

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY ROMAN  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Puckeridge, Ware

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117454

Acting Headteacher: Mr Peter Coldwell

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Evans  
1049

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 247785

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: High Street  
Puckeridge  
Ware  
Hertfordshire

Postcode: SG11 1RZ

Telephone number: 01920 821450

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Dr Breda Jackson

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1049	Brian Evans	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught?
14061	Leonard Shipman	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?
10668	David Walker	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Educational inclusion Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27301	Cynthia Messom	Team inspector	English Music Foundation stage English as an additional language	
24091	Michael Shaw	Team inspector	Science Art and design	How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Thomas of Canterbury is situated in the village of Puckeridge in Hertfordshire. The school draws pupils mainly from a wide semi-rural area. There are 114 pupils on roll, which is below average for primary schools. The numbers in each year group vary considerably; for example, there are nine pupils in Year 6. The numbers of boys and girls are fairly evenly balanced but there are more girls in the older age groups. Nineteen pupils, mainly with moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural needs, are on the school's register for special educational needs which is below average. No pupils have statements of special educational need. There are no pupils who have English as an additional language or who are from ethnic minority groups. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The intake to the school is of below average attainment overall.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and behaviour is very good. Pupils in Reception achieve well. Standards overall are average in Years 1 and 2 and above average in Years 3 to 6. The acting headteacher, supported well by the deputy head, provides effective leadership and works closely with parents, staff and the governing body to build on the strong base provided by the substantive headteacher. Teaching and learning are good. The school is effective and gives good value for money.

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

- Provision for pupils' moral and spiritual development is excellent.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good in Reception class.
- Resources are used well to promote learning and rising standards.
- The partnership between the school and parents benefits the school very well.
- The acting headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide very good leadership and management.

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

- Writing skills by the age of seven.
- Pupils' mathematical skills.

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

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

Overall, the school has made good progress on the key issues identified in 1998. In Years 1 and 2 standards in reading, writing and science have risen although further improvement is needed in mathematics. There have been significant improvements in geography and in design and technology although there continues to be some underachievement in art. Schemes of work clearly identify the development of pupils' skills and knowledge. Assessment procedures in most subjects are used effectively to support pupils' learning. The requirements of pupils with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, have been effectively addressed and their needs are now met well. The overall learning environment for staff and pupils is very good.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	B	A	A*
Mathematics	D	D	E	C
Science	D	C	C	B

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

The judgements in the above table need to be viewed with caution because the number of eleven-year-old pupils entered for national tests each year is small. In 2002, 18 pupils were entered for the tests and in the current Year 6 cohort there are just nine pupils. Overall, pupils attain well above average standards when compared with similar schools. The improvement in test results over time is in line with the national trend but there is a significant variation between subjects. The school met its target for English but not in mathematics. In English, results since the last inspection are rising in line with national trends and confirm the school's success in implementing an effective literacy strategy. English results were in the top five per cent when compared with schools with similar cohorts. The current small group of Year 6 pupils are attaining above average standards in English and achieving very well. In mathematics, higher attainers in 2002 achieved well but many average attainers did not reach their predicted levels and so overall attainment was well below average. The school's response includes specific programmes designed to overcome pupils' numeracy difficulties and standards in Year 6 are now average. However, overall leadership and management in mathematics are weaker than in other subjects. Pupils make good progress in all other subjects except art where progress is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, pupils have above average skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) and include a significant number who are very confident. Throughout the school there are good examples of the use of computer skills across most subjects. Pupils with special educational needs, including very able pupils, make good progress and achieve well by the time they leave school.

Again, partly because of small Year 2 pupil numbers, percentage results in national tests for seven-year-old pupils vary considerably from year to year. The overall trend in reading and writing is up over the past three years but since 1999 there has been a downward dip in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that reading, speaking and listening skills are well above average. The current focus on developing pupils' writing skills has been successful in raising standards but they are weaker than other aspects of literacy. In mathematics, the weaknesses for average and low attainers are being addressed but standards remain an issue for the school. Teachers make good use of classroom assistants. Overall pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects and achieve average standards by the end of Year 2. Children in Reception make very good progress and reach average standards in all areas of learning. High expectations, well-informed teaching and very good knowledge of the children are key factors in the successful provision.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school.	<b>Very good.</b> The pupils are keen to learn especially where teaching is good and stimulating.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms.	<b>Consistently very good.</b> This is because of very good classroom management and the whole-school policy. The very good standards of

	behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are strengths of the school and make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Personal development and relationships.	<b>Very good.</b> They respect each other's feeling and care for each other. The adults are very good role models.
Attendance.	<b>Good.</b> Attendance is above national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Good</b>

*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.*

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and has a favourable effect on pupils' attainments. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. In Reception, teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. The teacher and nursery nurse provide very good opportunities for children to learn through talk and practical work. The teaching of Years 1 and 2 pupils is broadly satisfactory but lacks the rigour and high expectations found in other year groups. In all years, most pupils are eager learners and make good efforts to improve their knowledge and understanding in all subjects. They concentrate on their work well. Teachers plan well and have good class management skills. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is often good across most subjects and contributes to rising standards. The teaching of music throughout the school is excellent. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and so make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum.	<b>Good.</b> The school provides a good, broad curriculum that is relevant to pupils. It is very good for children in Reception.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	<b>Good.</b> Very good assessment of pupils' needs, good planning and good extra support in literacy and numeracy result in good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.	<b>Very good.</b> Provision for spiritual and moral development is excellent. Provision for social development is very good whilst provision for cultural development is good. Very good procedures for ensuring that pupils behave well contribute to a very positive learning environment.
How well the school cares for its pupils.	<b>Good</b> with many very good aspects, such as promoting and monitoring the pupils' personal development. Pupils' progress is monitored very well in English, mathematics and science although procedures are not as well developed in other subjects. Parents really appreciate the very high quality of care their children receive. Many help in and around school. This partnership is a strength of the school. The school's overall caring approach and its very good links with parents and community are important factors in encouraging the pupils' positive approach to learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff.	<b>Good.</b> The acting headteacher in partnership with the deputy head are an excellent team that provide strong leadership during the secondment of the substantive headteacher to another primary school. Subject co-ordinators vary but the quality of their leadership and management is at least satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities.	<b>Very good.</b> The governing body is very effective. Governors are very supportive and knowledgeable about the school. They hold the school to account for the standards of its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance.	<b>Good.</b> The school collects and analyses data on attainment well in order to make improvement in its teaching methods and pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources.	<b>Very good.</b> Financial management is very good and the principles of best value are applied well. The new computer suite provides a good quality learning resource. Staffing, learning resources and accommodation are generally good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parental responses are from the 71 returned questionnaires, the written comments and the 22 who attended the parents' evening prior to the inspection. In addition a number of parents were interviewed during the inspection.

What pleases parents the most.	What parents would like to see improved.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their child enjoys school and makes good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is consistently good.</li> <li>• High expectations that the children will learn.</li> <li>• Pupils mature and take responsibility.</li> <li>• Teaching is good. School is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about progress (a few).</li> <li>• Work closer with parents (a few).</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence fully supports the positive views of the parents. The quality of the annual reports and curriculum information for parents does vary between classes. Homework is of good quality and supports teaching and learning effectively.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall, pupils achieve well because since the last inspection the substantive headteacher has established a learning environment in which high expectations are the norm for teachers and pupils. The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, with strong support from parents and governors, are continuing to ensure that all pupils are given every opportunity to reach high levels of personal and academic achievement. Pupils enter school with below average standards and they reach above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science by the time they leave to go to secondary school. Comparisons with national averages are difficult to make in some years because numbers are small, for example in the current Year 6 there are only nine pupils.
2. Pupils make very good progress in all areas of learning in the Reception class. They achieve the nationally expected early learning goals because the quality of teaching and partnership between the teacher and nursery nurse effectively meets the needs of all children.
3. Inspection evidence indicates that the school continues to maintain high standards in speaking and listening and in reading. Writing skills, particularly extended writing, are weaker. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is close to the average and higher than that indicated by the 2002 test results at the end of Years 2 and 6. The main area of weakness in mathematics in 2002 was that average attainers did not achieve as well as predicted. This is being addressed for the current year and the fresh initiatives, such as booster classes, are making a difference. Nevertheless, co-ordination and management of mathematics throughout the school is not rigorous enough. Higher attainers achieve well in English and mathematics. In all other subjects except art and music, pupils achieve well and reach nationally expected standards. Art is identified as a priority in the school improvement plan and the school is implementing a number of strategies to improve its quality. For example, an artist in residence has worked with pupils in developing techniques in which to work with different media. Music standards are high because most of the teaching is excellent.
4. No significant differences were observed between the standards reached by boys and girls. Pupils develop their subject vocabulary well but do not develop their capacity for writing at length. Written work is not always presented neatly in a number of subjects. Pupils' ability to research information in most subjects is good. Pupils apply mathematical skills satisfactorily to their subjects. They apply their ICT skills well in most subjects and their keyboard skills improve significantly as they move through the school. Displays in classrooms included a number of very good examples of pupils' work ranging from word-processed compositions in English to graphical and 'PowerPoint' material.
5. The school caters for the needs of pupils of all aptitudes and ability. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards meeting the individual education targets set for them. Provision includes the extended and adapted use of the Additional Learning Strategy and 'Springboard' mathematics. Classroom assistants support these pupils well. Higher attainers generally achieve very well because there is regular provision of challenging work. However, a few average attainers do not achieve their potential in mathematics. The school identifies pupils' specific talents well as, for example, in sport and music, but is at an early stage of providing for pupils in other subjects.

