

Inspection Report

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ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Colehill, Wimborne

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113828

Headteacher: Mrs Halina Richards

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Baxter
25217

Dates of inspection: 30th September – 3rd October 2002

Inspection number: 247413

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	5-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cutlers Place Colehill Wimborne Dorset
Postcode:	BH21 2HN
Telephone number:	01202 883763
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pauline Baldwin
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25217	Paul Baxter	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught?
19639	Gill Anderson	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?
3855	David Langton	Team inspector	English Geography History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
14997	Val Emery	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs Science Art and design Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St.Catherine's is a seven class Catholic primary school, with 159 pupils attending full time and 28 children attending part time in the reception class. It is below average in size. There are 15 per cent more boys than girls attending the school, with significantly more boys than girls in a few year groups. The school is situated on the outskirts of Wimborne in Dorset and serves a wide area containing an above average proportion of privately owned property. Most pupils possess skills and attitudes that reflect their overall well above average economic and educational backgrounds. Nine pupils come from ethnic minorities and one pupil has English as an additional language. Very few of the pupils (a low number in relation to the national average) are registered as eligible for free school meals. Twenty-four per cent have special educational needs, including specific learning, physical and behavioural needs and this is broadly average. Of these, two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and this is above the national average. Children begin full-time school in the reception class with above average levels of attainment. This can vary from year to year, however, with a few year groups containing a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs than other year groups. The school is oversubscribed and it has just been awarded 'Investors in People' status in recognition of its strong support and use of staff in meeting the pupils' needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Catherine's Catholic Primary is a very good school. It is most successful in using its strong Christian ethos to promote the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and very good achievement, especially in literacy, numeracy and science. In response to the headteacher's outstanding personal leadership, very well supported by senior colleagues and governors, provision is very good in most areas. As a result, standards continue to rise and pupils are on course to meet their targets. The school has responded very purposefully to the findings of the previous inspection and now provides increasingly good value for money.

What the school does well

- The excellent leadership by the headteacher is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, colleagues and governors. Together they share an equally strong commitment for improvement and capacity to succeed that consistently promotes the pupils' learning.
- The pupils' excellent attitudes and relationships are strongly promoted by the staff and ethos of the school and they make a powerful contribution to the quality of their work and progress.
- Standards are high in science and the pupils have well-developed literacy and numeracy skills.
- Most pupils achieve very well, in relation to their prior attainment, by the time they leave the school.
- Excellent moral and social development promotes the pupils' self-esteem and enjoyment of school that underpins their academic and personal achievement.
- Mostly good and often very good teaching is a consistent strength that helps the pupils to learn very well.

What could be improved

- The school's strengths lie in the consistent very good quality of its provision and in its ability to improve. Consequently, no key areas of improvement are identified for specific inclusion in a governors' action plan.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection in 1997 concluded that St. Catherine's was 'a good school, poised to do even better'. Since then the school has improved significantly in all areas and is a very effective school now. Very good improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and this is now a consistent strength across the school, unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated and all pupils, including higher attaining pupils, benefit from greater challenge than at the time of the last inspection. As a consequence, academic standards in most subjects and the pupils' personal and social skills have been raised very well. Provision in most other areas has shown either very good or good improvement and key issues for development identified by the previous inspection have been rectified. The school now gives good value for money, another significant improvement. Inspection now indicates that standards are much higher than the average standards identified at the time of the last inspection and pupils' achievement has been lifted from good to very good. The school has made very good improvement and has an excellent capacity and will to continue this success into the future.

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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A*	C	A	C
Mathematics	A	B	B	C
Science	A	A*	A*	A*

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

Despite variations in the prior attainments of the pupils in different year groups, standards at the end of Year 6 have been mostly above average and have increased at a trend similar to that found nationally. The pupils' performance in last year's National Curriculum tests compared favourably with the standards found in similar schools, in particular the standard in science was very high, placing the school in the top five per cent nationally in this subject. Evaluations of the pupils' performance in this year's tests indicate even higher standards, especially in English and mathematics. Inspection shows that pupils continue to do well. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to attain above average standards overall, reflecting very good achievement for a group of pupils containing an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The appropriate attainment targets set by the school for Year 6 pupils are being attained. Specifically, standards are above average in English and mathematics and they are well above average in science and music. Consistently good and better teaching, detailed lesson planning and the nurturing of the pupils' positive attitudes to learning and effort are promoting at least above average standards in most subjects at the end of Years 2 and 6. Exceptions are the average overall standards in physical education, and in Year 2, the very high standards in science, (many also attain high standards in speaking and listening and reading) and well above overall average standards in English, mathematics and music demonstrated by this capable group of pupils. Part-time children are achieving appropriately in the reception class as they adjust to school life. Many will exceed expectations in most areas of learning, except in their creative and physical development, where their attainment matches expectations. Achievement for all groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers is very good overall and is at least good in most subjects through the remainder of the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show excellent attitudes, contribute to school life wholeheartedly and enjoy being at school. These qualities undoubtedly enrich their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall. A few very young children need and receive sensitive support and steadily develop the considerate personal skills readily shown by the vast majority of pupils throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships and very good personal skills are evident across the whole school, and support very good learning. Pupils assume responsibility seriously; for example, supporting younger pupils or by representing their peers on the 'School Council'.
Attendance	Very good, well above the national average.

The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are strongly supported by the first-class day-to-day example and expectations of staff.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Teaching is a strength across the school and it is a key element in promoting the pupils' learning. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching in reception is satisfactory overall; a large proportion is good. It is typified by warm relationships and by effective management of the children's behaviour. It is supported by a well-planned practical curriculum. The teaching is restricted by the sheer number of very young children being inducted at the same time on a part-time basis. This makes meeting the children's individual needs a significant challenge at this time. The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 1 to 6 and teaching was very good in well over one quarter of the lessons observed. Teachers are very successful in nurturing the pupils' self-esteem and in promoting excellent attitudes and relationships. These have a most beneficial effect on the pupils' learning, which matched the quality of teaching in almost all the lessons observed.

Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Due to the school's cycle of planning and the timing of the inspection it was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in geography in Years 1 to 6, and in art and design and history in Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching is very good in music, and in science, which is a particular strength due to the specialist input of the headteacher. The teaching of ICT has improved significantly as a result of staff training and the creation of a new ICT suite. Teaching is good in all other subjects where judgements are made. Teaching is typified by a very good emphasis on basic skills, by the teachers' very good expectations and management of the pupils' behaviour. As a consequence, pupils build consistently on their previous learning in classes. Since the last inspection, teachers have improved their proficiency in challenging potentially higher attainers and including all pupils. Pupils with significant special educational needs are taught very effectively and also receive sensitive support from teaching assistants. The teachers work well with teaching assistants and parents and their efforts are valued. Teachers use homework well to extend the pupils' learning. All the teachers acquire a very good knowledge of the pupils they teach and use this well to assess and meet their needs. Work is marked regularly and often identifies clear ways of improvement for pupils, thus aiding their progress. Learning is significantly enriched by the consistency of the teaching and standards and the pupils' achievement continues to rise.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in Years 1 to 6; improved and now satisfactory for children in their reception year. Very good provision in literacy, numeracy and in personal, social, health and citizenship. Involvement with the local community and local schools is also very effective in enriching the pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school is dedicated to meeting the needs of all pupils and providing full inclusion and equal learning opportunities for all.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall, excellent provision for the pupils' moral and social development, very good spiritual and good cultural development. These areas are strongly and consistently supported by the school's Catholic ethos and are key factors in promoting the pupils' excellent attitudes and relationships.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall, and in most aspects. Secure procedures for health and safety and pupils' welfare underpin the very secure level of day-to-day care provided by the staff of the school.

The school has a very good partnership with parents, which underpins the pupils' excellent attitudes and academic success. Most parents have made an informed choice to send their children to this school and willingly give support either by helping in school or with visits or by raising significant funds through the school association. This partnership is promoted strongly by the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. Excellent leadership by the headteacher and very good contributions from the deputy headteacher and senior staff are sustaining improvement, strong provision and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good, led capably by an experienced Chair and supported strongly by informed Chairs of committees. Statutory requirements are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very well developed and effective. The school monitors the pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests diligently and uses them supportively to raise expectations and standards.
The strategic use of resources	Existing resources are used well, but insufficient resources for ICT in a few classrooms are restricting the benefits of the new ICT suite by limiting the opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills even more.

The accommodation is of good quality. It has been enriched by the provision of additional classrooms and a kindergarten facility, by enlarged administrative areas and more recently by a magnificent new ICT suite. Having wrestled with a budgetary deficit for several years, the governors are very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and their decisions are, by necessity, based very securely on the principles of best value. Overall the school is staffed and resourced satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The children like school and behave well.• The school is well led and managed.• The children are expected to work hard and achieve their best and the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.• The teaching is good.• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside lessons.• The quality of the information provided by the school about how their children are getting on.• The amount of work given to pupils to do at home.

The inspection team support all the parents' positive views expressed above. Inspectors consider the range and quality of activities outside lessons, (including lunchtime clubs, visits and visitors) to be good for a school of this size. Homework is set appropriately in accordance with school policy and national guidance. The school provides very good information for parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. St Catherine's is a popular school, with many pupils travelling substantial distances by car and coach. It is a growing school and this is resulting in significant variations in the overall level of prior attainment of the pupils within the different year groups. Generally pupils have entered the school with attainment that is above average compared to the national picture. Standards in personal and social and creative development tend to be those that are least developed with standards in communication, language and literacy, especially speaking and listening skills, at a higher level.
2. The degree to which young children settle into life at school can vary from year to year depending upon the skills they possess and the numbers seeking entry. This term 28 children have started on a part-time basis in the reception class and most are being inducted into school satisfactorily. It is a large number of children, however, and they are accommodated in a small classroom. Given their wide-ranging needs, progress is not as rapid as it has been in recent years. The majority of the children achieve satisfactorily in most areas of learning in their reception year. The biggest gains are made in their personal and communication skills. This year the main challenge is to establish clear routines that help the children to develop positive attitudes towards each other and in learning together. Most children respond appropriately to the carefully planned and effective teaching, and by the time they commence full-time schooling their social skills have improved sufficiently to support their learning.
3. By the time the children reach the end of their reception year and start learning in Year 1, learning has been effective and they have achieved satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainments. Communication skills, numeracy and personal and social skills are the areas where learning is most effective. On entering Year 1, attainment is above average in most areas except in their creative and physical skills, where attainment matches that expected of pupils of this age.
4. The pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments for Year 2 pupils has shown a significant improvement in recent years, particularly in reading, writing and science, in response to improved teaching. Standards have begun to improve in mathematics more recently reflecting the successful whole-school emphasis on implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. An analysis of this year's tests indicate an overall well above average performance by pupils at the end of Year 2 in relation to the standards found nationally and an improved and creditable performance in relation to the standards found in similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher than average levels has continued to rise in response to the teachers' increasing expectations of what pupils can and should attain.
5. Inspection now shows that by the end of Year 2 standards are well above average overall, especially in English, mathematics and music and standards are very high in science. This represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection when standards were average overall. This has been accomplished by:
 - improved and now good teaching supported by classroom observations, clear guidance and professional development;
 - consistent implementation of National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies;
 - improved curriculum and lesson planning, focusing on clear learning objectives;
 - improved and now good use of assessments of the pupils' work to raise expectations.
6. Achievement is very good overall through Years 1 and 2, for learning is enriched by very positive attitudes and relationships and consistently effective teaching. The pupils' increasingly well above average skills in literacy and numeracy support their work in other subjects very strongly. The teachers, knowing that the pupils read particularly well, emphasise specific vocabulary and utilise measuring tasks most successfully, to promote the pupils' understanding. This is seen to good effect; for example, in design and technology, ICT and science, where standards are much higher than those identified at the time of the last inspection. Science in particular is now a significant

strength throughout the school, stemming mainly from the headteacher's inspirational leadership and specialist teaching.

