

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gillingham

LEA area: The Medway Towns

Unique reference number: 118782

Headteacher: Mrs B Long

Reporting inspector: Mr J Donnelly

23637

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 247962

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 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Greenfield Road Gillingham Kent
Postcode:	ME7 1YH
Telephone number:	(01634) 855783
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Allison
Date of previous inspection:	26 <sup>th</sup> January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23637	J Donnelly	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9173	S McDermott	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	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?
10808	A Britton	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32343	P Gladwin	Team inspector	Science Geography History Special educational needs	
21103	V Ives	Team inspector	English Music	
5565	B Thakur	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's is a large voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in Gillingham, Kent with 418 pupils on roll aged 4-11. It has just under 60 pupils from minority ethnic groups with Asian, African and Caribbean backgrounds. Twenty seven per cent of pupils have special educational needs which is above the national average and ten pupils have English as an additional language. There are a few languages spoken in the school and ten per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils' attainment on entry into the reception class is below average but, as a result of the good progress they make, attainment on entry to Year 1 is average overall. The number of pupils leaving or joining the school, particularly between ages seven and eleven, is low. The school had a period of acting headship from September 2002 until April 2003. The new headteacher has been in post for just over four weeks. The school has also had a high turnover of staff in an area of challenging recruitment and retention.

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

St Mary's is a sound school with some good features but much remains to be done. Standards are average. The pupils make steady progress but could do better still. Children's achievement in the reception classes is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are weaknesses in the leadership and management. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Children's achievements in the reception classes are good.
- Standards are above average in art and design overall and also above average in history in Years 3-6.
- Teaching is consistently good in Year 6 and so enables pupils to make good progress in lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and they concentrate in lessons, work hard and behave very well.
- There are very effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development are very good.
- Links with parents and the local community are good.

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

- Monitoring and evaluation of standards across the school and the assessment of pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding in subjects other than English mathematics and science.
- The challenge for higher attaining pupils in some lessons.
- The quality of marking, so pupils know how to improve their work.
- Pupils' attendance. Too many children take extended holidays in term time.
- The role of governors, in raising standards through an understanding of what works well and what needs improving.
- The accommodation, particularly for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

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

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

The school was last inspected in January 1998. Overall progress has been satisfactory. Standards and the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved. Standards in design and technology in Years 3-6 are now satisfactory. Teaching has improved overall. High standards have been maintained in many important areas of the school. However, some of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection have not improved. For example, the key issues to improve assessment and the role of subject leaders to monitor teaching and learning are identified as weaknesses again. As a result, progress since the last inspection with regard to these issues is unsatisfactory. The capacity for further improvement following the appointment of the new headteacher is 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	A	B	B
Mathematics	C	A	C	C
Science	B	A	C	C

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Children make good progress in the reception class, particularly in personal and social development, where a significant number of children enter with poor social and personal development. As a result of good teaching, most are likely to meet the nationally expected levels in language and communication and numeracy at the end of the reception Year. However, a significant number are still working towards the expected levels in personal and social development.

Results in the 2002 national tests for Year 2 pupils were above average in reading and average in writing. When compared to those in similar schools nationally, the pupils' performance in reading was above average and in writing, below average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are rising in Years 1-2 and are now just above national averages. Results in the 2002 English national tests for Year 6 pupils were above national averages and above average when compared to those in similar schools. This is against a background of a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and a change in leadership and management. Current standards in Year 6 are average.

In mathematics, results in the 2002 national tests for Year 2 were average. When compared to similar schools nationally, mathematics was average. During the inspection, pupils attained standards that were average. Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 were average both compared with all schools and with similar schools. The school identified some underachievement of this group when they were in Year 4 and took action to remedy the situation successfully. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 3-6 and attain standards that are in line with national results.

In lessons in science, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve standards that are in line with the national average. Results of the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6 were average. When compared to similar schools nationally, standards are also average. However, inspection evidence indicates that the trend is much more positive. Progress is satisfactory overall.

Given the low starting points of many and the very significant proportion who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language (EAL), the overall progress of pupils is satisfactory. In English, mathematics and science, standards are rising in the lessons observed, where teaching is often good. Progress in most other subjects is satisfactory. However, in art and design and history standards are above average and progress is good.

