase, pupils use information and communications technology (ICT) to correct punctuation and spellings on text from work in literacy. They are able to generate text and insert appropriate pictures and save and retrieve information speedily. By the end of the junior phase, pupils are able to produce multi-media presentations, mindful of the needs of their audience. Their work in producing animated "books" for pupils in Year 2 is of a high standard. They can present information in different forms and understand the need for quality in their presentations. Their presentations include appropriate use of hyperlinks and "action settings". Pupils' work on control, monitoring and modelling is at nationally expected levels. Pupils routinely use ICT as a tool to help their work in other areas of the curriculum, particularly literacy and numeracy.
142. Learning is now very good throughout the school for all pupils, including those having special educational needs and the one for whom English is an additional language. It was possible to see six lessons in this subject, five of which were taught very well and, in one lesson, pupils were taught well. The school makes very efficient use of its ICT suite; all classes are timetabled for two sessions per week there. The computers are not, however, networked to the computers in the classrooms, to enable further work to be carried out in class. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.
143. Pupils' response is very good indeed. They show great eagerness for and interest in this subject. Pupils work hard in practising their skills and work co-operatively very well. They are not afraid to volunteer their own suggestions and, sometimes, are ahead of both the teacher and the inspector.
144. The co-ordinator for this subject is knowledgeable and has spread her skills through the school. Whilst she has already provided in-service training for colleagues, she has not yet had time to monitor and evaluate the work of all colleagues. There are appropriate computers in every classroom. The school is linked to the Internet and is developing its own web site. There is an appropriate range of cross-curricular software. Great improvements have been made since the last inspection in terms of the hardware available; standards remain in line with national expectations.

## **MUSIC**

145. This subject was not referred to in the previous report.

### **Strengths**

- The coordinator is a highly skilled music teacher.
- Singing in lessons is good.
- Pupils benefit from peripatetic teaching.

#### Areas for improvement

- Pupils could experience more music from different cultures.
  - Pupils could be given more scope to record their own rhythms and music.
146. Only a few lesson observations were made during the inspection and there was no recorded work to scrutinise, though videos of school productions were viewed. Pupils in Year 6 discussed their knowledge of the subject.
147. By the end of Year 2, standards are above those found nationally and the pupils have made good progress since leaving the reception class. Pupils sing with great confidence, often in parts, and show a good awareness of dynamics. They clap quite complex rhythms and are beginning to explore musical notation. They have a sound knowledge of some major composers. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty reading the words of songs and have to learn them 'by heart' but this does not stop them joining in with all activities, including concerts. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly in line with those found nationally and all pupils make satisfactory progress. They understand tempo, dynamics and crescendo and diminuendo well, and can demonstrate these skills in their singing. They have good knowledge of the value of formal notes and can beat out rhythms. Higher attaining pupils can read musical notation and follow tunes quite well. However, for the majority of pupils, knowledge of the notes' names, music from around the world, classical composers and their experience of formal and informal notation is only satisfactory.
148. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, overall, towards their behavioural targets because they are very motivated in this subject. Those with literacy targets find reading the songbooks difficult, but have support with this from their teacher and the class assistants. The one pupil in the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language makes sound progress in music. He can join in beating rhythms and using instruments, but his very limited language skills make singing very difficult for him at this stage.
149. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very strong. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the confidence to move away from the taped programme to enhance the pupils' understanding. Their lessons have pace, teach the correct vocabulary and challenge the pupils to perform. In Year 1, the pupils met the challenge of beating out a complex 'loud and soft' rhythm on their knees. They enjoyed the lesson fully and were enthusiastic for the next one. Year 2 pupils chose percussion instruments that reflected their part in 'the song of the owl' and played them with good control and rhythm.
150. In the junior years, teaching is satisfactory. The teachers rely heavily on taped music programmes. These provide a sound structure for lessons for less experienced teachers, move quickly along and challenge the pupils' singing ability. Teachers use them well, but are sometimes unable to expand on the points being made; for instance, the interesting instruments in a Year 4 programme were discussed by the teacher, but not shown to pupils. Pupils tend to be passive and well behaved in lessons, rather than the excited learners seen in Years 1 and 2.
151. The school has rightly been focusing on English and mathematics since the last inspection and the coordinator has just taken over the subject. Whilst the subject has 'ticked over', she knows that there is a great deal to be done. She is presently writing an action plan and reviewing the whole curriculum, which relies heavily on taped programmes. These do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to listen to and appreciate music from other cultures, or to record their own music. Peripatetic music teaching is very strong and the pupils make rapid progress in learning to play their instruments. They can follow this up by joining the local schools' orchestra, based at a nearby secondary school. School concerts, choir performances and nativity plays demonstrate a high quality of singing and are enjoyed by the public, parents and pupils alike. Music and singing are insufficiently represented in school assemblies.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. This subject was not referred to in the previous report.