7. Results in the National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments for pupils in Year 6 in recent years have been far more consistent than those for pupils in Year 2. They have been well above average overall, almost always at least above average and often very high in relation to the standards found nationally for pupils of this age, especially in science. Even at this high level of performance the school has sustained a trend of rising standards matching that found nationally. The pupils' performance in this year's National Curriculum tests reflect the continuing improvement in standards and shows an even greater proportion of pupils attaining higher than nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science. This is likely to show an improved and above average comparison with the performance of pupils in similar schools. Comparisons between the pupils' performance in tests when in Year 2 with that in Year 6 show that pupils have performed very creditably indicating at least very good achievement.
8. Inspection findings are equally positive and also indicate an improving performance from all pupils across the range of prior attainments. Inspection evidence now shows that the attainments of pupils currently in Year 6 are above the national average overall. This is a lower attaining year group than those normally found in the school for it contains a greater than usual number of pupils with specific learning needs. Nevertheless, in relation to the pupils' prior attainment this standard shows that most pupils are building effectively on their previous learning and are achieving very well overall by the time they leave the school. The pupils' attainment is well above average in science and it is above average in almost all other subjects, including English and mathematics. Attainment is average in physical education for pupils for this age. Most pupils with special educational needs benefit from additional sensitive attention from learning support assistants and by having their needs targeted and met well through strategies outlined in their individual educational plans. Pupils with special educational needs and potentially higher attaining pupils also achieve very well by the time they leave the school. This analysis shows that standards of attainment have increased significantly since the last inspection when they were found to be mainly average. The very creditable performance by the pupils stems from the continued consistent application of strategies employed in Years 1 to 2 plus:
 - consistently good and better teaching building on what pupils have learned previously;
 - sharing learning intentions with the pupils at the beginning of lessons and reviewing new learning at the end of lessons;
 - increased challenge and expectations raising the performance of potentially higher attaining pupils.
9. Pupils achieve very well through Years 3 to 6, in English, mathematics, science and music. Achievement is good in all other subjects, except physical education where achievement is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been accomplished in most subjects, but perhaps most improvement has been achieved in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and ICT, for all these subjects have received whole-school emphasis, as national or in-school priorities. This has initiated improved planning, improved resources and clearer objectives, which have raised the quality of provision and, subsequently, the standards attained by the pupils.
10. The agreed targets for pupils in English and mathematics by Year 6 are suitably challenging and reflect the different levels of attainment shown across the year groups in the school. They are securely based on a careful analysis of National Curriculum test results and are supported by the teachers' good use of assessments of pupils' work. This has enabled teachers to challenge pupils effectively at an appropriate level and so further their progress.
11. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented very effectively and consistently across the whole school. This has helped to raise expectations generally of what pupils should and can attain, and standards have risen as a consequence. A recent whole-school focus on writing is having a positive effect now on learning in lessons, and an increasing number of pupils are achieving very well in relation to their previous starting points. Overall attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing and spelling is at least above average by the end of Year 6. Opportunities to enrich the pupils' literacy skills are developed most successfully across the full curriculum; for

example, in Year 6 when learning to compile multimedia presentations using ICT and in Year 2, where lists of subject-specific vocabulary aided pupils' understanding of mathematics. Identification of key vocabulary is a regular and beneficial feature of teaching and learning in most lessons.

12. The National Numeracy Strategy is also implemented very effectively. As a consequence, standards in mathematics, especially numeracy, are rising steadily. Standards in mathematics are well above average by Year 2, (a particularly able year group) and standards are above average in Year 6 reflecting very good achievement over time and consistently good and better teaching. Teaching and learning has been promoted effectively through the school development plan and industrious and well-focused subject co-ordination and evaluation. The pupils' numeracy skills are developed further and help to support learning in other subjects; for example, by measuring the lengths of materials used in design and technology and measuring activities in science lessons. The pupils' skills are improving, however, their increasing ability to use and apply them effectively in other areas of learning, although improved with the addition of the new ICT suite, is restricted by the lack of sufficient computers available for daily use in the classrooms.
13. Although test results show some differences between the attainment of boys compared to girls, these were not evident in classroom learning. A few classes had a greater number of boys than girls, but this did not impair the learning of any pupils. The teachers are diligent in treating pupils equally and this is a key factor in ensuring full opportunity and success in learning for all pupils. Across the school beautiful displays enhance the pupils work and encourage successful learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils have an excellent attitude to school and their behaviour is very good; this applies to pupils across the full range of prior attainments and special educational needs. This shows a good improvement since the last inspection when both were judged to be good. All parents are very appreciative of these very high standards. Pupils of all ages respond very well to the school's excellent moral and social ethos, and to their teacher's calm and positive management of their behaviour. They know what the rules are because they are involved in making them and so are happy to comply with them. Pupils' response to the short prayer and reflection at the start of the day is to make a calm and committed approach to their learning. The large number of children attending part-time in the reception are taking longer than usual to settle into school life, but observations show that they are beginning to improve their social skills in line with the school's expectations.
15. Overall the pupils' enthusiasm for school and learning is excellent, and this enriches their achievements. They want to work well and are keen to do their best. Their very positive attitudes and attentiveness make an excellent contribution to their learning; for example, in a numeracy lesson in Year 4 pupils responded willingly to counting upwards in hundreds accurately. Pupils are very interested and involved in their activities. In a music lesson in Year 5 all pupils, both boys and girls, were equally giving their all, wanting to get it right, wanting to sing in harmony; generally an impressive spiritual aura that strengthened their learning and attainment. Such positive spiritual awareness reflects the school's emphasis on these values.
16. The behaviour of pupils is very good because it comes from within and is reinforced by the profound impact of the extremely positive ethos of the school. There have continued to be no exclusions since the last inspection. Oppressive behaviour like bullying and racism is not an issue and its absence is a very good reflection on its management and the way individual pupils value and respect each other. This can be clearly seen in the playground, which can be crowded when one is in use for netball, and yet pupils continue to play and relate to each other very well. The high moral development of the pupils reflects the school's excellent provision.
17. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good and are reinforced by the emphasis that the school places on their moral, social and spiritual development. Pupils mix very well and there is a strong sense of inclusion of all pupils in all activities. Pupils are very influenced by the excellent role models about them of gentle, but firm, caring and kind adults who show mutual respect for pupils and each other. This creates an atmosphere of calmness and purpose, which

has a positively profound effect on teaching and learning, and the attainment of pupils. Their respect for the feeling, values and beliefs of others is excellent because empathy is successfully nurtured in pupils; for example, through a history lesson for Year 4 considering the emotions of people caught up in war. Pupils are very good at taking initiative and responsibility; for example, in positions of responsibility like the school council, class responsibilities, just holding doors for others, or showing visitors where they need to go.

18. Relationships are excellent because the school is founded on caring for each other, and this becomes embedded in the children. Parents fully recognise this and expressed their appreciation of the staff, at their meeting with the inspectors, acknowledging the strength of the relationships and the building of their child's self-confidence. This is seen in the developing maturity of the older pupils. Pupils support others very well in class with learning, and through the 'buddy system', where older pupils support pupils at lunchtime and playtime. The strong social development of the pupils reflects the high quality of the school's provision in this area.
19. Attendance is very good at well above the national average and with no unauthorised absence. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils are keen to come to school because they enjoy the happy relationships and the learning opportunities provided for them. This contributes to good punctuality at the start of the school day and for lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching in the school is good. During the inspection the teaching in well over three-quarters of the lessons observed was at least good and in over one quarter was very good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated and there is a higher proportion of very good teaching now. Teachers are continuously seeking to improve and a culture of openness and constructive dialogue is maintained. From a strong position, at the time of the last inspection, the school has continued to improve. This improvement in provision has been achieved by:
 - careful appointment of new teaching staff;
 - very good quality and well focused professional development;
 - very rigorous, but supportive, monitoring and evaluation based securely on classroom observation by the headteacher and senior colleagues;
 - systematic implementation of National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
21. These procedures have increased the teachers' expertise and raised their expectations of what pupils can and should attain. They have also led to consistent and effective lesson planning strategies in all classes. For example, sharing lesson objectives with pupils at the beginnings of lessons This was seen to good effect in a mathematics lesson in Year 6 where the teacher highlighted the language of fractions successfully to aid the pupils' understanding. Teaching is the key reason that standards are rising so rapidly enabling pupils to achieve very well as they move through the school. The pupils' learning also continues to be significantly enriched by the pupils' excellent attitudes to school, which are also consistently promoted by all staff throughout the school. For example, pupils often spontaneously applauded each other's success in lessons, as they did in a very successful mathematics lesson in Year 2.
22. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in reception and are made more difficult than usual at this time by the large number of children attending part-time at the same time, by the breadth of their learning needs and by the restricted space in the classroom provided for them. Much of the teaching is good, however, especially in promoting the children's personal and social skills. However, the limited space is restricting the teacher's efforts to develop these skills through supported and independent play. Even so, the quality of teaching and learning opportunities has improved well in reception since the last inspection. The teacher and teaching assistant make an effective team, and in the short period since the autumn term began, they are seeking to know the children well and are addressing their individual needs carefully.
23. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2, with much being very good in Year 2, where challenge and high expectations from the teacher are enabling a large proportion of

potentially higher attaining pupils to make rapid progress. Teaching is also good in Years 3 to 6 with a high proportion being very good. Teachers involve the pupils well in their learning and take close adherence to the pupils' views and ideas. This in turn motivates the pupils to take more responsibility for their learning and this promotes excellent attitudes. Occasionally when the pace of lessons slips in over-long discussion, it is the pupils' enthusiasm that sustains effective learning. In most lessons, however, teaching is rigorous, but learning is fun. This was clearly illustrated in a very good music lesson in Year 5, which resulted in the pupils' singing a 'round' with little practice, in beautiful harmony.

24. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall. All teachers have a good understanding of the concepts and skills required, enabling them to teach confidently. They have a detailed knowledge of the National Curriculum, understand the programme across all the subjects and the progression through it. In reception, the teacher's understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum is also good. In lessons throughout the school there is very clear presentation of content and learning objectives. Children and pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers use, and reinforce, appropriate subject-specific vocabulary with well-chosen illustrations and examples. They set high expectations and understand the expected demands of pupils in relation to each relevant National Curriculum Level description. Teachers communicate enthusiasm, stimulate intellectual curiosity and motivate pupils. Literacy and numeracy lessons are planned well, involving teachers in enthusiastic presentation engaging pupils and moving their learning on at a swift pace. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, where the teacher's encouragement and strong support of the pupils' independent ideas enriched their shape poems.
25. Overall the school meets the needs of its pupils very well. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught, both in class and when they are withdrawn for small group support with teaching assistants. The particular requirements of pupils with special educational needs and those of potentially higher attainers are mostly identified well in lessons. Occasionally their differing needs are planned less effectively in literacy lessons. Throughout the school, there is scope to identify the specific needs of able and talented pupils more precisely in lesson planning. Most teachers ensure their successful learning through high quality questioning, but this would be strengthened by more consistently detailing their needs in planning.
26. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils with special educational needs, especially for those pupils with significant physical and emotional needs. The quality of teaching for those with special educational needs is good. Class teachers know the particular needs of the pupils very well and take good account of these in their planning, consequently, the pupils make good progress. These pupils are well supported in lessons, both by teachers and classroom assistants who are given good guidance by the class teachers. They are also well supported when withdrawn for extra tuition. The teachers are increasingly working closely with teaching assistants and parents and are effective in involving them in promoting the pupils' learning. This was seen, for example, in the new ICT suite where parents offered informed and sensitive guidance, and in mathematics lessons where teaching assistants offered productive and mostly individual support. There is scope, however, for more consistent emphasis on specific learning objectives in the notes teachers share with such colleagues so that they can extend the pupils' learning even more. Individual education plans include clear targets. These are implemented and regularly monitored by teachers to sustain the pupils' achievement.
27. The school has worked with good effect to improve the quality of day-to-day assessment since its last inspection. This is promoted well through oral interaction; for example, during class discussions at the beginning and end of lessons where links with previous lessons, learning intentions and reviews of new learning, respectively, underpin successful learning. They are supported well through the teachers' marking of the pupils' work. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good and consistent throughout the school. Written and verbal comments are positive, offer constructive ways to improve and often relate to individual pupil and group targets. Pupils' progress in lessons is carefully assessed. As a result, teachers know their pupils very well and keep detailed records of their progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. This means that most teaching, especially the teachers' questioning, is well matched to the pupils' prior

attainment and ensures that pupils extend their knowledge and understanding in a logical and systematic way.

28. Teaching is at least good in all subjects. There are particular strengths in the teaching of science where the headteacher gives strong leadership and example either as a specialist teacher or by her enthusiasm and knowledge in the subject. A very beneficial emphasis is placed on pupils' learning through investigation. This was seen to very good effect in a science lesson in Year 4 where considering questions such as, 'What happens to our skeleton as we grow older?' and 'Why do some bones grow more than others?' underpinned the pupils' successful learning. Very good teaching in music also illustrated the teachers' high levels of enthusiasm and skill that promoted the pupils' learning. Due to the timing of the inspection in relation to the school's planned curriculum it was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in geography across the school and the quality of teaching of art and design and history in Years 1 and 2.
29. The quality of teaching of English and literacy is very good overall. Teachers use questioning successfully to ensure that all pupils are fully involved in whole-class discussions. They promote and utilise to the full the pupils' very good reading and communication skills and expect pupils to think about and evaluate their work.
30. Vocabulary is emphasised consistently extending the pupils' understanding. Teachers also make very good use of opportunities to extend and enhance literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum; for example, in design and technology when investigating and creating structures. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy are also strong throughout the school. All teachers make good connections with previous work, share learning intentions with pupils and review new learning at the end of lessons, thus ensuring that the pupils build on previous knowledge, skills and understanding. This was seen to good effect; for example, in a lesson in Year 4, where the teacher's review of equivalent fractions aided the pupils' understanding of this difficult concept. Numeracy skills are reinforced and extended well to aid learning in other subjects; for example, in science when measuring pulse rates.
31. As a consequence of additional staff training, the teaching of ICT has improved considerably in recent years. It continues to improve as teachers utilise the enriched opportunities provided by the very well equipped new ICT suite. All staff, aided by parents, capitalise on the pupils' enthusiasm and make good use of new technologies such as the 'interactive whiteboard' to stimulate the pupils' interest. The pupils' skills are developing at a pace and teachers are using ICT more effectively now to enrich learning across the curriculum. This was seen to good effect in a lesson in Year 1 where the pupils' letters and designs of thanksgiving to God were enhanced by computer graphics. The use of ICT in the classrooms is less advanced and hindered by insufficient class-based computers. This is limiting the pupils' independent learning on occasions; for example, by using CD-ROMs to research their projects in history and geography.
32. In the main staff manage the pupils' behaviour very effectively ensuring a very high standard of behaviour providing a learning atmosphere that is settled. The large number of part-time children in the reception class presents a challenge at this time, but throughout the rest of the school pupils progress smoothly without interruptions or disruption. Teachers motivate children and pupils by praising good work and attitudes and, as a result, the pupils want to learn. Pupils are courteous and kind, learning to appreciate each other's efforts and helping when asked. All this has a positive impact upon pupils' learning, creating a very productive learning atmosphere.
33. Pupils apply themselves particularly well and show very good levels of interest and independence in their work. The quality of learning is good overall and it is a consistent feature in the vast majority of lessons enabling pupils to build systematically on their previous knowledge and skills. As a consequence, most pupils achieve very well by the time they leave the school. The excellent attitudes and relationships engendered by all staff and reciprocated by the pupils enables them to enjoy learning and to want to do well. The very positive views of parents about the quality of teaching and their children's enjoyment of school are fully endorsed by the findings of the inspection. Most pupils sense that they are learning well, their views are valued and they contribute to lessons with confidence. In the vast majority of the lessons observed pupils listen

very well, settle sensibly to work and learn well. On a few occasions younger children need more support, but the sustained influence of the school's ethos of care and respect based on Catholic values is seen to good effect in their improving attitudes as they move through the school. All this has a very beneficial impact on their learning, increasing their willingness to listen, contribute to discussions and sustain concentration.