The school met its national targets in 2002 for English but was unsuccessful in mathematics. However, this mathematics target did not reflect the school's own analysis. The targets for 2003 are challenging yet realistic and reflect the improving trend in standards overall.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. The great majority of pupils are very keen to learn and do as their teachers ask.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall. There have been no fixed term exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school between teachers and pupils, and pupils and their peers, are very good. Pupils' personal development is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with good features. Teaching and learning are consistently good or better in reception and Year 6. Teaching and learning in most lessons in English, mathematics art and design and history is good. It is good in science in Year 3 to 6.

Strengths:

- High expectations by some teachers and good subject knowledge lead to good learning of basic skills for all pupils.
- Enthusiasm, challenge and pace to lessons, which inspire pupils to try harder.

Areas for improvement:

- Too little time is spent at the end of lessons to help pupils summarise what they have learnt.
- Insufficient challenge and pace for some more able pupils.
- Teachers' marking does not help pupils to understand how to improve their work further.

The quality of teaching and learning in the reception classes is good. As a result, many of the early obstacles to the children's learning are overcome and they become curious and confident learners.

All pupils, whatever their background or culture, are valued and included in school life. Pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs are well taught and fully included in the life of the school. Literacy and numeracy are well taught across the school.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant overall. Medium term subject planning is a weakness and some lessons are too long. There is a good range of interesting and stimulating extra curricular activities. Good links with the local community enhance pupils' learning effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory provision enables pupils to make steady progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The progress of pupils in the initial stages of learning English is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to understand the richness and diversity of other religious beliefs and ethnic groups and takes appropriate steps through its policies to combat racism.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. The teachers successfully promote mutual respect amongst its pupils. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are unsatisfactory and do not consistently inform the next stage of learning.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	The school has good links with parents overall.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management overall across the school are satisfactory. However, subject leaders are insufficiently focused on raising standards. The newly appointed headteacher is clearly focused on raising standards overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have clear committee structures and give readily of their time. However, they are insufficiently involved in helping to raise standards and some do not have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Some of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have not been addressed.
The strategic use of resources	Overall, the budget is used effectively. Staffing, resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall. The school takes account of purchasing goods at a favourable cost, but its spending decisions are insufficiently linked to raising standards further. The Year 1 and 2 classrooms are very cramped and the mobile classroom is unsatisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mutual respect amongst pupils.</li><li>• Most of the teachers are good role models.</li><li>• The school promotes high social and moral values.</li><li>• Children like school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extra-curricular activities.</li><li>• Cramped accommodation.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments made by parents and that the school has some accommodation that is unsatisfactory. The team judges the extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory. The inspection team also agrees that the behaviour and personal development of the pupils are very good, but it has reservations about the quality of teaching and progress identified by parents as good in the questionnaire.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the Reception Year with below average attainment in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics and well below average social and emotional development. Attainment is average and the progress is good overall by the end of the Reception Year for most children in all areas of the learning, except in personal, social and emotional development. By the time they join Year 1, most have reached the expected standards for this age in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics, and a small minority exceeds these standards in some elements. Attainment is largely affected by the amount of time children have in the school, although to some extent, the quality of teaching and learning makes up for the difference in age, and the younger children make rapid progress towards the expected standards for this age.
2. Results in the national tests and teacher assessments in 2002 were above the national average in reading and average in writing for pupils in Year 2 and above national averages for pupils in Year 6 in English. When compared to the performance of pupils in similar schools, standards are above average.
3. Standards in the mathematics 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6 were average, and average in comparison with similar schools. In the lessons observed, pupils in Years 1-2 attain standards that are expected for their age in numeracy and in shape and measure. Progress is satisfactory.
4. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3-6, and many pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are in line with national results. Higher attaining pupils are not always given work that is sufficiently challenging and they do not progress as quickly as they could.
5. Standards in science have fallen since the last inspection. Standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are average but this shows a dip from the national test results of 2002 when standards were well above average at the end of Year 6. This can be attributed to a large cohort of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' make satisfactory progress in science.
6. There are no significant differences in the attainment or progress between pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is no difference in achievement between white European, or pupils from other ethnic groups. However, the school recognises that there is a lack of challenge for more able pupils in some lessons.
7. Standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school are improving since the 2002 national tests. Progress in most other subjects is satisfactory.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. Individual education plans have appropriate and manageable targets. More able pupils are clearly identified in class profiles but there is inconsistency in the way higher ability pupils are challenged across the school and subject areas.
9. Progress for pupils with EAL is satisfactory overall across the school and over time. The pupils who are learning to be bilingual make good progress in the Reception Year. Progress is sound thereafter. Standards of work seen in subjects are generally similar to those of their peers at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
10. The national results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been analysed for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is useful in making comparisons and establishing how well pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are achieving in comparison with rest of the school. The data analysis, however, is not yet sophisticated enough to include the performance of EAL pupils at the various stages of learning English. There are no written guidelines for teachers as to how they