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

6. Since the last inspection, the school has built effectively upon the many positive features in the report. The pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and personal development are now very good. Parents have expressed their appreciation for the values that the school promotes. Levels of attendance are good and above the national averages.
7. The pupils come into school in an orderly manner, some with their parents, whilst others arrive by school bus. They are smartly dressed and congregate in the playground before school starts. This allows some time for parents to have informal discussions with class teachers. Pupils quickly settle into the class routines prior to registration. They use the time constructively; such as quiet reading or writing.
8. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. This is because of the high expectations set by staff, the consistent implementation of the policy and the pupils' own input through the 'School Council'. They clearly know what is expected from them and they are fully aware of the rewards and sanctions of the behaviour policy. A few pupils have the potential to be disruptive. The teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator have put in place an effective programme to support pupils with problems.
9. Pupils play and mix happily irrespective of their individual backgrounds. The spacious grounds provide ample opportunity for a variety of play activities. The older ones care for the younger ones and the members of the 'School Council' take a very responsible viewpoint to ensure play is both safe and interesting. There have been no exclusions this school year although there have been in previous years.
10. Pupils' personal development, including relationships, is very good and underpinned by the positive school ethos. Good manners and courtesy are commonplace. Pupils clearly respect their school and resources and there is no damage or graffiti. They are encouraged to think of others and are given time in class for periods of reflection. For example, in the Foundation Stage, the class were asked to think of someone who needs God's help and to pray for them. This they did quite naturally.
11. The members of the 'School Council' are very proud of their role in helping each other as well as taking the school forward. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 'look after' those in Year 1 or Reception. Routine tasks, such as responsibilities as monitors in the dining room, are undertaken without quibble. Greater responsibility is given to pupils as they progress through the year groups. This helps build their social relationships and citizenship for the future.
12. Levels of attendance are good and above the national averages. Parents are constantly reminded of the importance of attendance and respond by not taking excessive holidays in term-time. Registration is taken swiftly and creates a good start to the day. This has a positive effect on their attitudes to learning. In one class registration, each pupil replies with a grade on how they feel. For example if they feel very happy then it is 'one' and if they feel really unhappy then it is 'five'.
13. Pupils with special educational needs are generally confident, well motivated and keen to make progress. Their attitude to learning, particularly in a small group, is often good. They have very good relationships with their classroom assistants and generally value the assistance they receive.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning are good and has significantly improved since the last inspection. All lessons were at least satisfactory, two thirds were good and nearly a fifth were very good or better, including five lessons that were excellent.
15. Teaching and learning in Reception are very good. Children are very well managed and this gives them security in the classroom. Planning is very good and based on thorough knowledge of individual needs. There is generally a very good balance between opportunities for play and more formally organised group and class teaching. There is a strong emphasis on children learning through practical work, developing speech and reading, mathematics and creative development. The teacher and nursery nurse work together as a very effective partnership. Pupils who are potentially higher attainers are provided with appropriate extension activities to meet their needs. There is good liaison with Year 1 children which ensures continuity in their learning.
16. Teaching and learning of Years 1 and 2 pupils are satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons well and have good management skills. Pupils work conscientiously and sustain concentration in completing the work set for them. However, there is less rigour in the use of assessment to guide children's progress in lessons than in other year groups. Pupils, therefore, do not acquire skills, knowledge and understanding as well as pupils in Years 3 to 6 neither do they have such an accurate knowledge of their own learning. In a number of otherwise satisfactory lessons in Years 1 and 2, a common thread is that the pace of lessons slows during group work.
17. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good. It was very good in Years 5 and 6 and good in years 3 and 4. Excellent teaching was observed in music. The teacher had very good subject knowledge, high expectations and skilled teaching methods. For example, in a lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils were being prepared to sing a song on an ecological theme for a local music festival. Through a series of well-gauged stages pupils reached a high standard of choral work which included very good pitch, rhythm and timing. The boys sang as enthusiastically as the girls. The pupils rose to the challenge because their learning was very well matched to their previous learning and they were able to succeed continuously through the lesson.
18. The teaching of English and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is good in a number of aspects but a greater focus is needed in developing writing skills. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and there is a good balance between skill learning and creative work. There are good examples of how work in a number of subjects links in strongly to supporting pupils' literacy development. For example, older pupils' work on Kenya is used to reinforce their grammatical knowledge. The teaching of mathematics and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy are satisfactory overall. Assessment is used well to place pupils in ability groups but the work set for groupings is not always matched at a level that is not only challenging but also within their reach. On occasions this can result in some off-task discussion although it very rarely gives rise to behavioural problems. Higher attainers achieve well because they have mastered skills in problem-solving and enjoy mathematics.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers are aware of pupils' learning difficulties. They provide suitable tasks and a range of appropriate activities and organisation which match the targets in the individual education plans, though a few of these are still not sufficiently precise. Classroom assistants effectively support individuals or small groups, working well in collaboration with the teacher. The headteacher, as special needs co-ordinator, provides an effective link between all staff

for pupils on the register of special needs. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to learning. They are eager to answer questions or take part in role-play. Even the younger ones are able to sustain their concentration levels for long periods. In class they are respectful towards their teacher or class colleagues and allow others to speak without interruption. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The support provided by the classroom assistants for additional help with literacy skills, teaching in small groups and the use of in-class support, makes a significant contribution to the pupils' progress.

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

20. The school continues to provide a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to the intellectual, social, creative and physical needs of all its pupils and which complies with statutory requirements. The quality and range of learning opportunities have improved since the last inspection and are now good overall and enriched through extra-curricular activities. Shortcomings in the provision of geography and design and technology have been resolved, but further work is still required in art.
21. The length of the school day has been extended to allow both additional taught time and a longer lunch-time. Policies and the necessary provision for health, drugs and sex education are fully in place. The school makes good use of published guidelines, appropriately modified to meet the needs of the school, in planning the curriculum in most subjects and these are helping teachers to plan more effectively for the continuing development of learning. Teachers are very aware of the need to ensure that the pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat work as they progress through the school. However, within subjects the time allocated to English is lower than is usual, although this does not adversely affect pupils' attainment levels in the subject and is correspondingly increased for religious education, in keeping with the school's foundation. Some subjects, such as design and technology, geography and history, are taught in blocks of time during the year, but, overall, the curriculum allows adequate time for coverage of the foundation subjects. The school uses visiting specialist teachers very effectively; for example, ensuring that pupils receive a high quality musical education.
22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now good. The Code of Practice is fully implemented. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is improving. All pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum and the opportunities it offers for them to learn and make progress.
23. The school has implemented well the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these are supporting the pupils' attainments throughout the school. Opportunities exist for the pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in a variety of situations. For instance, the youngest to the oldest pupils take an active part in discussions about the work of the School Council, while in mathematics, pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrated their language skills in explaining how they interpreted a pictograph. The introduction of additional and further literacy support is also helping to support pupils' progress. 'Booster' and 'Springboard' classes are provided for pupils at appropriate times of the year, in order to raise the attainment of specific groups of pupils in English and mathematics. Targets are being set for all pupils, following an analysis of their prior attainments, though procedures to securely monitor their progress are not yet in place. There is evidence of the use of mathematics across the curriculum, such as measurement in design and technology, graphs in science and time lines in history.

ICT skills are being taught systematically and opportunities to use them as a tool in other subjects are taken.