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

34. The school provides an inclusive and enhanced curriculum for pupils of all ages and prior attainments. It is satisfactory for children in reception in the Foundation Stage, and good for pupils in Years 1 to 6. There has been good improvement in curriculum provision since the last inspection. All areas of concern identified previously have been addressed successfully. All statutory requirements are met, including a new and effective policy for race equality. The successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and the adoption of the latest national guidelines and schemes of work for most other subjects, supplemented by material from the local education authority, ensure the progressive learning of skills across the school. Provision for 'circle time' (whole-class discussions about personal and social issues) and 'Golden Time', contribute very positively to pupils' learning, and their social and moral development. Since the previous inspection pupil numbers have increased, enabling classes to be taught in single age groups and this has had a significant effect in helping to raise standards. There is regular and effective review of the curriculum through the governors' curriculum committee. Governors have responsibility for a curriculum subject and some have usefully observed the teaching of that subject. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school is developing its provision for identified gifted and talented pupils, with opportunities for these pupils to meet with others from other schools. Provision for ICT in the new, updated computer suite is very good. Arrangements for swimming are currently under review, but meet current statutory requirements. Specialist teaching in science and design and technology is raising standards in these subjects significantly.
35. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. New planning and provision ensures that there is an appropriate curriculum in place, which follows national guidance. The quality and range of opportunities within this new curriculum is also appropriate for children of this age.
36. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is appropriately broad, and following an audit of time after the last inspection, is better balanced. There is heavy weighting towards religious education, but the significantly longer than average working week ensures that pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement. The teaching of history and geography in lessons lasting two hours, for half a term, often with no provision for the subject for a term and a half, is inappropriate. Procedures for monitoring the curriculum have improved since the previous inspection and subject co-ordinators, together with most senior managers have an effective overview of what is taught to whom, when and for how long.
37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The planning reflects the new Code of Practice. Individual education plans are well constructed and relevant to the pupils concerned. They are used as practical working tools and are carefully and regularly reviewed and updated. The knowledge of the pupils of all those involved, including the special educational needs governor, is so detailed that the relevance of these plans is very good. The school has good systems in place to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs are well supported in all aspects of their learning and that they have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
38. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, delivered through the school's new 'Education in Personal Relationships' policy, is a strength of the school. Sex education, drugs awareness and health are well provided for, and workshops are held by the local authority for pupils in Years 5 and 6 for personal health development. Since the previous inspection a school council has been established with elected boy and girl members from each class, each term, raising money for various school projects through cake sales and competitions, and helping with school routine administration. This activity enriches the pupils' personal development.

Provision for personal and social development is encouraged by the 'buddy system', with older and younger pupils having the timetabled opportunity to play and eat together. The whole school has recently written letters, establishing relationships with a school of different background, in Wolverhampton. Over 90 per cent of parents think that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Adults are first-class role models and focus successfully on developing pupils' self-esteem. This provision makes a very successful contribution to pupils' personal development and to the excellent relationships that exist throughout the school.

39. The school has very effective strategies in place for the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy, with very good results. All teachers have received appropriate training and show awareness of identifying specific vocabulary in their lessons; for example, in science, music and information and communication technology, and in planning for pupils' writing, such as empathically in history, experiencing what life was like in England during the Blitz. They frequently take opportunities in lessons, other than English and mathematics, to reinforce and extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Parents help to hear younger pupils read. Assessment data is well used to identify and redress weaknesses in writing and spelling. All staff show a good awareness of providing opportunities for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
40. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. Arrangements for speakers to visit the school, and for school trips to visit places of interest, including residential visits for pupils in Years 3 to 6 are very good. Each class has an educational visit, such as Year 5 to the 'Mary Rose' and Year 3, a recent visit from a Roman legionary, 'Gavius Silvanus'. Years 3 and 4 visit the Science and Natural History museums in London. Visits for younger pupils are appropriate and closer; for example, to the Sealife Centre at Weymouth and Palmer's Farm. Due to the long distances travelled by many pupils most clubs take place during the lunch hour, and during the inspection, children, including some from Years 1 and 2, were involved in computers, recorders, choir, and 'Club Francais'. Groups of pupils learn a variety of musical instruments such as flute, keyboards, clarinet, and guitar and 50 pupils were observed singing in the newly formed choir. Outside visitors for music, from the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, for example, and to teach playground games from the past, for tennis coaching and music tuition, further enhance the quality of the pupils' learning. Parents support clubs well. Netball and soccer coaching are made available, and matches are played against other schools. A residential camp for pupils in Years 3 and 4, run by parents, and stays in Lyme Regis and the Isle of Wight for Years 5 and 6, contribute significantly to pupils' learning and their social and personal development. A significant number of parents have indicated their view that the school makes insufficient provision for extra-curricular activities. Inspection finds this not to be the case.
41. The school's provision to ensure the equality of access and opportunity within the curriculum is good. Boys and girls of all ages and differing prior attainments work and play well together. Teachers show good awareness of inclusion in their planning and delivery of their lessons; for example, in a literacy lesson the teacher made sure that every group had the opportunity to share and comment on their work with the rest of the class. The quality of provision for higher attaining pupils, although often very good, is inconsistent in teachers' planning. Assessment is well used to identify where additional provision such as booster classes and learning support is required. During the inspection week, teachers were observed ensuring that pupils who had been taken out of lessons to read to inspectors or to have brief instrumental tuition were made aware of what they had missed, and enabled to catch up.
42. The school's links with the local community are good. There is regular contact with the parish churches, local firms, the local superstore, with support for the Harvest Festival service, the library and the old people's home. Local people are invited to the school's plays. Pupils take part in the local carnival and sing carols locally. Displays of pupils' work feature in the local store and library. Local services such as the police and the fire brigade visit the school regularly. The school premises are used by a privately run after-school club. Pupils support local charities well. The local Bournemouth Football Club provides soccer coaching for pupils.
43. The school has very good links with other schools. Almost all pupils transfer to the senior Catholic school, St. Peter's, with which there are very strong links. Pupils have induction 'Open Days' at

their new school, and teachers of key subjects visit pupils in their own environment, ensuring a smooth transfer.

44. There are very close relationships with other Catholic schools. The schools' pyramid system enables expertise such as a dancer or artist in residence to be shared. The kindergarten has recently been rehoused and is now accommodated on the school site. This promotes very good induction arrangements for transfer from the kindergarten to the reception class. Pupils take part in games tournaments with other local schools, although these are a little limited due to the different age group structures.
45. The school places very high value on the pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision. It is very good overall and is evident in all aspects of school life, permeating all school policies. Provision for pupils' personal development has improved in all areas since the last inspection. The school's mission statement and ethos strongly promote the provision of opportunities for pupils to develop personal skills to promote Christian values, confidence and respect. The pupils' personal development is a considerable strength of the school and all areas have improved since the last inspection. This has a significant impact on pupils' very good behaviour, their excellent attitudes to the school and very good achievement.
46. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. A key strength is the strong Christian ethos of the school underpinned by Catholic values, which presents a secure and consistent learning environment. An agreed teaching style encourages respect for the views of pupils and encourages their questions. The school ethos encourages pupils to explore their beliefs and values and promotes reflection on the way different beliefs impact on peoples' lives. They study, for example, other world religions and learn how these influence the way different people live. Spirituality is promoted in all subjects of the curriculum. In art, for example, pupils learn to observe, learn about and record the world around them and develop their ability to express their own responses, feelings and ideas, using visual, tactile and verbal means as appropriate. Pupils' self-esteem is strongly promoted and respect for each other is strongly modelled by all adults in the school. This gives pupils confidence to seek and answer questions from teachers, asking 'Why?' 'How?' and 'Where?' providing a wider framework to pupils' learning.
47. Excellent provision is made for pupils' moral development. The school places a strong emphasis on the provision of a clear and agreed moral code through its 'Golden Rules', clear rules, which enforce consistent messages, for example, kindness, honesty and respect for pupils. These are promoted further on the 'Goals Board' providing pupils with a visual recognition of their good behaviour. Additionally, class rules are negotiated regularly and copies are easily available in classrooms for each pupil. These concern such issues as 'take turns', 'help each other' and 'listen'. If these happen to be contravened, pupils are asked to look at these rules during part of playtime and reflect on how they have contravened them. This makes a powerful contribution to the very good behaviour seen in the school. Fair play, respect and support for each other are strong components of the school ethos. Staff provide excellent role models, showing care and respect for the dignity of pupils and valuing each other as individuals. Formal opportunities for debating are a good example of this, where pupils learn to listen to one another's points of view on topics such as environmental issues. The topic of 'waste' is a good example of this.
48. Excellent provision is also made for the pupils' social development. There is a strong sense of community within the school. The school council makes an important contribution to this and consists of representatives from all classes in the school. Comments and ideas are fed to the council through class representatives. Ideas such as 'equipment for the playground' are discussed at the council meeting, which is chaired by a Year 6 pupil. When agreed, pupils fund-raise and order the equipment. Very good provision for residential trips in Years 5 and 6 make another important contribution to social development. Additionally, house captains are elected on a termly basis and candidates are required to make election speeches to entice pupils to vote for them. This very good provision for social development supports pupils in being full participants in the school community and successful learners.

49. Pupils' cultural development is good. Inclusion in local festivals and events such as the 'Christmas Parade' in Wimborne are well established. Visits and visitors also make important contributions to this area. Theatre visits to Poole Arts Centre and the Tivoli Theatre in Wimborne are good examples. Visits to the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and musicians coming to the school are regularly arranged. For example, during the inspection a member of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra worked with the pupils using a 'digerydoo'. Interesting visitors such as a local historian and an astronomer are further good provision. A good focus on life in other countries is a current area of development for the school. There is ample evidence of a strong programme this year, which includes life in the Caribbean for younger pupils and life in Thailand for older pupils. The preparation of pupils for life in multicultural Britain is now satisfactory. Pupils discuss racism and race equality and are helped to empathise with the feelings of others who have different values and beliefs. The contribution of the headteacher's own heritage, which is Polish, is important in these discussions. Pupils are enabled, for example, to discuss and empathise with the feelings of a Polish, non-English speaking family, arriving in the Midlands and how they might be treated. A good link is being established with a school in Wolverhampton to help pupils to appreciate our own cultural diversity, but this has not yet fully impacted on pupils' developments.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. This is a very caring school in which pupils feel very secure and happy and, therefore, settle very confidently to their learning. Teachers know pupils very well, recognise their needs and give them very good support and guidance. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The school has a very comprehensive and effective child protection policy that is reviewed annually. The headteacher is the person responsible for its implementation and has received the necessary training. Liaison agencies are very accessible and give good support. There is an appropriate health and safety policy, which is effective in its implementation. Ongoing checks ensure vigilance and there are no issues outstanding from the last audit.
51. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are good and the personal support and guidance they receive is very good. Good annual reports, which now meet statutory requirements, and records of achievement show that teachers know pupils well and use targets to facilitate their development. Pupils have ownership of these, as they are actively involved in reviewing their termly targets. Annual reports meet statutory requirements, which they did not do at the time of the last inspection. The personal development of pupils is monitored by their class teachers, and supported very well by the very strong and effective spiritual, social and moral ethos of the school. The work of the school council, whereby representatives from each class are able to offer their views and ideas, recognises the importance placed on the pupils' personal development by the staff. The overall impact is to raise achievement in all areas for all pupils.
52. This excellent ethos has a powerful impact on the procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, monitoring and promoting good behaviour and monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, all of which are very good. Registers are kept well and are carefully monitored by the administrative staff. The taking of holidays in term time is kept low as the headteacher discourages this. Parents also want pupils to learn, and the pupils themselves want to come to school. All these factors ensure that attendance is maintained at levels well above the national average.
53. The monitoring and supporting of good behaviour is a strength of the school. 'Golden Rules' are known well by pupils and they value their 'Golden Time Reward' of additional playtimes for good effort and behaviour. 'Circle time' whereby pupils discuss issues as a whole group in classes very successfully ensures the increased involvement of reticent children and gives them empowerment. The school council promotes very positive attitudes and responsibility as pupils know that they have a voice that is not only heard, but is acted on when it is practical to do so. The school's strong ethos encourages the very best behaviour and ensures that bullying is not an issue. All pupils care and empathise well with each other. These procedures are very successful because pupils feel responsible for themselves and others. Pupils are rarely rude or disorderly because of

the strong mutual respect they share with each other and the caring adults who work in the school.

54. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. They are very good in English, mathematics and science, good in ICT and for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment is currently satisfactory in all other subjects, although the school has already identified in its planning the need for more formalised assessment in these subjects. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection, and it has helped significantly in raising standards. Samples of levelled work are kept for all pupils, in English, maths, science and religious education, enabling teachers to check standards. Records of achievement are compiled for each pupil with samples of good work recorded, although these are not levelled against national criteria. Reading and writing, maths and science are assessed regularly, enabling weaknesses to be identified, targets to be set, and evaluations to be made to check that pupils are on target to achieve their goals. Pupils' reading ages are checked against their chronological age twice a year. Different genres of writing are assessed monthly, enabling predictions of likely outcomes to be made. The local education authority evaluates results of some end-of-year tests, enabling the school to make comparisons with other local schools.
55. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and those identified on the revised Code of Practice register have detailed individual education plans. These enable their progress to be monitored frequently and systematically. There is a register for those pupils who are identified as gifted and talented. Since the previous inspection the school has improved its arrangements for identifying these pupils. The deployment of learning support staff is a key factor in the very good provision for these pupils. Good systems are in place to identify children with special educational needs on entry to school in the reception class. Regular assessments and reviews take place throughout the school. Monitoring reviews are a regular feature and individual education plans are relevant and useful.
56. Good use is made of assessment evidence and analysis of data to identify where and which pupils need support through booster classes and additional English support, targeting pupils who might thereby achieve a higher level. Earlier assessment that writing was weak has enabled the school to provide extra support as necessary and raise standards in writing significantly above the national average. Spelling is currently a focus for improvement. A positive feature of school reports is that the school now assesses and grades pupils for their effort as well as their attainment. Marking of pupils' work by teachers is generally good, supportive and suggests ways forward for improvement. Data from assessment is used to help to formulate targets for further end-of-year improvement. Progress towards these targets is checked by monthly analysis of samples of pupils' work. Teachers use information to group pupils within the classroom. Targets generally are challenging, but realistic, and the school is confident of achieving its current goals.
57. Without exception, parents at the meeting praised the level of care provided by staff. The high quality of care is fundamental to the ethos of the school and has been maintained well since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The parents' views are that it is a very good school, and this is supported by the inspection findings. The overwhelming majority of parents supported this view in all areas of the questionnaire. The one exception is that just over one third of parents do not consider that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons, however, the inspectors find that the school offers a good range especially of lunchtime clubs. For example, netball in the lunch hour and trips to support the curriculum, as in history, where Year 4 pupils are to visit Scaplens Court to look at all aspects of World War II to support their current learning in the subject.
59. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their progress and individual education plans are regularly reviewed.

60. The school's links with parents are very effective and this is facilitated very well by the high quality of information provided for them, particularly about pupils' progress. Annual reports, which did not meet requirements at the time of the last inspection, now do, and give good information about what a pupil knows and can do, targets, and levels for attainment and effort. This is of great help to parents as they provide a great body of support for learning. There is the highest level of support for the open afternoon when parents can view their child's work and discuss this at the following parent consultation as well informed partners in their child's learning. Good use is made of homework diaries where most parents are involved in an ongoing dialogue with the school.
61. The impact of parents' and carers' involvement on learning is very good and they are committed to the home-school agreements. Good tracking systems enable identification of pupils needing support, and the school works closely with parents to maximise achievement. Parents give generously of their time in school; for example, a parent helper in an ICT lesson in Year 5 gave excellent support and expertise and considerably enhanced the quality of teaching and learning. The parent association is very supportive making significant contributions to the resources of the school and its social life. They have continued to support the school very well since the last inspection and have made a major contribution to the recent building project that provided two additional classrooms and the kindergarten facilities and currently the computer suite. They also make an excellent contribution to the summer camp as they organise and run it. The experiences provided at this camp enable aims such as developing the pupils' social skills to be met. Opportunities provided at the camp also make a very effective contribution to the developing independence of pupils. The kindergarten facilitates the very good induction of pupils into the school.
62. The school meets the high expectations of parents, and has the confidence of all its communities, both local and farther afield. Links with parents that were already good at the last inspection are now even stronger as they are very good. This is due to the high level of commitment of all involved and the strong ethos of the whole-school family. The key issue of the last inspection concerning annual reports not meeting statutory requirements has now been fully met, and parents are clearly informed of pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good, and this is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. The leadership of the headteacher is now judged to be excellent; a very good improvement since the last inspection. She is an outstanding leader of people, having a clear insight into the needs of staff and pupils. She has significantly reduced the school's budget deficit ahead of agreed times, raised the number of pupils in the school, continued to develop the premises and resources, despite restricted finances, ensured significant raising of standards across the school in national standardised tests and has shown herself to be an exceptional teacher of science.
64. The headteacher would be the first to say that all this is a team effort. She is very well supported by the school governors, deputy headteacher and senior managers. The headteacher gives a very clear lead in the direction in which the school is moving. The school works very well towards the aims and values it seeks to foster and the prevailing ethos of positive, dedicated teaching and learning, seeking the highest achievement for each pupil, where the whole-school community supports each other in living out Christian values and beliefs, and is to be applauded. Staff with delegated responsibilities work very hard to support the headteacher, and their contribution is much valued. The new senior management team, including the co-ordinators for Years 1 to 2 and Years 3 to 6, meet regularly to monitor planning or teaching, scrutinise pupils' work and implement agreed action plans. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and other subject leaders give good support.
65. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is very good. It operates through a very efficient committee system ensuring that the school is taken forward positively. Governors support the headteacher very effectively ensuring that bureaucratic demands have a negative impact. The governing body has a full complement, is well informed by the headteacher

and is fully involved in the running of the school. A 'Governor of the Month' takes especial interest and the Chair of governors, in her role of 'critical friend' meets the headteacher regularly. Many governors have served the school for a considerable time, have much expertise and experience and use this well to plot the future direction of the school. A 'buddy system' for the induction of governors is most effective, and governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They receive detailed information from the headteacher, senior management team and staff, through contact with individual subject co-ordinators. Many also visit the school often, and visit classrooms regularly to monitor lessons. They are linked to a particular class, and track the same three pupils as they progress through the school. This is good practice. They analyse the pupils' results in the national tests, and look at comparable schools' results. Their informal support has been vital in assisting the staff of the school to raise standards.

66. Daily acts of collective worship meet the statutory requirements and provide full inclusion for all. Governors and staff ensure good provision for the pupils' health and welfare and through their new and effective policy for race equality they are strong in their promotion of racial harmony. In all areas the governors meet their statutory obligations. The school has an agreed set of aims, securely based on Catholic values that promote a close partnership with parents. They are fully shared by the whole-school community and are reflected to the highest degree in the work of the school. The school is determined in providing good equal opportunity. The special educational needs co-ordinator, together with the special educational needs governor, provide very good leadership, ensuring the effectiveness of close monitoring of the pupils' personal development, and progress of pupils with special educational needs is regularly undertaken. They ensure that statutory requirements in relation to the pupils concerned, are fully met. The special needs co-ordinator and Governor work very closely together to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met. As a result, several pupils move down and off the register and no longer have special educational needs. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are sufficient overall, with strengths in those available to support mathematics and design and technology.
67. The effectiveness of the governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is very good. They work very closely with the headteacher and senior staff to match the budget to agreed priorities in the school development plan. They are fully involved in the development of the plan, as are all teachers, learning support assistants, lunchtime supervisors and parents. The school's annual and rigorous self-review questionnaire is a powerful tool for prioritising the views of all those involved, and has resulted, for example, in the appointment of a male teacher to set a relevant role model for the pupils, improved provision for music and more physical activities for the pupils. The newly formed 'School Development Group', including the Chairs of all committees, monitors and updates the school performance review monthly. The raising of standards is implicit in its planning and success criteria and has been a successful endeavour.
68. There were no key issues regarding leadership and management at the time of the last inspection, but all the key issues then identified have been successfully addressed, an indication in itself that leadership and management are strong.
69. Financial planning is very good. The school targets its funds very closely and efficiently. The headteacher, Chair of finance and Chairs of committees are very aware of budgetary considerations and have shown great diligence and commitment for a number of years in adhering to a prudent deficit reduction plan. However, at the same time they have shown skills and vision in pursuing and achieving developmental aims, such as the new ICT suite, the new kindergarten and classroom extension and improvements to the administrative facilities. The deficit in the budget is now well under control and governors and staff continue to ensure that available funds are targeted in the best interest of the pupils. The school puts the principles of best value into practice very effectively. It ensures that purchases are made through competitive suppliers and it is constantly evaluating its performance against statistical data provided from analysis of assessments, both locally and nationally. Specific grants, such as the standards fund, are used well; for example, to improve teachers' competence with ICT, in literacy and numeracy, and to promote the pupils' personal development throughout the school. Grants to support pupils with special educational needs are also used efficiently; for example, to provide additional staffing or ICT resources.

Colleagues in the school retain a clear awareness of the impact of expenditure on standards and this is furthering the process of school improvement.

70. Financial control is also very good and the headteacher and Chair of the governors' financial committee work well with the two administrative staff to ensure that the funds made available to the school are managed very efficiently. Together they ensure that the governors are kept very well informed, thus enabling them to make accurate strategic decisions. The school's most recent audit report in January 2000 noted that, 'Despite a £37,000 deficit, it is considered that the delegated budget is being well managed. Being able to lead the school to a balance budget within the five-year period it is considered that this is a realistic goal', clearly indicating the strength of this provision. This inspection shows that the school is well ahead of schedule in reducing the deficit.
71. The school is well staffed and teaching and support staff work extremely well together to meet the pupils' needs. Administrative staff use management information systems very effectively to monitor attendance and the budget, but as yet, it is not used to support assessment. All teachers are well qualified and there are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils in the school. There is scope, however, to review the arrangements for the induction of children attending part-time, in the light of the number of children seeking entry and their needs, which can vary significantly from year to year. The accommodation is good overall. It has been enriched in recent years by the opening of a new kindergarten and classroom block, a new ICT suite and by extensions to the administrative facilities. Classrooms are not large, but most are supported by adjoining shared work areas. The reception room is too small, however, for the large number of children attending part-time and this is limiting learning opportunities. Outdoor facilities are spacious and include woodland and pasture areas, and rich resources for environmental and science work. The provision for learning resources is satisfactory overall. Most resources are accessible and are well cared for. The new ICT suite is a significant development that is extending the pupils' learning opportunities. Not all classrooms have class-based computers, however, and this is restricting the school's attempts to enrich learning across the curriculum using ICT. Resources are used very well to support the pupils' learning.
72. Taking into account the pupils' very good achievement and quality of the education now provided in relation to the funds available, the school provides good value for money; another significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school's shared commitment to improvement and its capacity to succeed are excellent. The message is clear to all that the achievement of every pupil is at the heart of all the school's work. Governors, headteacher and teachers work very well together, constantly reviewing and improving the provision made by the school. The commitment and dedication of the staff is a further strength of the school, resulting in happy, smiling, friendly and confident pupils, wanting to be at school.
73. An interim visit by the local education authority a year ago concluded that St. Catherine's was a successful school with 'clear and powerful leadership. The headteacher's vision, enthusiasm and energy are stamped on the school'. The last inspection concluded, 'This is a good school, poised to do even better.' It has – significantly – and is now a very successful school.
74. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is very good. The headteacher, governors, senior management and subject co-ordinators are all empowered to visit classrooms, view teaching and give feedback to teachers, which helps them identify weaker areas and improve their performance, and the pupils' learning. Identified improvements, for example, are the display and discussion of learning objectives, reinforced in effective plenary sessions. The success of these arrangements is clearly seen in the outcomes; high and very high academic standards across the school resulting from strong and consistent teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes. The role of the co-ordinators has been extended successfully. They now give effective support, although their monitoring of teachers' planning is inconsistent. Joint monitoring by the headteacher and a local authority adviser has been especially effective.
75. The school's strategies for appraisal and performance management are very good. The headteacher has introduced effective systems for discussion with teachers about career

development and needs at the start of each new school year. Support and training considerations are discussed confidentially and objectives set. The situation is monitored and revised after six months, as necessary. The headteacher is assessed by the governors' performance management group, with a representative from the local education authority present, and her performance is evaluated and targets set. The school has recently benefited by its involvement in the 'Investors in People' initiative, enabling training in communication with support staff, to very good effect, through the introduction of a 'buddy system'. It has recently been awarded 'Investors in People' status. Other recent successes of staff development have been the appointments of co-ordinators for music and ICT and the restructuring of the senior management team.