should support bilingual pupils in their class nor any plans to develop these in the near future. The support offered in the Reception Year is particularly effective and accounts for much of the good progress these pupils make.

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

11. The pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and make the most of their time in school. This positive approach to school has been well maintained since the last inspection. Pupils arrive punctually and happily in the morning and look forward to the day's lessons. A good number of pupils participates in the after-school clubs and they are keen to tell visitors about their triumphs in inter-school competitions. Pupils are very enthusiastic to learn and this greatly benefits their progress. In a geography lesson on scale, the pupils were very interested to find out more about maps, particularly when they could relate their learning to experiences in their own school surroundings. The older pupils made very good progress in their poetry lesson in tackling some challenging vocabulary and sentiments because they were captivated by the language and wanted to know more. Even in some lessons that lacked pace and stimulation, the pupils' patience and willingness to learn helped them to make progress.
12. Pupils with EAL have positive attitudes towards their learning and show very good levels of interest in their day-to-day activities. They are enthusiastic about listening to stories that are read by their teachers, and show much interest in reading afterwards by themselves. They are friendly and are well integrated within the school community. Their behaviour is very good and they form very good relationships with adults throughout the school.
13. The behaviour of the pupils is very good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The pupils are particularly well disciplined in moving around the school and taking part in assemblies. Lunchtimes are pleasant and sociable occasions because the pupils, both infant and junior, know how to behave and interact properly. In lessons most pupils behave very well. In a Reception music lesson the children behaved impeccably and consequently made very good progress in their musical appreciation. Not one child had to be reminded to refrain from fiddling with their instruments during the explanations. However, the pupils' self-discipline is not always as strong as it could be, particularly when teaching activities are inappropriate or too long drawn out. In some cramped and stuffy classrooms it is not surprising that pupils find it difficult to concentrate and behave appropriately. Throughout the school, pupils are extremely polite and courteous, and look after their surroundings with pride.
14. The relationships of the pupils are very good, as they were during the last inspection. Pupils think highly of the adults in the school and appreciate the guidance they receive. Pupils also get on very well with each other. Often pupils were seen to play happily together at break times and collaborate well in lessons. A few pupils can be quarrelsome and squabble too easily, but this is often related to particular learning difficulties. Any instances of bullying are very rare. The pupils are responding very well to the school's strong promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others, as evidenced by their courtesy and concern for others. In one assembly many pupils were able to understand that if a person is always truthful others will trust him and in another pupils could confidently identify who would be upset if a person makes the wrong choice. Respect for the values and beliefs of others are very good. All pupils are reverential and quiet during prayers and listen thoughtfully to stories and readings.
15. The personal development of the pupils is good. Pupils take on small jobs around the school willingly, such as returning the registers to the office and setting out benches for assembly. However, pupils in Year 6 would appreciate more rights and responsibilities to recognise their status as the eldest in the school and to capitalise on their mature and sensible attitude. The pupils who participate in the class and school councils are proud of their position. They contribute positively to the democratic process in the school. As reported in the last inspection, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative. On occasions, pupils are over regimented or directed, so there is insufficient chance for pupils to think independently about what should be

done. In the same vein, not all pupils are sufficiently adept at checking their work to see how they can improve content or presentation.

16. The pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory and has deteriorated a great deal from the last inspection. The school has a higher rate of absence than similar primary schools. This stems not just from some pupils with long bouts of illness, but mainly from an increasing number of parents taking their children out of school in term time for family holidays. However, on the positive side, the rate of unauthorised absence is low because parents are conscientious in letting the school know when their children cannot attend. The unsatisfactory attendance levels cause disruption to the teachers as the pupils return and are having a detrimental effect on the progress of the pupils who are missing important parts of their learning.