### Strengths

- The provision for swimming is good and standards are high.
- Dance is taught well through the school and standards are good.
- The coordinator has a good action plan for the subject.
- There is a strong range of extra curricular sporting activities.

### Areas for improvement

- The level of activity for all pupils during coached tennis lessons could be greater.
- The use of assessment requires development.

153. It was not possible to see all aspects of physical education (PE) during the inspection. These judgments are based on those aspects observed or discussed with pupils.

154. By the end of Year 2, standards are good, overall, and pupils make good progress. Pupils perform well in dance and have good general games skills; no gymnastics lessons were observed. In dance, pupils explore contrasting movements well, gradually putting them together to make a sequence. In Year 2, pupils rehearsed their sequence, which told the story of waking and capturing the dragon, performed it for others and listened attentively and responded to the comments of other pupils. The quality of performance came from the consistently good teaching of dance through Years 1 and 2. Pupils during a tennis lesson had a good grip, most could make a forehand shot and the majority could rally quite well with a coach. The backhand shot was new during this lesson and few had grasped the body and foot position yet.

155. By the end of Year 6, standards are satisfactory, overall, and pupils make satisfactory progress through the junior years. Pupils' attainments in swimming and dance are above national expectations, and those in gymnastics and games are in line with those expected nationally. Athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities were not observed. In Year 6 dance, pupils can effectively combine graceful movements, which match the Indian music they are dancing to. Led by the teacher, they constructively criticise each other's movements in order to improve them. Later, with constructive interventions by the teacher, they quickly learn sequences of steps to a 'Gala Dance'. Pupils join in these activities well, often in mixed pairs, concentrate for the whole lesson and acknowledge that they are breathless at the end because of the exercise. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 stated that they really enjoyed swimming. 'I like diving for the brick!' said one boy. Most had passed more than the 25m national standard and could use all the recognised strokes. Higher attaining pupils could swim more than 100m comfortably. They had also experienced personal survival skills, such as treading water and swimming with some clothes on. Games skills are sound. Pupils can play net games like short tennis, invasion games like soccer and rugby and fielding games like rounders and cricket with improving skill. Gymnastic skills are sound. Pupils can move around the apparatus with good control and build a sequence of movements as part of a group. They often watch each other's work and offer constructive suggestions for improvements.

156. Pupils with special education needs make similar progress to other pupils. The pupil in the junior years who is in the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language is making sound progress. He receives support via a translator during lessons and is quick to imitate the pupils in his group during gymnastics.

157. Teaching is good, overall, in Years 1 and 2, because teachers have the ability to inspire their pupils, as in a Year 1 lesson on 'The Big Wave', when the pupils moulded their bodies to the shape of the wave very effectively and gained early experience in putting together sequences of movements to match the story and music. All lessons had good planning, pace and challenge.

Teachers used the taped resource well, not relying on it, but stopping it frequently to inject further teaching points, or to watch a pupil demonstration. Pupils responded very positively, were enthusiastic about the activity and made positive comments about each other's performance. The individual tennis coaching was of a high standard and the pupils were extremely enthusiastic about learning the game. However, during this lesson pupils were too static, mostly waiting for their next 'turn', sometimes in queues of 10 or more.

158. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in Year 6 dance, Year 3 games and Year 4 gymnastics. Here the teachers explained tasks clearly and used pupils well to demonstrate teaching points. Lessons kept moving and pupils maintained a high level of activity throughout. Teachers challenged pupils well in dance and gymnastics, using open-ended tasks which all could achieve in some way. Tennis lessons were less demanding and pupils spent too long in queues waiting for their next turn in contrast to the very lively 'bat and ball' lesson in Year 3 where pupils were constantly engaged in activity.
159. The coordinator supports colleagues well with their planning and teaching. There is a good action plan for the subject, but some of the 'targets' are insufficiently succinct. The pupils benefit from two large and well-equipped halls, ample playing fields and a residential visit in Year 6, during which the school teaches its outdoor and adventurous activities programme. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development by helping them learn to work together in pairs, groups or teams.