76. The appropriateness of the school's priorities for development is good and comes from a rigorous appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school development plan covers the necessary areas well. Appropriate priorities, such as the recent improved provision for ICT, and the transfer of the kindergarten to the school site, are planned and costed and success criteria are identified, although these are not always sufficiently closely linked to the raising of standards. The overriding priority, to reduce the budgetary deficit, is being resolved most successfully, well ahead of agreed schedules. The action taken to meet the school's targets is very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(* Issues already identified for development by the school.

77. St. Catherine's is a very successful self-evaluating, self-improving school. Strong leadership and management ensure that school improvement is very effective and is based on accurate up-to-date information and identifies appropriate priorities. Consequently, this inspection identifies no major issues requiring separate inclusion in an action plan. However, in order to continue the development of the school, the following minor points for improvement should be considered for inclusion in such a plan:

(* continue to develop and improve the provision for children in their reception year by: (paragraphs 78-87)

- reviewing the accommodation available to provide more appropriate space for practical learning activities, both indoors and outdoors;
- considering alternative part-time induction arrangements when there are a large number of children seeking entry to school.

(* continue to improve the 'in class' ICT opportunities offered to the pupils, so that they can practise, improve and use the skills learned in the new ICT suite to enrich their work in other subjects. (paragraphs 141-145)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	22	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	28	51	21	0	0	0

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

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)	N/A	170
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	44

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	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	12	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	15
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	27	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (89)	96 (89)	100 (84)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	26	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	14	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	17
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	28	27	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (88)	84 (94)	97 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	17
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	30	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (94)	91 (94)	97 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	161	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	7	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	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)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	345,329
Total expenditure	327,399
Expenditure per pupil	1,860
Balance brought forward from previous year	-28,541
Balance carried forward to next year	-12,599

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	170
Number of questionnaires returned	62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	34	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	44	3	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	23	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	48	5	3	5
The teaching is good.	62	32	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	51	8	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	42	2	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	26	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	38	49	11	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	74	23	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	34	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	38	33	3	8

Other issues raised by parents

The vast majority of parents consulted either through the questionnaire or at the meeting with inspectors expressed their strong appreciation of the leadership and staff of the school and the significant improvements made in recent years.

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

78. Provision for children in the reception class is now satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. New planning and provision ensures that there is an appropriate curriculum in place that follows national guidance. The quality and range of opportunities within this new curriculum are also appropriate for children of this age. The accommodation for the reception class, although well organised, is only just adequate for a class of 28 children. The outside play area is limited and is not fenced and secure, resulting in children having to be closely supervised when outside. This has an effect on children's learning in that they do not always have sufficient space to learn and explore in their group and independent activities. Additionally, there is no appropriate inside area that is not carpeted and is suitable for paint and wet activities for young children. The children do experience these activities, but in a carpeted area that is unsuitable. A staged induction process results in children and their parents knowing the school well and children are happy and confident in their new class. All children enter the reception class on a part-time morning only basis, until the autumn half term. This puts considerable pressure on the class teacher to provide for a large number of above average children, at the same time in their first weeks in school. After half term, there is better provision in that the additional afternoon sessions are attended by half a class at a time. This allows the teacher to make better assessments and to give more time to the children's needs.
79. Although the standards of attainment show significant variation from year to year, overall, the children enter the reception class with above average attainment in communication, language and literature, mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal and social development and creative and physical development, their attainment is average on entry to school. By the time the children are ready to start Year 1, a good majority have satisfactory achievement and are above the expected levels of the goals in their English and mathematics and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal and social development, their achievement is good as they are above average by the end of the reception year. Because of this, they are well prepared to enter Year 1 and the National Curriculum and have good attitudes towards their learning.
80. Children in the reception class benefit from satisfactory and at times good, teaching. Children now receive a well-planned practical curriculum, which is purposeful and well linked to national guidance for children of these ages. This means that all children, including children with special educational needs, learn well from practical play activities. A relative weakness in the teaching is the provision of too many demanding activities in which children need too much support from adults to learn well. At this time, there is a lack of sustaining independent activities and thus, there is too much pressure on the teacher. A particular strength of the teaching is the firm handling of the children, insisting that school conventions are established quickly. For example, the insistence to sit quietly in whole-class activities, listen carefully to each other and put their hands up. Additionally, at all times there are good relationships between the teacher, teaching assistants and other adults in the classroom. This means that the children benefit from the consistently good contacts that they have with adults. The effective control of the children by the class teacher, together with good relationships with them, ensures a happy and purposeful atmosphere in the classroom. Although there is a computer in the classroom and this is used for follow-up activities, use is limited by the fact that not all children have the required computer skills to work independently.

Personal, social and emotional development.

81. Children achieve well in their personal development because of the good teaching and their inclusion in whole-school activities, where personal development has a very high value. Children have 'buddies', for example, helpful older pupils in Year 6 and this helps them at lunchtimes and playtimes to learn about school conventions and to see the high standards of behaviour and relationships that exist in the rest of the school. An attractive, welcoming and secure environment

is provided and this helps children to settle quickly and feel part of the school. Children quickly understand school routines and start to work well independently of staff. They show confidence and start to relate well to each other and to all adults in the classroom. For example, children were outside with a support assistant, rolling their toys down a slope, and they were encouraged to take turns and to talk about which rolled the farthest and why they thought this might be so. Children still need adult support, but are already relating well to each other and the need to take turns. The classroom environment is organised to encourage children to become independent and to work and play collaboratively. In the role-play 'Home Area'; for example, dressing up clothes and resources are at hand for children to make choices, organise themselves and play and work together. They are already able to do this for a limited time. Even the youngest children are asked to become class helpers; blowing the candle out after prayers and changing the weather boards are good examples of this and, consequently, their self-esteem and confidence grows. Staff set a good example for children to follow. They work well together as a team and, as a result, the children see the value of co-operation.

Communication, language and literacy.

82. Most children are likely to be above the standard expected in this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1, and their achievement is satisfactory. The reception class provides an appropriate environment where children can develop their written and oral skills. Adults model clear speech in discussions, share books and provide writing opportunities. Children enjoy listening to stories and are quick to understand that text has meaning. Books are shared, both by the whole class and individually and children are soon able to join in the text. The current 'Chicken Licken' book was shared with the class and children are already able to read the characters' names, such as 'Goosey Lucy' and 'Turkey Lurkey'. These had been carefully named on the wall display and collage versions of the characters helped children to identify them.
83. The teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning. Early assessments indicate that the children are above average on entry the reception class, have above average letter recognition, and a good number can already write their names clearly. 'Jolly Phonics' sessions successfully build upon this previous knowledge. A modified literacy hour is already established, where children share 'Big Books' and then work on group tasks. The teacher and other adults give good support to the development of reading, writing and speaking and listening skills. In one group; for example, children chose a coloured feather and were encouraged to feel this on their skin and reflect upon what it felt like. The teacher helped the children effectively in exploring such words as 'soft' and 'tickly' and watched the feather descend, using words such as 'slowly' and 'floating'. Higher attaining children identified initial and final sounds when recording these words. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1, a good majority of children are able to read independently, using their phonic knowledge. They are able to write simple sentences and speak confidently. Higher attaining children write short sequential stories.

Mathematical development.

84. The teaching and achievement of children in this area of learning is satisfactory. Children enter Year 1 with above average mathematical skills. Day-to-day use of numbers in counting familiar objects in the classroom, is well established. Counting the number altogether for dinner and predicting 'more boys or more girls' are examples. As a result of this, children soon learn to count confidently and most could count up to 15, during the inspection. Children were encouraged to find the days of the week and the months as well as the date. Most children are already confident in identifying numbers one, two and three in a dice game and could count on accurately with their counters in the game they were playing. Concepts of 'longer' and 'shorter' were being explored and a good number of children could order a set of six objects according to size and match pieces of string to the right object. A strength of the teaching is the good range of practical activities to reinforce learning. The exploration of 'long' and 'short' was a good example of this, where a good range of practical activities was experienced, using different resources. By the time the children are ready to enter Year 1, they are working beyond the expected goals and are well within the National Curriculum. They solve simple problems, can work out 'two more', 'two less' and write the missing numbers up to at least twenty.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

85. By the time children enter Year 1, they have above average knowledge and understanding of the world. The teaching and children's achievement in this area are satisfactory. Children are gaining a good understanding of the world in which they live through a wide range of imaginative and practical activities. Their activity involving looking at their chalked thumbprints is a good example of this. Children were successfully encouraged to look at similarities, differences and patterns and could make simple observations such as 'mine is different to yours' and 'look at my pattern!'. Other activities in previous planning, indicates a good range of practical activities. Such examples are classifying favourite foods, matching animals to homes and a trip to a 'Farmer Palmer'. Children are encouraged to observe and investigate in such activities as 'what do you see under the water?'. The children's use of information and communication technology is below average at present. Many children do not have appropriately developed skills on entry to the reception class. Provision to use the school's computer suite is good. Children observed working in a very small group with a parent, indicated that they were making good progress during the lesson, but could not continue without adult help.

Physical development.

86. The teaching and children's achievement in this area of learning are satisfactory. Children meet the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Children have appropriate opportunities to develop their fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paint brushes, glue and scissors. They frequently put together and take apart construction equipment and play with small toys such as small-wheeled vehicles to use with a play mat. Regular times in the hall provide a structured time to use the large apparatus and to develop skills with balls, bats, beanbags and ropes. Outdoor play provision is limited in size and has no climbing apparatus, although there are some opportunities to use the kindergarten facilities. Observation of children, early in their school year, indicates average cutting ability and average ability to control their movements in physical activities.

Creative development.

87. The teacher plans the curriculum where there are regular opportunities for painting and collage and to use a range of materials. The teaching and achievement of children are both satisfactory and children are at the expected level of their age by the time they enter Year 1. They paint portraits of themselves, for example, and use paint to make objects to represent numbers such as 1 car or 2 flowers. They make collage pictures of 'Chicken Licken' and Henny Penny' and make body mobiles. The role-play corner changes its focus regularly and can be 'Pirates on board' or 'St Catherine's Hospital'. Children's ability to use materials creatively is average for their age. In their role play, they play co-operatively alongside other children who are in the 'Home Corner', acting out domestic situations for short periods of time, unsupervised.

ENGLISH

88. Standards in English across the school are very impressive, and the school has made significant improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. Factors contributing to this are:
- the very good teaching observed, and arrangements to monitor teaching;
 - the excellent attitudes of the pupils towards their learning, and their enthusiasm;
 - the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs;
 - the identification and support for gifted and talented pupils;
 - the strategies used for teaching literacy skills across other subjects of the curriculum;
 - the very good relationships between pupils, and pupils and teachers;
 - the successful introduction of the literacy hour;
 - the increase in pupil numbers enabling all classes to be taught as single age groups;
 - the very good leadership of the subject and the excellent leadership of the headteacher;
 - the very good assessment procedures in place and the good use made of assessment;
 - the successful planning for pupils of differing attainment levels;