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

17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good in English mathematics art and design and history. Teaching and learning are good in science in Years 3 to 6. It is consistently good or better in the reception class and Year 6.
18. Strengths in teaching include high expectations by some teachers and good subject knowledge which lead to good learning of basic skills for all pupils, including those with English as an additional language. Many lessons are well prepared and teachers keep pupils focused on the task so that they learn at a good rate. The good use of support staff has a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially for those with special educational needs. Weaknesses include insufficient challenge for some more able pupils and some teachers' marking, which does not help pupils understand how to improve their work further.
19. Teaching is consistently good in the reception classes. It enables children to make important gains in learning because teachers' planning across the six areas of learning takes good account of children's needs and identifies links with the National Curriculum. All staff have a very good understanding of the needs of the children and work together very well as a team. They work hard to encourage children to develop their language skills and understanding. Assessment is used well to identify children's needs and track their progress from entry into school.
20. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in English is good. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Teaching is always at least satisfactory, with instances of very good teaching. This has a positive effect on pupils' attainment, particularly in Year 6. In the most effective lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge is shown in the setting of challenging work that is carefully matched to pupils' differing capabilities. Lesson introductions are used well to promote discussion and kindle pupils' interest so that they listen attentively. Skilful questioning and explanations ensure that pupils understand their work. Behaviour is good and is based on the positive relationships amongst pupils and between adults and pupils. Praise is used well to show pupils that their work is valued and to encourage higher standards. Marking is inconsistent across the school. It is good, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where it is constructive and encouraging and where written advice is given to pupils on how to improve their work. This is not consistent practise across the school. This is the same judgement as at the last inspection.
21. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. Stronger lessons were observed in Years 4 and 6. Teachers generally have clear learning intentions, which are usually shared with the whole class. The plenary session is used for the teacher to ascertain whether pupils have achieved these intentions. Pupils are generally managed well and lessons are planned appropriately to build on pupils' previous learning. A good pace and challenge was evident in the better lessons and these teachers had higher expectations for pupils' performance. Most teachers organise and manage lessons well. However, the pupils with higher ability are not always given suitably challenging tasks. Marking is not consistent in quality and pupils' work in the infant school in their exercise books is generally untidy and poorly presented, due in part to the over-use of commercial workbooks.

22. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of science teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but with a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. Where teaching is unsatisfactory there is weak subject knowledge, lack of pace and missed opportunities to focus on key scientific vocabulary clearly. Previous teachers' assessments or information in Individual Education Plans are not consistently used in teachers' planning to build effectively on pupils' achievements. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good teaching. When teaching is effective, lessons are based on practical investigation and high quality challenging questioning from the teacher develops pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and pace effective.
23. The classroom assistants take considerable responsibility for the teaching of pupils who speak languages other than English at home. They have been well supported by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant co-ordinator. She meets regularly with the assistants to pass on to them what she has learned in training sessions and other suitable information. The assistants have responsibility for doing termly assessments of the progress of targeted pupils. This is done conscientiously and ensures that the assistants are well aware of the learning gains which pupils have made.
24. Good, well focused learning opportunities are provided for pupils with special educational needs when withdrawn for individual or group support by the special educational needs co-ordinator. When teaching in the classroom is good, pupils with moderate learning difficulties are generally well supported. Although teachers are aware of pupils' special educational needs, and the needs of those with English as an additional language, there is often too little detail in teachers' planning.
25. The teaching of pupils learning to be bilingual is satisfactory overall and good in the two reception classes. Teachers are able to draw on the expertise of the EMAG funded specialist teacher, and the bilingual support assistants within the school. Teachers know well the needs of their pupils with English as an additional language and are mostly aware of their cultural background. The pupils' needs are generally met within the classroom through teachers organising work in smaller groups and by providing more differentiated activities. This works more successfully where support assistants are available for working with pupils in smaller groups, and where there are more opportunities to ask suitable questions. Pupils are finding this support valuable and they respond favourably to the individual attention they are getting. In the longer term, this is helping to increase their confidence and their ability to speak in larger groups.
26. Pupils with EAL are supported well through the additional support available from the specialist teacher, who visits for one morning a week only and mostly works on a withdrawal basis, away from their class. The quality of support teaching is good. There are individual plans of work, individual targets for learning, and a written evaluation of progress made by the pupils. There is a good level of collaboration with the class teachers concerned, which helps to plan suitable activities for the individuals in small groups, and at times in providing individual support. This is helping to increase their confidence in talking to adults and to their peers. The school needs to consider more flexible ways of organizing the specialist support within the school, so that the maximum potential of the lessons is achieved in all subject areas, and there is equal access for the pupils to all that the school has to offer.