24. The range of extra-curricular activities is much better than is normally found in a school of this size, and is very good and has a positive impact upon pupils' standards, progress and personal development. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The longer school day has given sufficient time for clubs to be organized at lunch-time. This enables the full participation of pupils who would otherwise have been excluded through the inflexibility of the end of day transport arrangements and is in line with the school's policy of equal entitlement for all. There is a growing number of activities, such as drama, guitar and knitting clubs as well as football, netball and other team sports and games. The pupils appreciate having these activities and they participate well.
25. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. Much is taught through the ethos of the school, but discrete 'Circle Time' periods allow planned PSHE lessons and pupils receive small rewards or sanctions during the Friday afternoon 'Golden Time'. The school enhances pupils' personal development by encouraging them to take on responsible jobs. These include carrying the class registers to the office and helping in assemblies. Pupils gain an understanding of citizenship through the activities of the School Council and production of a school newspaper. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have an opportunity for residential experience, which also helps to develop their social awareness and independence and to strengthen relationships. Appropriate practice is in place to ensure that sex education and drugs awareness are fully covered within lessons for older pupils.
26. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. For example, the school has very close links with its church, those of the two neighbouring parishes and the Diocese of Westminster. The parish priest is a frequent visitor. The school is also well established in the village and has links with local businesses and the Hertfordshire Business Project.
27. There are good links with local primary schools and the secondary school that the vast majority of pupils move on to, to ensure a smooth transfer. The 'Friends' make a valuable contribution and provide additional resources such as improved computer facilities, the reception play area and garden and games tables. These are having a positive impact on children's learning.
28. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education is very good. All these aspects are strongly underpinned by the school's Christian foundation and are strongly reflected in the ethos, recognised from the moment one enters the building. Teachers explore opportunities to incorporate these aspects into the whole of the school day. Overall, there has been very good improvement in them since the last inspection.
29. Provision for their spiritual development is excellent. Through reflection, prayer and the arts the school furthers the spiritual development of its pupils and opportunities within lessons are used to create a sense of excitement and discovery. There are well-respected moments of reflection, usually with a background of quiet music, at the beginning and end of the school assembly. During periods of formal prayer all pupils demonstrate a very high degree of reverence and respect. A class assembly was observed which reinforced loyalty and caring for each other, as displayed by Jesus and His disciples. Assemblies meet the requirement as an act of collective worship. Pupils respect the reflective corner in each classroom and were observed sitting

contemplating the flower display, statues and other artefacts. Religious education lessons play an important part. Visitors to the school, such as the local Priest, contribute meaningfully to developing pupils' wider understanding of caring within society. The strong links with the local church contribute to the successful development of Christian values. Supporting local and national appeals widens pupils' thinking.

30. Pupils' moral development is excellently developed by the good example and respect all adults give them and by the ensuing good order in the school. The adults provide excellent role models, both in their dealings with each other and in their treatment of the children in their care. Christian values are taught and consistently practised throughout the school. In assemblies, religious education and personal and social education, pupils have very good opportunities to discuss moral issues. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and have a strong sense of fairness. The school places a determined emphasis on maintaining correct attitudes and good behaviour, and has developed a positive behaviour policy. Moral themes are explored and reinforced in lessons. There are well-established codes of behaviour and pupils understand the rewards and sanctions available. It is evident from the very good behaviour of pupils throughout the school that the consistent approach and high expectations by staff have a positive effect on the atmosphere in the school. Pupils are encouraged to think of the needs of others and help people who are less fortunate than themselves, through, for example, fund raising for Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, the Catholic Children's Society and the Kenyan link school.
31. Pupils' social development is very good. A School Council has been formed, which is made up of elected pupils from Years 2 to 6. Meetings are held regularly and give pupils an opportunity to express their views and take greater responsibility for the smooth running of the school. There is a good half-termly school newspaper edited and produced by the Year 6 pupils. The school fosters a family atmosphere. Pupils mix together well and there is a strong feeling of community. There is a constant but unobtrusive emphasis on appropriate behaviour, taking turns and thinking of others' needs, which encourages pupils to be courteous and well mannered at all times. Older pupils readily take on a variety of responsibilities in school, including helping younger ones. For example, during their 'golden time' pupils ask to be allowed to read to a pupil, or pupils, in one of the younger class groups. The use of visits, inter-school competitions and extra-curricular activities also helps to develop pupils' social skills.
32. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. A good emphasis is placed on all people, regardless of religion or culture, living happily together and caring for others. The school is developing cultural and multicultural links within most subjects. For example, in geography, pupils compare life in a Kenyan village with their own through their close links with a Kenyan school. Pupils are aware of the wide range of interesting elements in their own culture. The school provides opportunities for pupils to learn to play musical instruments. Opportunities are given to pupils to listen to music of differing styles and cultures during assemblies and lessons. There was little evidence of such a diversity in art. In religious education there are opportunities to learn about other faiths and an outstanding example of a Seder plate, together with an explanation of its constituents and their use and symbolism, was on view in the dining hall. Overall, the school plays an active part in enabling pupils to gain an understanding of the society in which they live, and develops their awareness of the part they might play in it. However, the pupils do not have the opportunity to study the cultures and beliefs represented in our culturally diverse society in sufficient depth.

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

33. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully improved the overall quality of care for all the pupils. This is a strength of the school and is recognised as such by parents. The school's ethos is strengthened by the very solid pastoral support provided by the Roman Catholic Church.
34. There are very good procedures to monitor and promote the pupils' welfare. The school has adopted locally agreed procedures for child protection. The acting headteacher is fully qualified and ensured that all members of staff have been suitably trained through professional training days using a professional guest speaker. The Diocese of Westminster also provides support and guidance. Provision for first aid is very good and staff have instigated innovative methods to ensure that any sickness or injury is fully tracked and monitored. Accident books are properly recorded. Health and safety, including security and risk assessments, are fully recorded and monitored by the governing body. All maintenance checks are in place.
35. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are good. The policy ensures that registers are marked consistently well and improved monitoring ensures that any concerns are quickly identified. There are existing good links with the education welfare officer and where necessary, referrals deal with the whole family rather than just absence. High levels of attendance are celebrated.
36. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour are very good. The 'School Council' and the midday supervisors all make a valuable contribution towards the whole-school policy. The policy is reviewed annually. Pupils clearly know the rewards and sanctions, such as yellow and red cards. Any unacceptable behaviour, including bullying and racism, is dealt with speedily. Those pupils with behaviour concerns are supported through positive action. Parents are closely involved, together with the class teacher, special education needs co-ordinator and outside agencies in a behaviour chart. This plan is carefully monitored and all improvements celebrated so that the pupil concerned can develop self-discipline.
37. Assessment procedures are good in all years and involve all teachers. Senior staff set realistic targets and monitor how well each class has done in meeting their targets. As a result, standards generally are rising in line with the national trend. Staff are using assessment data as part of their strategy to raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 and in mathematics for average attainers.
38. The monitoring and promoting of the pupils' personal development are very good. They are taught to consider their behaviour and their impact on others' feelings. The Foundation Stage pupils have their own learning goals. From Year 1 to the end of Year 6, the personal, social and health education co-ordinator ensures consistency throughout the school. Pupils' own views are sought either informally or through the 'School Council'. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, educational trips or celebrating festivals through their Church enhances their development as good citizens. Assemblies recognise and celebrate all aspects of their development towards the school, their families or to each other. Prayer, religious artefacts and reflection are an integral part of their school life. Pupils in years 5 and 6 have their personal development and citizenship potential monitored carefully. There is a tick list which parents and teachers scrutinise and discuss together.

39. The school meets the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice with good provision for its pupils on the register of special educational needs. It has good procedures in place to support pupils already identified in primary school and who may have difficulty in transferring to the different ethos and demands of a secondary school. Individual education plans are in place, though a few targets are too imprecise to be used effectively in lesson planning, or to be measurable, thereby facilitating accurate monitoring of progress. However, all staff are well informed of these targets and, generally, they are well used by teachers. Gifted and talented pupils are identified across the school and the school has recently introduced good strategies to challenge and extend these pupils further.