- the overall positive learning ethos that pervades the school.
89. In the national tests and assessments in 2001 pupils' overall standards of attainment at the end of Year 2, in comparison with the national average and with similar schools, were well above average in writing, and very high in speaking and listening and in reading. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection when standards in speaking and listening and in reading were above average, and in writing were average. In the 2002 tests, for which no national comparisons are yet available, pupils' attainment in both reading and writing was very high – a further improvement. Boys and girls have improved each year over the last three years, in reading and writing, and at a rate higher than that found nationally. The findings of the inspection show that at this very early stage of the school year, the present cohort of pupils in Year 2 are well above expected standards, and many are on course to attain a very high standard by the end of the year.
 90. Over the last three years the performance of pupils in Year 6 in the National Curriculum tests in English has ranged from an average level to very high level. In the 2002 tests every pupil attained the expected Level 4 standard in reading, and all but one in writing. These are very high levels of attainment. Inspection finds that the performance of pupils in the current Year 6 is likely to attain above average standards. This is due to a greater than average number of pupils in the class having special educational needs, and through a number of higher attaining pupils moving away from the area. Nevertheless, their standards are still above the national average, and a number of these pupils are expected to attain an even higher standard than this. Their level of achievement, however, from below average levels of attainment in reading and well below average attainment in writing at the end of Year 2 in 1999, is very good.
 91. Pupils enter the school with above average levels of attainment. During Years 1 and 2 they achieve well in all aspects of English, and maintain these high levels throughout Years 3 to 6. A significant number of pupils achieve even more, reaching very high standards. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported across the school and achieve equally as well as their peers. Gifted and talented pupils also achieve very well.
 92. Across the school pupils' standards in speaking and listening are well above the national average, and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' good, open questioning; for example, 'How do you know...?', and 'What do we mean by...?' stimulates pupils' effective communication skills to answer in full and well-considered sentences. Teachers show good awareness of inclusion, ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to speak. Plenary sessions within the literacy hour are well used to enable pupils to tell one another what they have done and what they have learned. Year 2 pupils acquire new vocabulary, 'time words', such as 'immediately', 'straightaway' and 'eventually'. Older pupils use more formal language; for example, in the school council and in assemblies to address a wider audience. All pupils interviewed by inspectors were articulate, well able to formulate an argument and confident in speaking to adults. Pupils' listening skills are equally very good. Teachers make sure of eye contact to ensure that they have pupils' attention, and the very good attitudes pupils bring to their lessons contribute very significantly to their learning. Pupils know why they are in school; they want to learn and they want to please their teachers. They listen very attentively.
 93. Pupils achieve very well in reading, across the school. A wide variety of graded and colour-coded material is available for younger pupils, although some of these readers are very old and inappropriate for the present time. Pupils are taught good strategies. They know how to use phonic skills to break words down into syllables, even if they do not know the term. Readers heard from Year 2 are already achieving levels well above their age. They are fluent, show good comprehension awareness, make good use of punctuation and read expressively. Parents give very good support at home, and teachers use the literacy hour well for group reading.
 94. Higher up the school, a lower attaining reader in Year 5 is able to build 'velocity' and easily reads 'superstitious' and 'hesitant'. Year 6 pupils read quickly, expressively, fluently, intonating appropriately. No word is too difficult for the average and higher attaining pupils to build. All are able to access information from the library, the higher attaining pupil referring to the 'Dewey' system. Pupils of all ages talk appropriately and confidently about the characters and plot of their

stories. They understand the terms 'skim' and 'scan'. They name favourite authors. All are familiar with the term 'glossary', know that an 'index' is in alphabetical order, but none knows the term 'blurb'. Most read further at home and belong to public libraries. Reading logs record titles, dates and contain some evaluative comments, but are used insufficiently for dialogue with parents and to assess areas of weakness. Texts chosen are not always matched well to pupils' abilities, and there is insufficient overview from teachers of the books chosen by pupils. Reading ages are assessed twice a year and comparison made with pupils' chronological ages, enabling pupils who require additional support to be identified. Standards of reading, from the sample taken during the inspection, are well above average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6, at this early stage in the school year.

95. Pupils' attainment in writing in the 2002 national tests is very high at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. Standards at the end of both years indicate more improvement than found nationally. The current Year 2 pupils are set to attain equal, if not higher, standards than last year.
96. In Year 6 where the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is more than average, and where a number of higher attaining pupils have left the school recently, attainment is expected to be above average by the end of the academic year, and some pupils are expected to attain above this. Each month a piece of writing, of different genres, is taken across the school and levelled against national criteria. Portfolios of levelled work are kept to enable teachers to judge comparative standards. The school has a systematic approach to handwriting, and pupils use a joined up, cursive script from Year 2. They use basic punctuation correctly and appropriate connectives in their sentences, producing sensitive, imaginative writing with good use of adjectives.
97. Year 3 pupils writing 'shape' poems for a Christmas tree selecting vocabulary carefully; 'glitter, bright, the day Jesus was born'. Year 4 corrected 'jumbled' sentences, identified that they were writing in alphabetical order. For example, 'In Adam Grandma's yard hat found the' became 'Adam found Grandma's hat in the yard'. Some of these pupils used paragraphs correctly. In Year 5, pupils changed text from 'The Suitcase Kid' into play scripts, with due attention to stage directions and the use of brackets. They made good use of adverbs to indicate how lines such as, 'Can you get my glasses, please?' could be delivered in a variety of ways to express different moods such as 'anger' and 'happiness'. Year 6 pupils used text from 'The Elephant Child' and enjoyed phrases such as 'satiabie curtiosity' and enjoyed the humour of the writing style and the play on words, before writing a more intelligible version of their own. They have a very good command of vocabulary using words such as 'suspicious', 'promiscuous', 'insatiable', 'precedent' and 'equinox' in their writing. Pupils used a variety of exercise books in their writing for handwriting, planning, text work and grammar, and showed very good awareness for this aspect of the subject. Presentation of work is not always of a sufficiently high standard.
98. Strategies for developing pupils' literacy skills through other subjects are very good. Cross-curricular links in history, geography and other subjects are very good; for example, empathy writing in history and reported findings in science. Specific vocabulary is targeted in subjects such as design and technology and music such as 'timbre', 'pitch', 'tempo', and spellings of scientific words are listed for pupils. Teachers show awareness of the need to underline literacy skills at opportune moments, such as in a Year 6 history lesson where pupils use formal language to compose an advert for a maid in Victorian times.
99. The teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is very good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well and this is helping to raise the overall standards of pupils' reading and writing. Teachers' planning of the literacy hour is good. Teaching is mostly well matched to pupils' differing needs, although in some lessons observed, higher attaining pupils were insufficiently stretched. Teachers are imaginative and hold pupils' interest in a variety of ways. In Year 1, for example, the use of a puppet, 'Billy' was very effective in keeping these young children on task. This same class enjoyed a singing game to help them with their understanding of the phoneme 'ch' – 'The cheerful chimp is chomping chocolate and cheese!'. Teachers are not

afraid to make fools of themselves, or to make deliberate mistakes, if this will help learning. All teachers manage their pupils very well. Very seldom does a teacher have to censure a pupil, and relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers are excellent. Pupils bring excellent attitudes to their lessons. They know why they are at school and they positively want to learn. A strong feature of all teaching is the displayed and explained learning objectives to which teachers return in the plenary session of the literacy hour to reinforce the lesson's learning. Teachers ensure that they have eye contact with pupils, so they listen attentively. Most lessons are delivered in clear, progressive stages, at a good pace.

100. Many teachers during the inspection were pushing pupils along, challenging them further; 'You have two more minutes to finish'. The best lessons seen involved an element of humour that contributed positively to pupils enjoying their learning. Teachers make very good use of their learning support assistants and work well with them. Staff, involved in additional literacy support, keep detailed assessment records of their pupils and liaise closely with class teachers. Marking is of a high standard, informative and helpful.
101. The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator has monitored the literacy hour lessons of all teachers, and has identified areas for improvement through data analysis, such as writing, which has been successfully addressed and currently the focus is on spelling. She is aware of the need for more up-to-date graded reading material, sets of group readers and 'Big Books' for younger pupils. Assessment procedures for the subject are very good. Writing and reading are assessed regularly and good use is made of that assessment,; for example, to identify higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, and those requiring additional support with reading, perhaps in booster classes. Examples of pupils' work are kept and standards in the monthly writing test are matched against national criteria. Reading is assessed twice a year and changes between reading age and chronological age are analysed. Pupils' work is scrutinised, although this is still at a developmental stage. ICT is well used to support the subject, improve spelling through appropriate programs and develop word-processing skills, but classroom computers are used insufficiently. The library area is central to most pupils, attractive and welcoming, but not conducive for classwork, the teaching of library retrieval skills or pupils' personal independent work. There are plans to develop this. All classes have their own reading libraries, although the provision of attractive and comfortable reading areas in classrooms is inconsistent. Literacy has a strong focus around the school with prominent displays in every classroom. The subject strongly supports pupils' personal, social and cultural development. An annual production involves the whole school, but there is no planned provision for drama and this is an underdeveloped area.

MATHEMATICS

102. Standards are well above average in Year 2 reflecting the high number of pupils on course to attain the higher levels by the end of the school year. Standards are above average in Year 6; a creditable performance in relation to the significant number of pupils with special educational needs in this group. These judgements apply to all strands of the subject and represent good improvement overall since the last inspection, especially, in Year 2 where standards were broadly average. This has been accomplished as a result of:
 - a consistent implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy to strengthen the quality of teaching;
 - a detailed and ongoing analysis of the pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests to raise expectations;
 - a specific focus on challenging pupils at an appropriate level, particularly potentially higher attaining pupils;
 - an increasing and purposeful promotion of using and applying mathematical skills and knowledge;
 - a planned intention to increase the use and extension of numeracy skills across the curriculum.
103. The pupils' performance in national tests over the period 1998 to 2001 often vary from year to year reflecting the differing needs of pupils in each year group, but taken together show a slight

increase in standards, with the trend at Year 6 matching the rising trend found nationally. Evidence gathered during the course of the inspection showed that most pupils currently in Year 2 were achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment, building particularly effectively on their ability to use and apply their numeracy skills in everyday situations. Pupils currently in Year 6, which is generally a lower attaining year group compared to other years as it contains a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs, were also demonstrating very good achievement in relation to their prior attainment. This is especially evident in their ability to use and extend their numeracy skills to enrich learning in subjects such as, science and design and technology. Increasingly the challenge for higher attaining pupils was a key issue of the last inspection. In response the teachers have strengthened their planning to ensure that teaching presents pupils of differing prior attainments with well-matched tasks. As a result, potentially higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs also achieve well. Observations of lessons and an analysis of this year's National Curriculum test results clearly indicate an increasing proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in response to good teaching.

104. Pupils in Year 2 are developing above average facility in number and in their ability to use and apply number facts in their measuring activities. For example, most can use rulers effectively and accurately to measure in centimetres and metres. Pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers and explore number bonds and offer strategies to investigate patterns.
105. By Year 6 pupils have built steadily on previous learning and demonstrate above average knowledge, skills and understanding in number, measuring and shape and space. Most pupils identify fractions and identify equivalent fractions accurately. They readily convert fractions and reduce and increase systematically explaining their methods in detail. They demonstrate above average numeracy skills in their use of whiteboards during mental arithmetic sessions. Higher attainers evaluate their work correctly and develop strategies for calculating equivalent fractions and long multiplication. Average attainers take longer to develop an understanding of mathematical vocabulary; for example, 'denominator' and 'numerator', but they progress well showing good accuracy when multiplying fractions. Several, previously lower attainers with special educational needs, progress well, with support and show average attainment in adding and subtracting two and three-digit numbers. Across the school pupils show above average skills in using and applying their mathematical skills in everyday situations. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 extend their knowledge and skills progressively as they move through the school, and develop particularly strong awareness of shape.
106. Teachers are careful to emphasise the importance of using and applying mathematical knowledge. Their increased emphasis on investigation and problem solving, both within the subject and in other subjects such as science, extends pupils' thinking and confidence. Across the school pupils are acquiring above average skills in measuring and estimating, supporting their ability to use mathematical knowledge in everyday situations; for example, calculating the cost of shopping lists. Pupils are responding to the lively emphasis placed on mental arithmetic and the good pace of learning. They enjoy the subject and show very positive attitudes and behave very supportively in lessons. The newly opened ICT suite is proving to be a valuable resource. Increased software is enabling pupils to advance their mathematical skills and increased data-handling opportunities are promoting improved standards.
107. Teaching and learning is good across the school. It has been improved in recent years by increased monitoring and support provided by the headteacher and co-ordinator. Teachers plan in detail, establish effective links with previous work and review the new learning at the end of every lesson. These strategies are particularly successful in progressively building upon previous learning.
108. The teachers make the mental-oral strategies at the beginning of lessons enjoyable and pacy. The teachers demonstrate their good subject knowledge, thorough preparation and willingness to sustain warm relationships, to good effect in promoting the pupils' positive attitudes. For example, in a lesson in Year 5, the teacher used an overhead projector most successfully to increase the pupils' understanding of fractions. In a successful lesson in Year 4 the teacher challenged the pupils to measure objects in the classroom and to choose the units of measurement. Involving

pupils in their learning was also evident in a lesson in Year 2 where the teacher encouraged the pupils to select appropriate tools for measuring. The pupils showed excitement in their learning and readily celebrated achievement by spontaneously applauding each other's accurate measurements.

109. All the lessons observed showed consistent effectiveness. Planned lessons in the ICT suite are increasingly extending the pupils' learning, but opportunities to capitalise on the pupils' ICT and mathematical learning even more in classrooms, are missed due to the limited number of computers and software in individual classrooms. Teachers manage the pupils' behaviour warmly and effectively. They are increasingly using teaching assistants supportively in assessing and meeting pupils' individual needs. All teachers set appropriately high expectations. The pupils' work is marked regularly and clear ways forward are identified to promote pupils' progress. Assessment strategies are well developed and are used well to inform teaching and planning. Evaluating test results and regular homework are other strategies that impact well on teaching and learning. All lessons include successful group activities where the work is carefully matched to the pupils' prior attainment. This was also evident in the lesson in Year 2 where the pupils' learning was enriched further by support from the teacher and teaching assistant.
110. The pupils are encouraged to use and develop their numeracy skills to help learning in other subjects; for example, when measuring the growth rate of plants in science or when measuring card and straws to make stable structures in design and technology. The teachers place a strong emphasis on promoting the pupils' awareness of mathematical language. Their planning often identifies key words such as 'measuring', 'estimating', 'equivalence' and 'proportion' to reinforce the pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts.
111. The curriculum is planned well and meets the statutory requirements. The subject is led very well. Although the co-ordinator is new to this position, she is continuing a strong emphasis on raising standards and is keen to increase the use of ICT to enrich learning and to continue the challenge offered to higher attaining pupils. Resources are good and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning; for example, the use of whiteboards for individual pupils to record their instant responses in mental arithmetic sessions. Overall the consistent good quality of the teaching is a significant factor underpinning the steadily rising standards in the school.