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

27. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and meets statutory requirements. Good provision is made for the very youngest children. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection.
28. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well and they have been effective in maintaining standards and achievement for most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. However, medium-term plans are not always linked to pupils' ability, especially in the case of gifted and higher ability pupils. The

planning in other subjects takes account of national guidelines, but some schemes have only recently been reviewed and revised. Nevertheless, they help to ensure continuity and progression in learning.

29. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. A subject policy and a scheme of work are in place and are due to be revised to include citizenship. The subject is clearly defined through timetabled lessons, 'circle times' and other subjects like science, physical education and religious education. There is a school council with representatives from all the junior classes and Year 2 in the summer term. The school provides Years 5 and 6 pupils with sex education and although there is no official policy on drugs education, visitors have talked to various year groups about the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drug abuse.
30. Pupils have satisfactory access to the curriculum. The school's inclusion policy for equality and diversity are very clear on gender and racial issues and any incidents of this nature are dealt with swiftly and capably. Although planning for lessons in English and mathematics takes account of the range of ability within classes, this is not always the case in other subjects. Teachers provide appropriate learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs and generally work closely with learning support assistants to ensure that these pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum. The school had identified gifted and talented pupils but an appropriate enriched curriculum for these has not yet been formulated.
31. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory overall. There are suitable arrangements for ensuring access to the curriculum for pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning English. However, the needs of more advanced learners of English who continue to need additional support in different subjects of the curriculum are less well met. The school aims to ensure that there is equal access to the curriculum for all pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and for those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils are generally well supported within class in accessing subjects of the curriculum. However, there are occasions when pupils who are withdrawn for additional support from the specialist teacher miss out on many useful activities and experiences that other pupils enjoy within the class. For example, during inspection, the three pupils withdrawn from Year 1 for additional support missed out on a number of interesting activities in different subjects that had direct bearing on enhancing their speaking and listening skills, and in developing their own imagination. Over the long term, this also deprives teachers of getting additional guidance and strategies for in-class support from the specialist teacher.
32. Extra-curricular activities, including the use of visits, are good. A good wide range of school clubs is arranged after school on most afternoons. This enables pupils to participate in, for example information and communication technology (ICT), music, dance, soccer, netball and basketball. Most of the clubs are provided for junior pupils but infant pupils take part in dance and a soccer club is planned for this age group in the future. Visits to local places of interest and a residential visit for Year 6 pupils in the summer term support pupils' learning in school. Visitors to the school include theatre companies, an artist in residence and those in support of pupils' religious education studies.
33. Good use is made of the local amenities on school visits like the Maritime Museum, Riverside Country Park and the local toy museum. The school has very close connections to the parish and pupils of all age groups visit the local church. Pupils from the school have participated in a local industry and technology initiative and have constructed their own moving vehicle during a young engineers' project. The school also has close links to a supermarket through the headteacher's participation in a leadership course.
34. There are good, effective links with nearby schools and nursery and play schools. The school takes part in tournaments and competitions with nearby primary schools in soccer, netball and athletics. Teachers visit local nurseries and play groups prior to children starting school. Year 6 pupils 'feed' several secondary schools and staff from these schools, including special educational needs co-ordinators visit. Students from the county university carry out their teaching practices in the school and secondary school students benefit from work experience.

35. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good in all four aspects. This maintains the judgement of the last inspection.
36. Spiritual development is very good. The school's Catholic ethos and a daily act of worship provide pupils with an opportunity to reflect on spiritual issues. These are planned to cover spiritual, moral and social issues like the reason why everyone is special. Pupils are encouraged to share their own feelings in assemblies and in music, dance and art and design lessons. The wide variety of art displays around the school has a spiritual content, as do the prayer corners in every classroom. There is a wooden bench on the edge of the playing field, commemorating the death of a young pupil from the school and designated as a quiet place.
37. The promotion of pupils' moral development is also very good. The importance of high standards of behaviour and courtesy is promoted and expected in the school and most pupils react well accordingly. Pupils raise money for various children's charities like the local hospice and Catholic Children's Homes by participating in netball matches and baking cakes. A behaviour management policy is in place and a summary of this document is sent to parents annually for signing.
38. Very good arrangements are also made for pupils' social development. There are very positive relationships between adults and pupils in the school and all adults provide a good role model for pupils. Pupils show good co-operation both in lessons and in the playground, for example when pupils work with a partner or in a small group in physical education and mathematics lessons. Pupils of all age groups are given responsibilities in monitoring and tidying tasks and there is a thriving School Council. Pupils' involvement in fund raising activities promotes a good awareness of the needs of others.
39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also very good. A good range of experiences of other cultures is provided through curriculum subjects like, art and design, music, religious education, dance and geography. Displays in classrooms and in other areas of the school indicate a spiritual and cultural dimension. The multi-cultural aspect of pupils' personal development is very well catered for in religious education when such other religions as Judaism, Buddhism and Islam are studied. Displays of African and Japanese clothes further enhance this aspect. Pupils' knowledge of their own culture is extended very well in their history and literature lessons. Theatre companies are regularly invited into the school and pupils also produce their own dramatic performances.

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

40. The care of the pupils is well founded in the strong Catholic ethos. All pupils, whatever their ability, race or colour, are welcomed to the school and included in the full life of the school. The staff know their pupils well and are able to give sympathetic and practical pastoral support to each individual. However, the lack of rigorous academic tracking procedures means that some pupils are not sufficiently extended in their learning.
41. The school has as good systems for the safety and welfare of the pupils at the last inspection. The site is safe and secure, with the addition of new fencing and the regular patrolling of a security firm. The governors and headteacher ensure that the school is regularly checked for potential hazards. Currently, they are acting on the recommendation of the recent health and safety audit to keep more formal records of risk assessments. Fire prevention systems are good and aided by the expertise of one governor who works for the fire service. Welfare and medical procedures are good. There are sufficient staff with training in first aid. Playground supervisors are vigilant and quick to deal with any bumps and grazes. The accident book is meticulously kept and it is commendable that the school makes sure that it notifies parents by letter of any accident, however minor. As there is a significant number of minor accidents during playtimes, there is need for regular monitoring of the accident book by senior staff to find out why and where these occur and to see if they can be prevented. Pupils with particular medical needs are well looked after.
42. There is a caring ethos in the school and there are suitable arrangements for identifying and assessing the needs of pupils with EAL when they are admitted to the school. The specialist



teacher involved uses the standardised EMAG Service Procedures for individual assessment, and for tracking pupils' progress thereafter on a regular basis. This is proving useful in noting progress made by individual pupils over time.

43. Procedures for child protection are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher and her deputy are well trained. The headteacher keeps confidential records securely in her office. The school liaises carefully with the social services departments for pupils and families who need special help and support.
44. The school has unsatisfactory systems for the checking and improving attendance. Registers are called swiftly and effectively at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The teachers and office staff are quick to find out about unexplained absence and help individual pupils with attendance problems. However, the school is not yet making sufficient use of the computerised registers to track trends in absence and to find out why authorised absence is so high and which groups of pupils have the highest amount of absence. Since the last inspection, the governors have consistently reminded parents about the need to avoid holidays in term time, but to little avail as the authorised absence figure has increased year on year.
45. Procedures for tracking and promoting good behaviour continue to be very effective. The whole school, including staff and parents, has high expectations for appropriate behaviour that are founded very successfully on the strong Christian moral code. The reward for good behaviour and attitudes is well recorded via the class Star Charts or the Praise Book. The strategy of marking the names of pupils who are behaving inappropriately with crosses on the board or in the Red Book is fairly administered and recognised as serious by the pupils. On a few occasions the management of the pupils is over regimented and detracts from the pupils' independent development of self-discipline. The school keeps up very good communication with parents if it has concerns about a pupil's misbehaviour and together home and school can work effectively to help improvement. The consistent application of rewards and sanctions in all classes allows the pupils to know exactly what is, and what is not, appropriate and leads to the very good levels of behaviour in the school.
46. The school is very quick to nip any incidents of bullying or name calling in the bud. All parents are aware of the school's "zero tolerance" of bullying and have received the "Say no to bullying" leaflet, so they can work effectively with the school to the same ends. The headteacher keeps a well-monitored Bullying and Racial Incidents Book so that pupils involved can be helped to understand the seriousness of the incident and given support to improve.
47. Procedures for the monitoring and supporting of pupils' personal development are as good as at the time of the last inspection. The Catholic ethos embraced by all the staff provides a sound foundation from which the pupils grow up as well rounded citizens. The youngest pupils are settled in well and are quickly able to cope with the routines of school life. Pupils are given a satisfactory number of duties around the school, although there are not enough opportunities for the older pupils to demonstrate their responsibility and to recognise their place at the top of the school. Sex education and lessons in the use and misuse of drugs prepare the junior pupils well for life beyond school, although the school needs to agree a formal drugs education policy to ensure consistency in teaching. The involvement of pupils in the class councils and school council provides a valuable grounding in democracy and in how to contribute effectively to the community. The personal, social and health education lessons give pupils a good chance to learn how to articulate their feelings and discuss topical issues. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that the promotion of personal development is threaded throughout the curriculum and that all teachers, particularly as many are comparatively new, feel confident in holding effective class discussions on sensitive and personal issues. Pupils leave St Mary's as confident and well-adjusted young people.
48. There are good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Initial assessments for children starting school are analysed carefully. From this analysis and carefully observation within classes, special educational needs are identified. Good provision is maintained through support from outside agencies such as the Medway LSS. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of her pupils. Individual education plans