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

40. The school has consolidated the good links with the parents and wider community since the previous inspection. From a parental perspective these links are very good. These links are clearly a strength of the school. This is confirmed through the questionnaires and those who attended the pre-inspection meeting. In addition a number of parents were interviewed at random during the inspection process.
41. The views of the parents are gathered in a number of ways including questionnaires, parent evenings and an 'open door' policy for parents to discuss concerns. Feedback is given to keep parents informed of the outcomes of their concerns. There is a local translation service for any parent who requires it. The special education needs co-ordinator ensures that parents are fully involved in all reviews to support their children's learning.
42. The school has very good induction procedures in place for new pupils, especially in the Foundation Stage. This provides confidence for those pupils on their first stage of their education. Routine information is generally of a good quality, though a few parents would like better curriculum information. The annual reports vary in quality. Some are of very high quality and provide clear target setting and pertain to each child. Attainment levels are shown so parents can gauge how their child is achieving in relation to national expectations. Some reports are more generalised and target setting has less emphasis. Both the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents need updating to meet the requirements.
43. Many parents help in the life of the school and work effectively with staff to improve the quality of education. Parents happily make curtains, help with reading or paint rooms in the school. Very enthusiastic and dedicated 'Friends of the School' work tirelessly to raise money by holding fund-raising events. The profits from these provide much needed resources such as computers.
44. Most parents are happy with the quality and quantity of homework. Inspection evidence shows that the provision for homework is good. The homework diaries are used effectively and parents can easily monitor what books their child reads. Parents sign the diaries and the teachers respond to comments. The diaries are clearly marked by teachers to improve the pupils' learning. Homework supports teaching and learning.
45. Parents of pupils with individual education plans generally attend, or are informed of, the termly review meeting and are involved in the setting of new targets for individual education plans.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The leadership and management of the school are good. They show improvement since the last inspection; there have been several changes since then in a number of areas including enhancing the role of subject co-ordinators. Currently the headteacher is on secondment to another school and there is an acting headteacher in post.
47. The acting headteacher and deputy work very well together building upon the strong legacy of the substantive headteacher and maintaining the progress made since the last inspection. Staff are committed to raising standards, evaluating progress and practice and share ideas for development. Subject co-ordinators are empowered to monitor lessons, administer budgets and take a full and active role in the school. The use of schemes of work based upon those produced by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority is leading to greater continuity and progression in lesson planning and to a common sense of purpose and vision shared by all members of the school community including pupils and parents. However, there remain some weaknesses in the senior management team particularly as regards the co-ordination of the Years 1 and 2 curriculum and in the management of mathematics.
48. The governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and developmental priorities of the school and they play an effective part in monitoring the school's performance. They work closely with the headteacher who keeps them informed of the work of the school. The two committees meet regularly and report to the main governing body. Individual governors have responsibility for the core subject areas. The chair of the governing body meets regularly with the headteacher; governors are frequent visitors to the school taking an active part in its work.
49. Teachers are well qualified to meet the needs of the pupils and teach the National Curriculum. The learning support assistants are effectively deployed and provide a very good level of support for teachers and the curriculum; they are an active and valued part of the school community. Subject co-ordinators are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning of their subjects throughout the school and have a clear concept as to how improvements can be achieved in their subjects. The school has a well established performance management system in place which includes meeting with learning support staff and setting clear targets for all staff; this is seen to have a positive impact on raising standards of teaching throughout the school.
50. Newly qualified teachers are supported by a very good system of monitoring and induction provided by the deputy headteacher. They are encouraged to attend courses and receive weekly non-contact time when they can visit other classes, and arrangements are made for them to see leading teachers in other schools.
51. The special needs co-ordinator manages the provision for pupils with special educational needs very well. The work of the learning support staff is monitored by the deputy headteacher and they meet regularly. The learning support staff are seen as integral to the school working closely with teachers and taking responsibility for small groups of pupils. This plays a positive part in ensuring the best possible educational opportunities for all pupils.
52. The school makes effective use of new technology. The administrative and support staff work efficiently and in close partnership with the teaching staff. As a result the general ambience and appearance of the school environment is a very positive one. In the school office information technology is used to maintain a database for pupils, manage the budget and communicate through electronic mail. In the school

curriculum, full use is made of computers both in the classrooms and the computer suite. This is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning.

53. The accommodation in the school is good. The school makes good use of the space available and has the advantage of a separate dining area allowing full use to be made of the school hall. There are plans for future developments of the building with a view to improving the site of the well-organised computer suite. The school library is housed in the school hall but this does not prevent pupils having access to books. Some classes have a thoroughfare to others, which could cause disruption, but careful use of outside walkways ensures this is minimal. Pupils benefit from a well-organised playground with a large hard area and a very large field. The school building is well maintained and kept very clean.
54. Resources to support teaching and learning are generally of good quality and well used. They are stored centrally with easy access for all staff. Pupils show care in handling resources. The improved provision for ICT has enhanced learning and there is very good access to the computers.
55. The school has established very good procedures for financial management. The budget process is efficiently managed and governors kept informed of spending patterns through the finance committee meetings. The school makes good use of the standards fund to support educational priorities. The school is effective and provides good value for money.

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

In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- (1) improve the consistency of the development of pupils' writing and presentation skills by the age of seven by
  - providing more opportunities for extended writing\*;
  - ensuring that the same style of handwriting taught in handwriting lessons is applied in all their written work;
  - always expecting high standards in the way pupils present their work.  
(Paragraphs 3 and 83 - 92)
  
- (2) improve standards in mathematics\* by the age of eleven by
  - improving teaching and learning skills;
  - extending the range of resources available for average and below average attainers;
  - providing more effective leadership and management in the subject.  
(Paragraphs 3 and 92 - 100)

### **Other issues which should be considered by the school**

- Identify more precise targets for pupils with special educational needs in a number of individual education plans.  
(Paragraph 19)
- Improve standards in art\*.  
(Paragraphs 108 - 112)

\* *where marked the school has already identified these areas for improvement.*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	7	7	9	0	0	0
Percentage	18	24	24	34	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 three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	114
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	14	9	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	13
	Girls	8	6	6
	Total	20	17	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (100)	74 (100)	83 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	13
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	18	17	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (100)	74 (100)	87 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	9	9	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	6	9
	Girls	7	5	8
	Total	16	11	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (92)	61 (85)	94 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	9
	Girls	5	6	6
	Total	12	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (92)	78 (85)	83 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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	98	3	1
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	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	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	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)	5.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3
Average class size	22.8

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	128

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	330,853
Total expenditure	327,459
Expenditure per pupil	2,599
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,531
Balance carried forward to next year	18,925

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
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	114
Number of questionnaires returned	71

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	44	7	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	51	4	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	61	7	3	0
The teaching is good.	44	46	4	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	45	10	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	28	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	42	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	44	11	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	30	4	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	38	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	37	7	1	7

## **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**

56. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and gives them a very secure basis for future learning. The children entering the Reception class have lower levels of knowledge, understanding and skills than would normally be expected for children of this age particularly in communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical development. All children make very good progress so that by the time they leave the Reception class, most children will be achieving the nationally expected early learning goals. Children with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress in all areas of learning.
57. The quality of teaching is very good. Key strengths include:
- very good knowledge of the children and what they should be learning and the planning of a wide range of activities to give them experiences and support matched to these learning needs;
  - high expectations of children's behaviour and learning;
  - very good teamwork between the teacher, the nursery nurse and teaching assistants ensures the needs of the children are well met in all areas of learning and this is enhanced by the religious curriculum;
  - very good class management skills, especially in literacy and numeracy sessions where ability groupings develop well children's basic skills and knowledge;
  - very good relationships which enable children to be happy, secure and grow in confidence;
  - very good use of the outdoor area to develop the whole curriculum.
58. A weakness is that:
- occasionally, teacher-directed sessions of literacy go on too long and result in children becoming restless.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

59. Children have very positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy coming to school and form very good relationships with each other. Children work hard and play happily together with a good degree of independence and increasing confidence. Routines are well established so that children know what is expected of them and feel secure. As a result of this, their behaviour is generally very good. Children concentrate well in groups and whole-class sessions. They are beginning to listen to each other and most know how to take turns in speaking, as well as how to signal that they wish to contribute or answer questions. Children are learning to persevere and stay on task when working independently at a chosen activity. This is due to the careful matching of the activities to the capability of the children. Staff skilfully encourage and challenge children to move forward to the next step in their learning. A few still prefer solitary play activities but the majority of children are beginning to co-operate and play together. For

example, they show their increasing maturity in role-play areas such as Barnaby Bear's house, the beach hut and the shop. This shows their increasing maturity.

60. A strong emphasis is placed on personal and social development in order to support learning in other areas, especially physical and creative work. For example, children share equipment when cutting and sticking, and take turns with the outdoor toys. Most children say 'please' and 'thank you'. They practise these skills in the shop when thanking the shopkeeper for the goods they have bought. All staff listen carefully to what children have to say and value their contributions, often repeating to a wider group or asking questions to include others within the discussion. Adults are sensitive to the needs of all children and work hard to increase confidence and self-esteem. Praise is used well to acknowledge achievements.
61. Teachers have high expectations that children will care for themselves independently, that after visits to the toilet they will wash their hands and accept some personal responsibility, such as when changing for physical education lessons. Children rise to these expectations with many able to do this without any adult support, or with support limited to tying a shoelace or helping to turn items such as jumpers the right way round. Children are encouraged to have a go first and then ask an adult for help if needed, enabling them to develop independence. They understand the class rules and know what behaviour is expected of them, such as learning to tidy up after activities and take care of equipment, and to put their coats on when it is cold outside.
62. Children are developing a clear sense of right and wrong, share their toys with each other, and help each other with tasks. They comfort each other when they are upset, and some are confident enough to organise themselves and others in group play. Circle time is well used to encourage consideration and kindness to others.