SCIENCE

112. Standards in science are a considerable strength of the school. They are very high at the end of Year 2, and at the end of Year 6, standards are well above average. Pupils' achievement over time is very good. This judgement is based on lessons observed, work seen, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils during the inspection. The current Year 6 class is very able in science, but there are more relatively lower attaining children in the current Year 6 and they are not likely to match the very high standards of the last two years. The national tests for 2001 and unconfirmed results for 2002 for Year 2 pupils, support the very high attainment judgement for these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are strongly supported and achieve very well, many attaining average standards through this very good support. The school makes very good provision for higher attaining pupils. At Year 2, 80 per cent of pupils attained Level 3, (the higher level) and at Year 6, 66 per cent of pupils attained the higher than expected Level 5 standard in the unconfirmed 2002 tests. Boys and girls achieve equally as well in science. Standards since the last inspection have shown very good improvement and have risen consistently year-on-year since 1997.
113. Pupils make very good progress in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in the key areas of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Science is used as a distinct way of exploring and explaining the world and the school's approach to developing scientific enquiry and investigation is very good. The aims of the school's policy have very clear aims and objectives linked to developing self-respect, confidence and independence, as well as respect for the physical and natural world. Opportunities are provided to promote an awareness and concern for the environment. This approach gives very good support to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

114. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 observe, explore and ask questions about living things, materials and physical phenomena. They begin to work together to collect evidence to help them to answer questions and form scientific ideas. In Year 2, for example, pupils were sorting a range of foods to their own criteria. They observed similarities and differences, which helped them to understand that we need a variety of foods from different groups to keep us healthy. Pupils were able to classify foods into different groups and could record their observations, many using scientific vocabulary such as 'carbohydrates', 'proteins' and 'fats'.
115. The older pupils in Years 3,4,5 and 6, learn to carry out systematic investigations, working on their own and with others. They use a wide range of scientific language, conventional diagrams, charts and graphs and information and communication technology to communicate their ideas. Computers are used appropriately; for example, to research information and develop scientific vocabulary such as 'photosynthesis', 'chloroplast' and 'molecules'. In Year 4, pupils were investigating 'what happens to our skeleton as we grow? Do some bones grow more than others?'. With highly skilled questioning and support from the teacher, pupils decided on a method of approach with a good awareness of fair testing. They carried out the investigation by measuring the arm length and skulls of Years 1 and 4 pupils and an adult. They used tables and then graphs to record their careful measurements and drew scientific conclusions such as the skull does not grow as fast as the arms. Pupils learn to make observations and comparisons and use more complex instruments for measurements. For example, in Year 5, pupils were using stopwatches and stethoscopes to measure their heart beats and to identify which factors, such as exercise, affected the pulse rate.
116. Pupils' attitudes in science lessons are very good. They are very well behaved and enthusiastic about their work, especially when it is investigative work and focus well on it with a high level of co-operation. Teaching is also very good overall. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good. As science in Years 4, 5 and 6 is taught by a specialist, scientific knowledge is excellent. Instructions to pupils are very clear, which ensures that they know exactly what they are intended to achieve. Teachers' questions are open-ended and pupils' contributions are highly valued, making a good contribution to their personal development. When asking for suggestions for a 'fair test' in finding out how much water plants need to grow, comments such as, 'Excellent, listen to what has to say', supported personal development very well. Methods are very successful in promoting the pupils' interest and in further developing their knowledge and understanding of the aspect of science they are studying. The very good relationships and class management impact well on attitudes and behaviour and support the very good learning that is taking place.
117. Excellent leadership has made a strong contribution to the consistently rising standards. Contributory factors to the high standards are:
- strong leadership through a very well-written policy, which reflects the school ethos very well;
 - very good assessment procedures and good support for teachers in levelling pupils' work;
 - very high agreed expectations throughout the school;
 - very good scrutiny of regular assessments to inform the curriculum and teaching;
 - parents' comments 'Science is special, children are motivated to develop science knowledge at home' – evidence of strong parental appreciation and support.

ART AND DESIGN

118. Standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. They have remained at this level since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school.
119. No lessons were seen in the Years 1 and 2 classes. Teaching is good in Years 4, 5 and 6 and this means that pupils learn well, using a variety of tools and techniques through the school. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate and talk about their own work and that of others'. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of colour, pattern, texture, line and tone systematically. Pupils in Year 3; for example, having gained an understanding of proportion when sketching portraits of each other, were making satisfactory improvements in the fine detail of eyes and hair. Regular use is

made of ICT. For example, pupils in Year 6 used an art and design program, when making books for younger children, using nursery rhyme pictures to import onto multimedia. The teaching covers a wide variety of methods and materials and pupils in Year 1 make close observational drawings of plants, and there is a collage and pattern work. In Year 5, pupils experience paper sculpture. As skills are taught particularly well, pupils learn well and this makes a strong contribution to the above average standards. In Year 5; for example, the skills of using pastels were being revisited. The teacher skilfully encouraged the very close observation of the flowers she had brought in, encouraging pupils to marvel and reflect on their shape and form and how shadows appear to distinguish them. Very good vocabulary was used to help pupils to understand pastel techniques. 'Stroking', 'moving' and 'brushing' are good examples of this. The good demonstration of the use of pastels, together with good questioning, encouraged pupils to observe closely and reflect. Questions are very supportive to good learning when they ask, 'How have I got that petal to look like it is behind the other?'. By the time such teaching sessions are completed, pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic to try for themselves. They have confidence in their own ability, because they have the knowledge and understanding of how to achieve well. The resulting pastel work was above average as a direct result of the good teaching skills. Pupils show evident enjoyment, care and pride in their work. They take care of resources and enjoy looking at and evaluating each other's work.

120. The teachers make good links with other areas of the curriculum, such as history. Here; for example, pupils paint Victorian figures or use chalk and pen to reproduce a Winter scene. Particularly good examples of pupils' work in the style of Van Gogh are on display in the school. Containers in the style of Clarice Cliff were completed in Year 5. Pupils explore the features of different styles of art from different cultures. Good examples of this are Aboriginal art in Year 4 and Nigerian masks in Year 5. These provide good support for pupils' cultural development.
121. The co-ordinator is highly skilled and enthusiastic about the subject. Although art and design has not been a focus for development by the school, she has kept going the high status and enthusiasm for the subject. Monitoring is mainly informal through displays and scrutiny of pupils' other work, but it is effective and teachers have a good awareness of standards. A good portfolio of evidence is kept, enabling standards and progression to be monitored. Resources for learning are satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. As a result of a renewed emphasis on the subject throughout the school, most pupils are on course to reach standards that are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Across the school, pupils of differing prior attainment, including pupils with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Specific subject teaching in a specifically resourced room is enabling an increased proportion of pupils to increase their rate of progress in acquiring new skills. This is particularly the case in terms of encouraging pupils to think about their ideas and designs and in planning them in detail prior to the making process.
123. The subject was identified as a strength at the time of the last inspection and after a period of reduced emphasis the school has done well to re-establish strong foundations in the subject. Overall, in terms of standards and provision, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Good cross-curricular links; for example, with literacy through 'George and the Dragon' play-scripts enrich the pupils' learning.
124. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build on their constructive play opportunities experienced in reception and are introduced to the design process of planning, designing and making. An examination of the pupils' felt glove puppets, completed in Year 2, show that pupils have considered 'fitness for purpose' and have demonstrated above average designing and evaluation skills. For example, one young girl observed that she found stitching the felt together to make her puppet, the most difficult part of the design process. The pupils' sketches of their designs and ideas; for example, of their imaginary playgrounds, show that they are refining and improving ideas as well as planning the tools needed and the stages needed to make their completed models. Oral discussions and written evaluations assist their understanding of the subject and also enrich their literacy skills.

125. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to extend their skills and understanding in planning and making structures such as structures including a puppet stage, for example, enrich their numeracy skills through measuring and cutting the necessary materials. Pupils in Year 3 plan, make and evaluate drums, moving monsters and bridges, and develop and evaluate methods of making as well as finished models. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 design and make storybooks and toys with moving parts and use ICT to design purses. By Year 6 most pupils design, plan and modify ideas about structures and consider concepts such as strength and stability in creating puppet stages. Their design skills are increasingly above average, but finished models are of an average standard as there is scope to raise the quality of finished articles. Younger pupils extend their ideas by using ICT software, and opportunities for older pupils to use ICT to aid their learning have increased with the creation of a new ICT suite. Plans are in place to ensure that pupils are enabled to control mechanisms to add movement to their finished models. This will enable pupils to raise their levels of attainment and understanding.
126. Across the school pupils show a real enthusiasm for their work. They take the subject seriously, look forward to the craft opportunities to make models, but also enjoy the important designing, planning and evaluating processes. Pupils co-operate most warmly and effectively and their learning is significantly strengthened by their willingness to sustain concentration and share equipment. Teachers are careful to nurture these positive attitudes and achievement and effort are celebrated warmly. This was clearly shown at the end of a lesson in Year 2 where the teacher had invited an older pupil to perform a puppet show for the class. This enjoyable presentation also enthused the pupils in their future work.
127. The quality of teaching is good. Most is completed by an enthusiastic, well-prepared and talented teacher. A strong and effective emphasis is placed on the importance of preparation and pupils are encouraged to plan and evaluate their work carefully. This was seen in a lesson with Year 6 pupils as they strengthened their paper structures by adding cladding. The teacher promotes warm relationships and sets high expectations, thus feeding the pupils' concentration. Work is celebrated and ideas in particular receive positive responses. A particular strength of the teaching is the good organisation of resources and the encouragement of ongoing learning at home through homework assignments. Consistently good teaching is having a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning and many pupils are making rapid gains in confidence and skill.
128. The subject is led very effectively. Although the co-ordinator is relatively new to his position, he has had good support from the previous co-ordinator. The curriculum is well planned. Formal recording of assessments of pupils' attainment is at an early stage of development, but through specialist teaching and by working in other classes around the school the co-ordinator has a good awareness of standards. Clear expectations of pupils are driving the intention to raise standards even more. The headteacher gives strong support to the co-ordinator and the recent re-establishment of the specialist design and technology rooms is a significant improvement. There are exciting ideas to enlarge and equip the specialist room even more to support pupils' learning. Resources for learning are good and are particularly accessible; a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
129. Work in the subject utilises and enriches the pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and the subject development plan includes specific ways in which these skills can be further utilised and developed to promote learning in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

130. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is average and at the end of Year 6 it is above average. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection, which identified only occasional higher than average standards. This is due to better planning, through the adoption of the latest national guidelines, elements of good teaching, improved attitudes and enthusiasm from the pupils and the very high standards of literacy shown by the pupils. The ability to plan and deliver lessons to a single age group is a further improvement since the last inspection. Due to timetabling

arrangements it was possible to observe only two lessons. Further evidence from which to make judgements is based on looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning, and from talking with pupils and teachers. Across the school most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well.

131. In Years 1 and 2 pupils studied their immediate environment, showing a good knowledge of the dangers of litter to themselves and animals, identifying safety hazards in a play park, such as a statue that might be dangerous to climb, and suggesting improvements. Year 1 identified countries of the world following the journeys of 'Travelling Ted'. Year 2 pupils spoken to had good recall of the work done comparing their own location with another; the Isle of Struay, linked with their literacy study. They knew that Struay is an island, correctly defining it as a piece of land surrounded by water, planned the best way to get there and used appropriate geographical vocabulary. They showed good awareness of points of the compass, and knew that France is south of England and separated from it by the English Channel.
132. Year 4 pupils were also observed in discussion about their immediate environment when they considered the effects of nearby noise pollution, with comments ranging from, 'the computers in the ICT room were quiet, but irritating', to 'Year 6 was noisy because they were chatting!'. They collected, analysed and recorded their findings accurately, increasing their awareness of environmental issues. Year 6 pupils, in work relating to the study of rivers used ICT skills well to produce bar graphs of water usage around the home. They learn to use appropriate vocabulary – 'meander', 'source', 'tributary'. Those interviewed show good understanding of the use of coordinates.
133. Too few lessons were observed during the inspection for an overall judgement to be made about teaching. In the two lessons seen the strengths were in moving lessons at a good pace, maintaining pupils' interest through a variety of teaching methods, managing pupils very well, using a plenary session well to reinforce learning objectives and having high expectations of task and conduct. The main weakness was a lack of sufficient planning for pupils of all ability groups, especially higher attaining pupils. Pupils' learning is considerably enhanced by the enthusiasm and good attitudes they bring to their lessons and by their above average standards in literacy. They contribute very well in discussion and write at an above average level of communication.
134. The subject is generally well led. The co-ordinator is enabled to monitor lessons, but not teachers' planning, and is well aware of the need for a more formal strategy for assessment and further resources to support the subject. This is provided for within the next year's action plan. Pupils' learning is significantly enhanced by the school's provision for visits, including residential visits for Years 3 to 6, to places such as the Isle of Wight and Lyme Regis, where much good fieldwork and orienteering occurs.
135. These trips enhance not only the pupils' learning, but their social and personal development. Cultural development is supported through the study of other countries, such as India and Africa, and the Caribbean through pupils' personal education. Year 2 pupils identify that, 'It has clear skies and is very hot'. Since the previous inspection curriculum time for the subject has been increased and this is an improvement. However, teaching in blocks of two hours in some classes and making no provision for the subject for a whole term and a half, in some classes, reduces continuity in the learning of skills and is inappropriate for the pupils. Little focus on the subject is seen in displays around the school, and the use of ICT to support the subject is underdeveloped.