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

63. Children make good progress overall in this area and achieve well. Most children enter the school with below average communication skills and vocabulary, and the school enables them to develop these skills with increasing confidence. Children are willing to speak in whole-class discussions and are learning to listen and take turns in conversations. They have learned a wide range of songs and action rhymes, such as 'The farmer's in his den' and 'Point to the window, point to the door'. They enjoy performing them. Children have regular opportunities to share their news and to talk about their experiences. They enjoy listening to stories and sit attentively for an appropriate length of time. Children are developing their early reading skills well. All recognise their name and read other names with confidence.
64. Children know the outline for a story, recognising that print has meaning. They recognise rhyming words and repeating patterns, joining in the chorus of favourite rhymes and stories. More able children have started reading simple texts and instructions. They are learning a number of frequently used words and attempt to make sense of unknown words using the initial sounds and picture clues. Lower attainers explain what is happening in stories read to them and use pictures to predict what might happen next. Children are aware of the words 'author' and 'illustrator' and know the difference between them. Children enjoy illustrations in books, have favourite books and handle them carefully. They hold books the correct way up and turn the pages in order.

65. Early writing skills are beginning to be developed and most children make marks to represent writing, incorporating correct letter symbols into their writing and read back what they write. Some copy the teacher's writing with good pencil control, and some more able children attempt a simple sentence and put a capital letter to start and a full stop to end their work. Children enjoy practising correct letter formation, for example when using their fingers in sand, rolling plasticine letters, painting letter shapes or making collage letters.
66. Spoken language is developed well in both formal and informal situations. Most children chatter about their play. Most will explain what they are doing to visitors and will initiate conversations with each other and negotiate positions. One child said, 'You can come with me and Barnaby Bear to the seaside, if you like.' Children were able to use specialist language such as 'beating' and 'plucking' when playing with musical instruments in the sound room.
67. In teacher-directed activities, children are given time to express their thoughts and ideas and the more articulate children are encouraged to further develop their language skills. The basic skills of reading and writing are taught very well in well-focused sessions in which children learn quickly. Letter sounds are taught well and reinforced in activities such as matching objects to their initial sounds, for example 'd' for daffodil, 'b' for bumble-bee. The children are introduced to a wide range of books to stimulate their interest such as books about baby animals and other new life in spring. All adults read stories in such an enthralling way that children listen intently. The children take books home to share with parents, which helps to develop their interest and skills. They write for a range of purposes, such as making home-made books about 'my favourite old toys' after a visit to the Museum of Childhood, writing their news and sending letters. Displays of children's writing around the classroom reinforce the message that it is important and valued.

### **Mathematical development**

68. Children have a wide range of mathematical ability and skill when they enter the school but standards are generally below average. Some more able children can count objects up to 20 correctly, whilst others can only count to 5. Through well-planned practical activities, including play, children develop an understanding of number, pattern, shape and measurement, with an appropriate vocabulary such as 'big' and 'little', 'tall' and 'short' and 'full' and 'empty'. They also learn specific mathematical vocabulary such as 'difference between', 'less than', 'subtract' and 'plus', 'add', 'more than'.
69. A wide range of structured and unstructured activities to develop learning is provided. These are well chosen for interest and enjoyment and are matched closely to the children's level of understanding. Teachers make use of every opportunity to encourage children to count, to recognise numerals and to do simple addition and subtraction as they play. For example, when singing for fun together, children use their fingers to count up and down as well as act out songs, such as 'ten green bottles', developing and consolidating their understanding of 'one more' and 'one less'. They also learn simple addition and subtraction such as  $2 + 5 = 7$  and  $5 - 2 = 3$ . Good use is made of a range of computer programs to reinforce learning in all areas of mathematics.
70. Children order numbers correctly to 20+ and they demonstrate this daily when counting how many children are in the class, how many are away, and how many are present during registration. All know that fingers help you count in 10s and 5s. They

learn about two-dimensional shapes through a range of activities, such as making pictures and geometrical patterns out of coloured sticky shapes and 'playdoh', and can also arrange objects in weight order, using balance scales from the heaviest to the lightest. Children make good use of the sand and water trays to investigate capacity and volume and learn vocabulary such as 'full', 'half full' and 'empty'. This good teaching promotes good progress.

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

71. Children's natural curiosity is nurtured by effective teaching that gives plenty of opportunities for them to explore the natural and man-made environment. For example, children have been finding out about baby animals such as lambs, and spring flowers such as daffodils. They have been eating fruit which is good for their teeth such. They have also looked at and drawn pictures of Barnaby Bear on holiday in a wide range of places, such as Poole, Portugal and Euro Disney. They look at him playing in the rain, snow and in the sun at the seaside, and draw suitable clothes for him to wear in these different situations and pack his suitcase appropriately. They experience the rain for themselves as they go out in the rain in the outdoor area with brightly coloured umbrellas, and test windmills and wind socks for effectiveness. They plant seeds and plants in their vegetable patch and examine bugs they find with magnifying glasses, trying to identify them by looking at a reference book.
72. They test materials to see if they are magnetic, and make home-made musical instruments, sorting them out by the way they are played, such as beating, plucking, shaking and blowing. They are beginning to develop a sense of time and happily recount what they did at school yesterday as well as what they are going to be doing at the weekend and in the holidays.
73. They learn more about their own culture and religion as they say a special prayer in the classroom before going to lunch, and thank God for the Spring and the daffodils. They learn about the Festival of Easter, but they also consider the celebrations of others, such as Passover, Carnival and the Chinese Lantern Festival. Opportunities for spiritual thought also occur without adult intervention; for example, three children play happily in the outdoor area looking at the daffodils in a pot. 'I like spring' said one. 'So do I', said another, as she crossed herself and made up a little prayer.
74. They use computers regularly to reinforce work in all areas of learning, using the mouse and keyboard with high levels of confidence. They can, for example, click on icons with the mouse to dress teddy, then save and print out their work. They can also programme a ladybird to walk forward and turn right and left to eat up a pre-arranged plastic insect.
75. Staff-led activities are used well to teach and establish new vocabulary related to the topic, such as journey words for Barnaby Bear's travel. Good planning ensures that the children are encouraged to explore and apply what they have learned through activities of their choice.

### **Physical development**

76. Fine physical skills are reasonably well developed when children enter the school and good teaching ensures that these continue to develop well. Children learn how to hold tools such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes correctly, play with small world toys and jigsaws and small and large construction equipment, and these experiences help them to develop their physical skills and manipulation.

77. Children control a range of small games, equipment with skill and confidence and an awareness of space. They show good co-ordination and control as they play with balls, quoits and hoops. In lessons, they listen carefully to instructions and learn the routines, paying good attention to safety, especially when moving rapidly around the hall or playground.
78. In their outdoor play, children show good awareness of space and others, by balancing well on tricycles and other wheeled toys, steering them with skill, travelling at speed, yet being able to stop when required. They observe the rules of zebra crossings and other traffic symbols in their play, learning how to be safe when out and about. Children run, jump and hop all over the outdoor area and climb and balance with confidence and safety on the climbing apparatus, although the equipment is insufficiently challenging for the boldest and most able. They put outdoor toys away carefully and efficiently.

### **Creative development**

79. Children achieve well in this area. Opportunities are given for them to express their feelings, and experiment with a range of media and materials, and they are offered a good range of activities, including drawing, model-making, painting, collage, imaginative play and music. Their creative attempts display increasing imagination and confidence.
80. Children enjoy making music and singing songs and are extending their repertoire of songs, nursery rhymes and jingles. They play instruments in time with the music, do actions to the songs and clap repeated patterns. Children enjoy singing because of the obvious enthusiasm of the teachers who join in with the actions.
81. Children react openly to stories expressing human kindness and sadness, and are beginning to relate these stories to incidents in their own lives, such as when 'Jack and Jill' and 'Humpty Dumpty' hurt themselves. They are able to express this openly using a teddy and a doll in circle time and learn from the experience how to empathise and say sorry.

### **ENGLISH**

82. Standards in national tests for 11-year-olds in 2002 were well above the national average and very high compared to similar schools. Standards in tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 in reading were in line with schools nationally and were broadly the same as those found in similar schools; however, writing skills were below average. Results are rising steadily in line with national trends. Inspection evidence confirms that standards by the end of Years 2 and Year 6 are well above average, with the exception of writing in Years 1 to 4 which is average.
83. Pupils achieve very well overall. Speaking is well developed and most pupils contribute confidently in groups and lessons and with their peers. They generally answer in sentences and give reasons for their responses readily. Pupils are keen to listen to other points of view and other ideas than just their own. In Years 5 and 6 they have good opportunities to talk and extend their vocabulary and this is effectively extending their thinking skills.
84. Standards of reading are above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils use a wide range of cues such as context and phonics to help them with unfamiliar words. For most, reading is a preferred activity and pupils are generally fluent. Pupils read with

enjoyment, emphasising important words or phrases; many are expressive in characterising voices and recounting action. Higher attainers use sophisticated language and present ideas well.

85. Standards of reading are well above average by the end of Year 6. Average and higher attainers make their own choices of books to read following advice from teachers. Most read books at home. Lower attainers use a range of strategies to read, their preference being to match sounds to letters and build up words they are not familiar with. More able pupils use higher order skills such as skimming and scanning to locate what they are looking for. Older pupils have satisfactory knowledge of accessing and using information in the library and via the Internet and there are good planned opportunities to do so. The library, although small, is well used. A satisfactory range of books is available for pupils in the library and in classrooms.
86. Pupils' good work in their handwriting books in Years 1 and 2 is not transferred into their English and other subject books where their writing is not well presented and, at times, untidy. Writing standards are below average. Letters are often not joined up and at times there is little consistency in pupils' writing. However, pupils' writing skills are improving as a result of recent initiatives. More pupils in Years 1 and 2 are beginning to be confident writers and able to organise their thoughts into sentences with full stops and capital letters in the right places. There is still much to be done if standards in writing are to be raised further.
87. Pupils' writing skills in Years 3 to 6 are above average. In Years 3 and 4, punctuation is beginning to be used well, and by Year 6, most pupils employ speech, exclamation and question marks appropriately to punctuate their writing. They experience and are beginning to create a good range of styles for different purposes and audiences, such as explanations and newspaper reports, biographies and diaries. In Years 5 and 6 pupils compile banks of words and phrases to create atmosphere and build suspense when setting a story. They learn how to write factually on historical themes as, for example, in their work on Icarus. In Years 5 and 6, writing skills are above average. The use of ICT is good. Pupils in all year groups learn features of word-processing well. In Years 3 to 6, pupils reorganise and redraft text, and search for interesting text and other information on the Internet.
88. Teaching and learning overall are good. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is satisfactory. In Years 3 and 4 it is good and very good in Years 5 and 6. In Years 1 and 2 there is scope for teachers to use more consistently features of effective teaching identified by the National Literacy Strategy. Some teachers' planning is not sufficiently detailed or informative enough about how the teacher is intending to move all pupils' learning on (especially more able pupils) from what they have already attained. In Years 5 and 6, pupils understand lesson objectives and know what they have to do and by when. The learning needs of pupils are met well. There is regular assessment of their progress and pupils achieve well.
89. Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to raising standards and reinforcing what has been taught in the lesson. Responses to pupils' work are generally based on the outcomes set for them, and this is a real improvement, based on targets set for teachers in the last year. Teaching assistants support learning well. They know particular pupils well, especially those having special educational needs, and are effective in preparing and helping these pupils make good progress. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in most lessons and over time, and better progress is made in Years 3 to 6 where the teaching is more effective.

90. Most pupils enjoy the subject and are keen to learn. They pay good attention and respond promptly and thoughtfully to adults. They try to produce their best work and effort and to stick at tasks until they are finished. Most take pride in what they do and help make lessons a positive and productive experience. However, not enough attention is given to improving the presentation of their work.
91. The subject is well managed by an experienced and well-qualified teacher who has overseen the satisfactory introduction of the National Literacy Strategy into the school and has been able to check that it is still being followed consistently and effectively in classrooms. The school has made good progress, since the last inspection, in raising standards. Advice on planning and raising standards is given in planning meetings for teachers and areas for further development are identified. For example, recent initiatives in developing writing are beginning to raise standards in this area. The school is beginning to identify consistently when literacy can be learnt and used in other subjects. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils selected key words and phrases from a history text, and wrote biographies of the wives of Henry the Eighth.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils reach average standards. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress although standards in mathematics are lower than in English and science.
93. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are keen to improve their skills and knowledge. There is a well-developed and structured scheme of work, based on the National Numeracy Strategy. Analyses of the strengths and weaknesses in previous years' test papers have been made but could be used more effectively to modify teachers' planning to support those pupils who are not achieving as well as they should. No significant differences were observed in the progress of girls and boys during the inspection. A good feature of the teaching is the extra support given to pupils with special educational needs. Teachers make good use of classroom assistants to support these pupils and they make a significant contribution to learning, so that pupils make sound progress towards their targets.
94. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress and have an appropriate understanding of numbers and their values up to 100, while a few pupils are familiar with larger numbers. Many know their number facts to 20 and can recall them without difficulty. Pupils use the terms odd and even correctly. They are able to use their skills to add up money and find the change. Most pupils have had some experience of measuring using non-standard measures, such as parts of the body, and recognise what is meant by 'tallest' and 'shortest'. They know the names of common two-dimensional shapes and some three-dimensional ones. Simple tally charts are constructed. The higher attaining pupils count in twos, fives and tens confidently. Lower attaining pupils use a number square and other practical aids to support them in their calculations. All pupils are taught appropriate mathematical vocabulary. All pupils confidently explain what they are doing and why.
95. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make sound progress in their learning. A scrutiny of pupils' past work indicates that they cover a wide range of activities that support their progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils have satisfactory levels of mental calculation, higher-attainers often working out quite difficult questions quickly and accurately. This supports them well in calculations involving large numbers and decimals. Most pupils calculate areas and perimeters, including the area of triangles. They understand how to work with negative numbers and percentages. Pupils recognise symmetrical patterns, and read,

interpret and use train timetables. They have a good knowledge of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Most plot points in the first quadrant, although they are less familiar with negative numbers and plotting points in all four quadrants. They draw conclusions from graphical representations of data, including pie charts. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils add to 99. Higher-attaining pupils are developing a good understanding of number bonds and place value. They use tally charts correctly and produce bar charts about their favourite food. Simple Venn diagrams are understood and pupils use them to show which objects have a property in common and which are different.

96. The National Numeracy Strategy is enhancing the curriculum and beginning to raise standards. Standards of numeracy are average and in line with expectations for pupils' ages. Lessons start with a brisk mental activity and this helps pupils to reinforce and extend their numeracy skills. There is a detailed numeracy plan for each half-term for each year group, which is tailored by the teacher in each lesson to meet the needs of the class. In all classes learning objectives are displayed and they help to direct pupils' learning. ICT is used satisfactorily although there is a limited range of software programs. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to extend their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example in science and design and technology, but its audited and planned use is at an early stage.
97. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers have secure subject knowledge, so that motivating activities gradually build on previous learning. Main points of previous lessons are revised and the objective of the current one to be presented to the pupils at the start. Teachers have good expectations of all pupils and work is often set at different attainment levels. Lessons start promptly and activities engage the interest of pupils. Work is generally perceptively structured at three levels, all blending into a continuous development of learning. Each pupil has a target setting out the key objectives to be learned, though these are not always applicable to the aspect for that day. Pupils' work is planned carefully and they often work individually or in small groups with an adult to provide help and support. Well-established routines for managing pupils' behaviour enable the lesson to proceed smoothly and minimise disruption when activities change. All lessons are planned to finish with a whole-class session to reinforce learning, and to provide a link to the next lesson. During this session pupils are able to demonstrate what they have learned and receive praise for their efforts. Unfortunately, on some occasions the time allowed was insufficient to do justice to the learning that the pupils had made.
98. Whilst there are strengths in teaching, there are also some shortcomings. Teachers do not consistently insist on an acceptable standard of presentation, nor are their comments on the pupils' written work sufficiently illuminating for the pupils to understand how much they have achieved and what they should do to improve further. Occasionally, tasks are not explained well enough before pupils begin their activities or the sheets prepared for pupils are unclear and the pupils then waste time wondering what they have to do. The management of time within the lesson is not always accurate enough to ensure an effective plenary session.
99. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are always at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils are good. Classroom assistants make a very positive contribution; they are well aware of what is required of them and the pupils they work with. They enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress in learning. Through the excellent role models provided by staff, and the exploitation of activities which demand taking turns,

working together, co-operating, collaborating, and thinking about the needs of others, mathematics contributes well to the moral and social development of pupils.

100. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who has now been in post for two terms, is working to a useful action plan but leadership and management, although satisfactory, are weaker than in English and science. More resources are needed to extend the range of activities for average and low attainers. The data analyses on tests already available are not used effectively to influence teaching and learning methods in order to raise standards.