HISTORY

136. Standards of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 and judgements for these pupils are based on scrutiny of work, talking with pupils and teachers and analysing teachers' planning. Pupils' very good literacy skills, their enthusiasm and excellent attitudes towards learning, and the consistently good teaching observed have contributed significantly to an improvement in standards. Since the last inspection increased pupil numbers

have enabled all classes to be taught as a single age group, and this, too, is helping to raise standards. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well across the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about the lives of famous people such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale, and understand the concept of a timeline, sequencing the events of the day.

137. In Years 3 pupils studying the Romans wrote descriptively about the Roman army, following the visit from a 'Roman legionary, Gavius Silvanus'. They understood the purpose of a Roman 'testudo', and listed differences between Romans and Celts. Year 4 wrote empathically about their feelings having experienced features of life during the Blitz through photographs of bomb damage to homes, and identified English cities and made a good link with their work in geography. Year 5 pupils considered the reasons behind the break with Rome during the reign of Henry VIII, his desire to have a male heir, and his divorce from Catharine of Aragon, before producing a poster explaining the situation. In Year 6 pupils looked with empathy and sympathy at life for children during Victorian times. Good use is made of timelines to develop sequencing and chronology skills.
138. No judgement can be made about teaching in Years 1 and 2, but the teaching of history in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good, and, as a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, learn well. This good teaching is characterised by detailed planning, considering the needs of pupils of differing abilities, varying methods to ensure pupil interest and delivering the lesson at a good pace. Learning objectives are discussed, made clear, and reinforced in effective plenary sessions. Some teachers, however, make insufficient provision for pupils of all abilities in their planning. Teachers make good use of resources as a stimulus for learning. In a Year 4 lesson the teacher, using an overhead projector showed pupils' photographs of the Blitz. In Year 6 video film was used very effectively to show pupils a reconstruction of Victorian life, highlighting the differences between life 'upstairs and downstairs'. In this way pupils gain a very good understanding of life in those times.
139. The school has adopted the latest national guidelines for the subject and this, together with an increase in allocated curriculum time, is helping to ensure continuity and the progressive learning of skills. Curriculum time is now appropriate, but the practice of teaching in blocks of two hours in some classes, with consequential lapses in some cases of a whole term and a half with no teaching of history, is not helpful in developing pupils' skills. Where work is displayed the quality is good. The subject co-ordinator is aware that there is a need for more formal systems of assessment and has plans to introduce this through the use of level descriptors. Resources are satisfactory, but the school lacks sufficient artefacts to support the pupils' learning. The regular use of visits to places such as the 'Mary Rose', the Isle of Wight, Scaplen's Court, and of visitors such as 'Roman' and 'Greek' presenters, provided for all age groups, helps to bring history alive for the pupils and is a strength of the subject. The subject co-ordinator who leads the subject well is enabled to monitor teaching of the subject in classrooms and this has helped to improve the quality of teaching. She has yet to monitor teachers' planning. Consequently, planning for pupils of different prior attainments is not fully in place.
140. Pupils make good use of the Internet to acquire further knowledge, and ICT contributes very positively to their learning. The subject enhances pupils' social, moral and cultural development well, and strongly supports pupils' literacy skills; for example, in Year 4, through non-chronological writing about the Ancient Greeks.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

141. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement is good. Following the last inspection the school created a small computer suite and a much enlarged and improved suite was opened at the beginning of this new school year. All teaching staff have completed ICT training and a full curriculum is now implemented. As a consequence, the teaching of ICT has been significantly improved and the pupils' use of ICT is beginning to enhance learning in a few subjects across the curriculum. In particular, work in the computer suite is significantly enriching learning in literacy and numeracy. Teachers are supported

by a nationally planned curriculum and this is enabling them to develop pupils' skills progressively. As a result, all pupils, including higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs, are now making rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding of use of ICT to aid their learning. There are a limited number of computers in the classrooms, however, and this is restricting the pupils' independent use of computers in the full range of subjects; for example, by using CD-ROMs to research their projects in history and geography.

142. Pupils in Year 2 know that a range of information, text and drawing can be entered, stored and retrieved using a computer. They show confidence and ability in mouse control and using the keyboard and access and use art and word-processing software effectively. They have access to a floor robot and develop appropriate skills in control technology. By Year 6 pupils use the Internet with confidence. Currently they are enjoying interrogating the school's new website and older pupils in the after-school computer club are compiling their own entries.
143. All pupils show very positive attitudes when working with computers. They enjoy the challenge presented to them and are excited by the outcomes of their instructions; for example, when changing font size or when adding colour to their drawings. Pupils share computers warmly and constructively and readily exchange ideas and help each other to learn more. These positive attitudes have a powerful impact on their learning.
144. All teachers readily promote and encourage these warm relationships to promote pupils' concentration and learning. The quality of teaching was good overall in the lessons observed. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, being particularly effective when supported by a teaching assistant or a helpful parent. Most teaching takes place in the computer suite and carefully planned opportunities are provided to develop pupils' ICT skills and to support learning in other subjects, including religious education. The teachers have updated their skills and by using 'state of the art' equipment such as a 'data projector' and an 'interactive whiteboard' lively lessons enthuse pupils. For example, the teacher's skilful use of the 'data projector' in a Year 5 lesson aided the pupils' understanding of a multimedia presentation. Similarly in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used the projector and whiteboard to teach pupils how to change font size of print and add colour to enhance presentations. The pupils' learning is stimulated by such multimedia presentations and significant skills are added in a short period of time. The enlarged ICT suite is a very new facility and occasionally organisational difficulties, such as deciding which pupils should work together, delay the commencement of learning. Overall, whilst the sessions in the computer suite are valuable, the lack of classroom equipment in some classes means that the pupils' newly acquired skills cannot be developed to the full. The school compensates to some extent by encouraging pupils, through homework, to develop their ideas and skills on their computers at home. However, these opportunities are not available to all pupils.
145. The subject is led very well by the co-ordinator, supported closely by the headteacher and fellow members of staff. All staff work together to ensure consistency, and by sharing their expertise, provide guidance for each other. The co-ordinator offers good direction and development in the subject and has recently compiled a school website. She has monitored planning and, with support from a talented parent, offers support to other year groups. ICT now has a high profile in the school and remains a key focus for development. The well-planned curriculum and resources have been significantly improved since the last inspection. The overall level of resourcing is satisfactory and the detailed subject development plan includes the provision of additional control and sensory equipment to strengthen the full coverage of the National Curriculum. With the acquisition of the new computer suite, the subject is at an exciting stage of development. Expectations are high and the school is well placed to raise standards even more in the near future.

MUSIC

146. Music is a strength of the school. At the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are well above average. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection, which identified good standards overall, with some occasions of very good and outstanding performances in group work. Across the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving very well. This

is due to the very good teaching observed, the very good and sometimes excellent attitudes that pupils bring to their lessons, the high awareness of music in the school and the generous provision made for a large number of pupils to be taught an instrument. During the inspection various groups of pupils were observed enjoying and learning to play instruments, acquiring above average knowledge that they bring to their class lessons. All pupils are taught to play the recorder in Year 3. Further awareness from visits and visitors such as a lady teaching musical playground games from long ago, and a representative of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, who taught the whole school during the inspection week, is evidence of the very good provision made for music in the school.

147. Pupils in Year 2 learned to develop a sense of pitch, building on previous work, before composing, playing and evaluating their pieces. They recognised that an octave has eight notes observing that on a xylophone these 'look like a staircase!'. They identified high and low notes and used the xylophone and other percussion instruments to compose a story including an up and down sequence. They selected instruments well, such as cymbals for a crashing giant, beat scrapers for a dinosaur's footsteps, using music for special effect and structuring their 'stories' with a beginning and an end. Year 3 pupils identified music from 'Carnival of the Animals', although they did not recall the composer. They recognised the elephant, and used movement and musical sound to portray different animals; for example, the bells that made a 'tinkly' sound were suitable for a mouse. In their warm-up singing exercise they sang 'Baa, Baa, Black Sheep' in a wobbly voice interpreting the sound of a sheep and then used deep, slow voices to express 'The Bear Went Over the Mountain', changing their own vocal timbres for effect. The quality of their singing and their voice control was very good. Year 5 pupils also attained at a very high level developing two and four-part singing, as a 'round', supported by percussion instruments. These pupils sang beautifully, in tune, in time and in harmony.
148. Nothing less than good teaching was seen, and overall teaching was very good. The adoption of new national guidelines with a new scheme of work supported by a commercial scheme, together with in-service training has increased teachers' confidence with the subject. They have high expectations of pupils' abilities and conduct, plan well and deliver lessons at a fast pace, in an imaginative way, keeping pupils' interest. They make very good use of 'warm-up' exercises at the start of lessons, and plenary sessions at the end, to reinforce learning objectives. Teachers' performance is monitored, and appropriate feedback given, enabling them to make further improvements. On occasion higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
149. Teachers make learning enjoyable for the pupils and the pupils respond by bringing very good and sometimes excellent attitudes to their learning. They want to learn; they want to please their teachers. Relationships in these lessons, between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. It is within this ethos, which pervades the whole school that pupils achieve so very well.
150. Almost one quarter of all pupils (about 40 per cent of the pupils in Years 3 to 6) receive tuition from the schools music service and other visitors in instruments including flute, clarinet, keyboards, guitar and violin. Some may be entered for Associated Board music exams. These pupils contribute much to the life and culture of the school, and have much to offer to help others in their class lessons. The recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic, has developed the subject very well since her appointment and is poised to raise standards still higher. Music is played in assemblies, when pupils enter and depart, but neither the piece nor the composer are identified. A display in the hall increases pupils' awareness of instruments and musical vocabulary such as 'bass clef', 'pentatonic scale', but the overall focus of the subject in displays around the school is underdeveloped. Whole-school singing in assemblies is of a high, controlled and tuneful quality, the pupils exuding confidence and rhythm.
151. Performing and composing are strong elements of the music curriculum, but there is less evidence of pupils' compositions for little work is recorded on paper for assessment purposes. Assessment of the subject is still in a developmental stage. The use of ICT to support the subject has begun, but is still insufficient. During the inspection 47 girls and three boys from across the school attended the first choir practice of the term. They sang impressively, with clear diction, and learned quickly. In Year 1 pupils sing grace before lunch tunefully and appropriately. The practice of

teaching all pupils to learn the recorder in Year 3 has positive impact later. Most older pupils can read annotated music. The subject contributes very positively to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to the school's overall positive and peaceful ethos. Pupils sing carols locally and the whole school is involved in an annual musical production. More awareness of music from other cultures is planned. The co-ordinator supports colleagues satisfactorily, but she has no current overview of the subject curriculum, and has yet to monitor teachers' planning. She has identified that resources for the subject, which are satisfactory, lack appropriate organisation and labelling, and that the quality and quantity of some percussion instruments is insufficient.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. Very few lessons were observed owing to the nature of the timetable. From this limited evidence, standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement through the school is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Inspection judgements have remained the same since the last inspection.
153. The teaching in the lessons seen throughout the school, was good. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are identified in the planning. Good attention is always paid to health and safety issues, as is pupils' awareness of the effects of exercise on the body. For example, after a vigorous exercise in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were asked to feel their heart beats and they observed that their hearts were beating faster and linked this well with the need for more oxygen. Teachers have appropriate knowledge of the required curriculum and skills are taught well. For example, appropriate attention is paid to directions, levels and speed, as well as twists and turns when pupils are practising their dance. This gives good support to pupils' learning to enable the quality of their movements to be clear and imaginative and they learn well in these situations. In a games lesson, the skills of control of the ball in tennis were taught and practised well through a variety of well-chosen activities, enabling pupils to practise and consolidate their skills in an enjoyable way. Teachers use a variety of methods when teaching. For example, pupils are asked to work individually, in paired activities and as a whole class. A good example of this was a Year 6 dance lesson where pupils worked in this way with a final aim of a whole-class dance. Experience in working in a variety of ways gives pupils good support for their personal development. At present, there are no links between physical education and ICT and this is a weakness.
154. Pupils who are less confident and competent in swimming by the time they are in Year 6 are offered swimming lessons in the summer term. This means that pupils reach the required National Curriculum Level by the end of Year 6. Good opportunities are offered to pupils in Years 5 and 6 to make residential trips and to experience outdoor and adventurous activities. This provides good support for both physical and social development. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly, by using National Curriculum Level descriptors (the standards pupils are expected to demonstrate as they grow older). This enables them to plot pupils' development and helps to ensure that satisfactory learning is taking place.
155. The co-ordinator is very newly appointed and is already giving satisfactory leadership. She is well qualified and enthusiastic and has good plans to further extend extra-curricular sporting activities. Resources for learning are satisfactory.