## **SCIENCE**

101. Numbers of pupils entered for national assessments and tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 are small and, therefore, comparisons with national statistics need to be viewed with caution. The 2002 National Curriculum teachers assessments at the end of Year 2 were well below national expectations. In national tests at the end of Year 6 pupils achieved results that were above national expectations and below those for similar schools. The overall trend in the last four years is rising in line with that nationally. Inspection evidence shows that at the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with the national average. Progress has been made since the last inspection with the introduction of a scheme of work using the Qualification and Curriculum Authority Scheme with additional materials provided by the co-ordinator.
102. Pupils at the end of Year 2 are developing their scientific skills. They undertake simple investigations making appropriate observations and can record their results using a chart and suitable bar graphs. Pupils begin to question and predict the outcome of simple investigations and understand the need for fair testing and careful observation. They appreciate the need for a balanced diet and the effect of sugary food on teeth. Pupils construct a simple circuit in order to make a bulb light although this is not extended into the use of electricity in the home. They sort materials according to agreed criteria and produce a chart of results.
103. At the end of year 6, pupils are developing a range of scientific concepts. They undertake a range of experiments making predictions and drawing graphs of the results. They understand that their results may not always agree with the hypothesis. Scrutiny of work shows that they make careful drawings showing the effect of the water cycle and use simple scientific terms correctly. They can use the terms 'pitch' and 'volume' in relation to sound and demonstrate that certain sounds are caused by the vibration of strings. In Years 3 and 4 pupils undertake an investigation into the relationship between friction and weight. Results are correctly recorded using a Newton meter recording and presented in graphical form. Pupils discuss their conclusions with each other and the class teacher and explain how friction is used in everyday life. However, knowledge is not always consolidated in Year 6, and no written work was seen on forces in Years 5 and 6.
104. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2; teachers have good subject knowledge. Explanations are clear and help pupils to sustain interest and make progress. Lessons are carefully planned and objectives shown on the whiteboard, they are used for reference in the lesson and at the end of sessions. Classroom management of resources and pupils is good and in many lessons teachers used skilful question and answering techniques to develop pupils' thinking skills. Often there is a good pace maintained. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, express their ideas and challenge each other's answers. Expectations generally are high but work for the higher attainer is not always of a sufficiently

challenging nature. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive; they listen well to the teachers' suggestions and can make contributions of their own. They show considerable enthusiasm in preparing an investigation and carry it out successfully. Resources are handled with care and pupils are able to share both ideas and equipment; behaviour in the lessons observed was never less than good.

105. Overall, presentation of work in Years 1 to 4 is satisfactory but insufficient care is taken with handwriting and layout of work. In contrast, the presentation of work in Years 5 and 6 is good. In some exercise books, marking is minimal and does not indicate how pupils might improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the classroom assistants and they make good progress with help. Where work sheets are prepared care is taken to ensure appropriate differentiation. Teaching is well supported by carefully presented displays linked to the lessons. In Years 2 and 3 work on diet is carefully supported by a display identifying foods that are good for the children and the role of sugar in tooth decay. Good use is made of ICT as a recording medium for graphs and charts especially in Year 5 and 6.
106. The science co-ordinator monitors work in the classroom and reviews planning on a regular basis; this is leading to increased confidence in teaching science and an improvement in teachers assessments in Years 1 and 2. There is a good range of resources available to support the teaching of science. Good use is made of the previous years' test papers in Year 6 to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and to prepare pupils for national tests.
107. The enthusiastic co-ordinator manages the subject well. New initiatives include the development of a sensory garden in the school. The school hosted a science event for parents and pupils which was very well supported and received positive reviews from the local press.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. No lessons were observed during the inspection and judgements are based upon consideration of work sampled, displays around the school and a portfolio of photographs showing previous displays.
109. The quality of work seen around the school and in pupils' books is below average. There are examples of collage and observational drawing by Year 6 pupils. There was no three-dimensional work on display although this was shown in photographs provided.
110. Younger pupils draw with a variety of media including charcoal and pastel. Pupils in Year 1 mix colour and paint carefully showing some detail. They use watercolour and make a variety of shades to colour a template of Elmer the Elephant. In Year 3 pupils carefully investigate a pattern using paper and develop it into a collage using a variety of colours and related shape. However, there is no attempt to show how ideas progress over time.
111. In Year 6 pupils draw carefully from life and demonstrate an understanding of basic shading using pencil. They use a variety of media including pen and ink combined with water colour. However, sketch books are not used to practise technique or make a range of sketches to develop a picture but contain completed drawings. A display in the dining hall of Greek posts drawn by older pupils shows an understanding of colour and the ability to layer paint carefully. Work is carefully mounted encouraging pupils to respect the work of others.

112. Basic materials and equipment are available and there is a range of art books available in the library and classrooms. An artist in residence worked with pupils to prepare a bronze plaque of the Bishop. The previous inspection identified art as a subject area where standards needed to be raised. There is a scheme of work in place and art is identified as a priority for the School Development Plan. A concerted effort is needed to raise the standards in art to match that of the other curriculum areas within the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

113. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are made from looking at samples of work on display throughout the school, and samples of pupils' reports, and discussion with teachers and pupils. The evidence indicates that pupils' attainment in design and technology meets expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Immediately prior to the inspection, the school had had a technology workshop with visiting puppeteer specialists and pupils' work was on display. The standards attained by the pupils in making and evaluating their work on these puppets were above that expected for their age.
114. Each class had made different puppets. For example, younger pupils made finger and stick puppets and older pupils made cone and sock puppets, marionettes and ping-pong ball puppets. Each year group had been given increasingly demanding specifications and produced appropriate designs. Pupils develop good cutting and pasting skills and are familiar with the characteristics and possible use of a range of materials. They develop a growing understanding of the nature of designs and how improvements can be made. Older groups had written, at increasing length, details of the materials and construction method applied. The oldest pupils also produced good evaluations of their work, a mathematical exercise of cost and a play script appropriate to the figures. The quality of the work signifies that teaching and the pupils' attitudes to and interest in their work was good.
115. There is sound leadership and management of the subject. The governing body have recently adopted the policy and the co-ordinator is improving standards by the introduction of the national guidelines and more detailed lesson planning for each unit. These have been modified to develop a scheme of work, which is well structured and comprehensive and ensures pupils derive a broad experience of the subject. The occasional use of outside specialists for Years 3 to 6 has also raised standards. Standards are also monitored by the use of assessment across the school and the development of a portfolio of evidence.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards in geography which are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils make good progress in investigating a variety of places and environments. Map work is mostly accurate and clearly labelled and pupils have a good understanding of keys and symbols. Pupils use a variety of different scale maps to gather geographical information and make a detailed study of other countries. For example, they collect data about diversity of population, lifestyles and the physical features in Kenya.
117. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach levels expected for their age. They have a satisfactory understanding of the natural features of their local area. They learn about different places in the world through secondary sources of information, such as

postcards from foreign countries. Continuity in pupils' learning is affected by withdrawal of small groups for additional literacy support, and planning for future lessons does not always take account of the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as work is matched appropriately to their needs and capabilities.

118. Teaching and learning are good. It was only possible to observe two lessons because of timetable arrangements. In one lesson, teaching was very good and in the other it was satisfactory. Other evidence, including the progress shown in pupils' work in geography throughout the school and in the medium-and short-term planning, provides a clear picture of good teaching overall. Teachers' high expectations are supplemented by effective questioning and by praise and positive reinforcement of an individual's progress. Detailed lesson planning ensures clear purpose, good pace and learning which is stimulating, enjoyable and supported by well-chosen resources. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, pupils prepared simple slides on life in Kenya in the ICT suite. Their interest and enthusiasm for learning geography were inspired by the teacher's skilful guidance in developing their thinking skills. Teachers match work well to pupils' needs. Group work is carefully planned so as to provide the appropriate level of challenge for all levels of attainment and all pupils participate fully in lessons.
119. Co-ordination and management of the subject is good and there are good examples of how teachers build in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills into the programmes of study. Medium term plans are monitored across all years. Sound progress has been made since the last inspection. The main areas for development are to complete portfolios of pupils' work to support teacher assessment of standards and to further extend the range of resources, including atlases and case studies.

## **HISTORY**

120. During the inspection it was possible to observe only one history lesson. There was very limited work available for analysis in Years 2 and 6. However, evidence from work seen and from discussions with pupils indicates that standards are average and achievement is satisfactory at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This matches the findings of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls.
121. By Year 2, many pupils demonstrate a developing knowledge of past civilisations such as the Romans. They also show some understanding of chronology in studying the timeline from 786 to 1016. Younger pupils have started to recognise differences between old and new as, for example, of house types and old and new household objects.
122. By Year 6, most pupils demonstrate some understanding of chronology by ordering developments during the reigns of leaders in history. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are aware of the reason for and results of King Henry the Eighth's marriages to Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour. Overall, pupils have a better grasp of facts than of chronology. Higher attainers use a timeline effectively to show sequences of events. Pupils' recording skills are not well developed. There is very limited evidence of extended writing in the work seen.
123. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the standards of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 and 4 teaching and learning are satisfactory with a number of good features. Two Year 3 high attainers made very progress in setting out a word-processed letter making a plea to Henry VIII to be merciful to Anne

Boleyn. Their discussion on what to say to the king responded to the teacher's skilful guidance on the context of the marriage, including Anne Boleyn's moodiness. The strengths and weaknesses of both sides were sensitively explored. Lower attainers are given good support by classroom assistants who work closely in partnership with the teachers. Overall the main weakness in history is the lack of extended writing by average attainers and teachers are tackling this issue through graded worksheets for groups of pupils of different attainment levels. The Internet is used for research although there are limited opportunities for pupils to take initiative.

124. The planned curriculum is broad but, as in geography, block timetabling raises issues of continuity in pupils' learning. The co-ordinator has a good action plan for developing the programmes of study further although there is very little time available for monitoring the subject. Assessment is not formalised through the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

125. By the end of Year 2, attainment is broadly in line with that expected of pupils of this age, with some achieving well in some aspects of ICT. At the end of Year 6 attainment exceeds the level expected of 11-year-old pupils. The confidence of these pupils in using technology is a particular strength. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when attainment at the end of Year 6 was reported as being satisfactory.
126. A well-equipped ICT suite has been established since the last inspection and standards have improved significantly. Good use is made of the suite both by classes and small groups of pupils throughout the day. The combination of the computer suite and the stand-alone computers in the classrooms provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills as well as supporting learning in other subjects. Throughout the school, in a range of displays, there are examples of the use of computer skills in a variety of subjects especially English. The subject co-ordinator has played a considerable part in developing the provision. A planned timetable ensures that all classes have access to the computer suite during the week. During these lessons, sometimes in small groups, they learn particular skills and make progress as they move up the school. These lessons are linked directly to work in the classroom encouraging pupils' learning in other curriculum areas.
127. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject. For example, in Year 2 pupils use an Excel spreadsheet to draw a frequency graph. To do this they need to make use of skills involving the manipulation of the mouse and keyboard in order to click on and drag items across the screen. In English, they develop good keyboard skills when writing a poem or a piece of prose and they demonstrate the ability to add a variety of 'clip art' to enliven their work. In Year 1 pupils use the computer to write about their families and include simple line drawings using software programs. In Year 2 pupils work closely with a classroom assistant in programming a robot to move around the room to a set of instructions. They work well together and during the lesson they gained confidence in inputting distance and the required degrees to turn. The overall lesson was successful and the remainder of the class carried out a similar task on the computer using the keyboard and overlay on the computer screen.
128. Older pupils make good progress in developing their ICT skills. Pupils in Year 6 bring together a wide range of skills and knowledge when they prepare fact sheets and multi-media presentations on a range of topics. In one example, pupils used these skills effectively to talk to the whole school about Kenya. They introduce animation and colour into their work without difficulty. A Year 6 pupil edited the school newsletter

without assistance and with a high level of confidence in his ability to undertake the task. Pupils download images from the Internet and introduce them into text supplementing them with their own writing. They are aware of the inherent problems of the Internet and talk knowledgeably of bias and the need for safety when 'surfing the net'. From Year 2 onwards pupils send and receive electronic mail.

129. Teaching and learning are good. Learning is monitored well and a portfolio of work for levelling across all year groups is further helping teachers to assess standards in the subject. Relevant staff training has improved teachers' overall confidence in the subject. This confidence is a contributory factor to the good teaching and learning. Pupils enjoy their work, are keen to learn and behaviour is never less than good.
130. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and provides good leadership and guidance for the staff. Additional support is also given through the introduction of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's Scheme of Work for ICT. Resources are good, with modern computers networked and linked throughout the school. Good use is made of a computer technician once a week to ensure that technical problems are not the responsibility of the co-ordinator.

## **MUSIC**

131. The part-time specialist music teacher is only in school once a week. Nevertheless, standards are above national expectations by the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils make very good progress. Music provision has much improved since the last inspection. All pupils have experience of performing, composing, listening to and appraising their own music, and studying music from a wide range of composers, music styles and cultures. They behave very well in lessons and obviously enjoy their music-making. Sharing instruments in music composition is helping them develop their skills of working together and developing good cooperative skills.
132. In Years 1 and 2, pupils experience a variety of rhythm, pitch and tempo activities. They use their voices and body parts to sing and clap repeated patterns. They know a small repertoire of songs which they can sing from memory, observing the correct pitch and tempo of the song. They can recognise high and low sounds, soft and loud timbre, and fast and slow tempo, and can move in time to some jolly folk music, keeping the pulse going by clapping, stamping and slapping thighs. They can rehearse and perform, with others, simple tunes and rhythms which they have composed to illustrate a simple story: 'The little house', involving a frog, a mouse and a big brown bear.
133. In Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to develop their skills in composition and work in small groups to compose pieces on tuned and untuned instruments using the pentatonic scale, which they put together in a sequence to form a whole-class composition which they perform to each other using the song 'Land of the Silver Birch' as the base tune. They are able to sing the song, accompanied by a drone on the pentatonic scale, with an ostinato throughout. They extend their repertoire of songs, can create and copy complex rhythm patterns, and know that the longer notes on the xylophone are lower, and the shorter notes are higher.
134. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are learning a range of challenging songs for this year's Hertford & Ware District Music Festival (which the school regularly takes part in) on an ecological theme about the ocean, 'Ocean World'. The standard of singing is very good, with very good pitch, clear words and very good observation of rhythm. All pupils

sing enthusiastically with great energy and are very keen to perform. Detailed attention is paid to breathing, posture and phrasing to improve performance.

135. Teaching in music is always excellent, and good support is given to the specialist teacher by the class teachers and learning support assistants to help pupils with composition. The teacher has excellent musical skills, and is very confident about teaching music, using time and resources very well, managing pupils excellently, and modelling examples of correct singing and playing to the pupils. Pupils and teachers obviously enjoy making music together and it greatly enhances the community spirit of the school. The use of ICT in music is being well developed by class teachers, particularly in science and in design and technology, and reinforced for older pupils on a residential study visit.
136. Music is well used in assemblies: a range of music of all styles is played as pupils go in and out, and pupils sing in tune enthusiastically and with clear diction. There are good opportunities for the whole school to celebrate and enjoy music together, especially in celebrations such as Christmas and Harvest. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum, for example pupils have made their own musical instruments out of found materials in design and technology lessons, drawn pictures of musical instruments using a range of art media, and there are good links with literacy when pupils compose music for favourite stories that they have heard the teacher read.
137. The co-ordinator leads the development of the subject very well, giving advice to staff for follow-up work to her weekly lessons, and confidence to non-musicians to teach the subject. Resources for music are good and they are well used. There is a wide range of untuned percussion instruments including instruments from a number of different cultures and tuned instruments such as xylophones and glockenspiels. Music provision is enhanced by opportunities for pupils to learn recorders and guitars with the specialist teacher, and to play them in the church in the Mass. Pupils are also given opportunities to learn country dancing, ballroom dancing, and to combine their music, dancing and acting skills in an after school 'Theatre Train' club. Pupils took part in a project with the English Chamber Orchestra in which they performed Shaker folk songs, composed their own music, listened to professional musicians, and made a patchwork quilt on a pioneer wedding theme. The school performs to parents and friends at Christmas productions and other concerts, which use all the varied creative arts talents of the pupils, especially music, the last few productions being a Nativity for the youngest pupils and 'Alice in Wonderland', and 'Jack and the Beanstalk' for the older pupils. Pupils also composed their own song 'The Cool School Beat' and 'The Phantom of St Thomas' (a creative composition) for performance at the music festival.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

138. Standards in physical education are in line with national expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Overall, there has been sound progress since the last inspection. Year 2 pupils handle and use different apparatus confidently. Many develop higher order skills; for example, in extended exercises pupils combine their movements in a sequence. Pupils of all aptitudes make at least satisfactory progress.
139. By Year 6 pupils generally show a developing control of direction and speed in their movement and in their jumping and landing. In outdoor games, high proportions of pupils, both boys and girls, show good teamwork in lessons. For example, in a rugby skills session, older pupils showed good co-ordination and timing in picking up and passing a ball on the run. In swimming, overall standards in Years 5 and 6 are slightly

above those expected nationally for older primary pupils. All students, including the slowest group, are confident in the water and respond well to guidance from well-qualified instructors. It was not possible to observe dance or gymnastics lessons during the inspection.

140. Teaching and learning are good. Clear lesson objectives, instructions and effective questioning reflect good subject knowledge. Teachers show a proper concern for safety when using apparatus and in planning activities. Warm-up sessions prepare pupils well for their activities and frequent evaluation of performance by peers supports the development of skills and techniques. Pupils work well together and are enthusiastic learners. Well-planned lessons allow pupils of all aptitudes to make good progress. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pairs of pupils worked on improving their catching skills by moving further and further apart. There is very little use made of new technology, for example, digital cameras, to analyse performance in the older age groups.
141. The subject is well-led and managed by the deputy headteacher. Documentation reflects a broad physical education curriculum being offered. The subject is well resourced and the school benefits from a well-developed games programme and good external links, for example, with local swimming clubs and Saracens Rugby Football Club. Outdoor activities for older pupils include an annual residential visit. Innovative approaches include 'crazes of the week' which during the inspection focused on 'rope' activities during breaks. Overall, the co-ordinator has a clear realistic view of what is possible within the time resources available. Priorities for further development include greater monitoring of teaching and learning, the use of ICT and developing further resources for extending the range of physical activities.