contain clear targets and are reviewed regularly. Provision for pupils withdrawn for individual or group support by her is very good. Observations from inspection illustrate pupils' very good progress in key targets on education plans in these sessions. Careful records are kept of pupils' progress. Evidence from inspection supports the view that pupils who are withdrawn for support are receiving access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

49. Within the classroom, support for pupils with learning difficulties is inconsistent. Pupils who have severe learning difficulties and who receive one-to-one support make good progress; targets in individual education plans are an integral part of the planned teaching and learning. When teaching is good, pupils with moderate learning difficulties are generally well supported. When teaching is less sound, during afternoons when there is less support from learning support assistants, or during foundation subjects, planning is not always differentiated to meet individual pupils needs. Although teachers are aware of pupils' special education needs, there is too little detail in teachers' planning about how their needs will be met when they are taught as members of the whole class.
50. Unsatisfactory progress has been made in developing the quality of assessment procedures to improve pupils' progress. The school has reviewed, but not yet developed a consistently applied assessment system and at the time of inspection there is no consistent practice for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Teachers keep individual records of progress and coverage, including records of pupils' achievements in national tests, but there is no comprehensive system of analysis of pupil progress to inform planning. The history co-ordinator keeps records of pupils' written assessments across the school, but there is no monitoring of teaching. At the time of inspection pupils are not consistently involved in setting targets for their own learning. Marking of pupils' work seen does not generally encourage pupils to reflect or focus on how to improve. In one Year 5 class, however, pupils with learning difficulties talked about how their teacher's marking with specific targets and sharing clearly the overall learning objective for specific lessons helped them to understand how to make progress. In Year 4, there are examples in pupils' books where marking encourages individuals to reflect on what is good about their work and suggests appropriate challenges to improve. Teachers' planning does not consistently build upon assessments from previous teaching and learning. School reports outline an accurate picture of subject coverage; attitudes and personal development but do not give a clear indication of actual progress in each subject. Assessment for pupils with special educational needs is thorough and targets are regularly reviewed as specified in the code of practice.

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

51. The school has good and effective links with parents and values their contribution. In return, parents have positive views about their children's education, appreciate the good pastoral guidance and like the family feel of the school. In particular, they support the way their children are helped to become confident and mature and applaud the good behaviour. In addition they like the good teaching, the high expectations and the good progress their children are making. The inspection team agrees that the behaviour and personal development of the pupils are very good, but it has reservations about the quality of teaching and progress and judges these to be satisfactory rather than good.
52. Teachers are generally aware of the languages that are spoken at home by the bilingual pupils. There are good links with their parents, especially with parents of pupils in the Reception Year, where the bilingual support assistant also makes a useful contribution. This is useful in knowing how well pupils are learning and in finding out about any areas of concern.
53. A significant number of parents do not believe that there is a sufficient range of activities outside lessons. The inspectors judge that the provision for extra-curricular activities is good, with particularly extensive sports clubs for the juniors. Although a homework policy was agreed and distributed to parents in 2001, the regular setting and marking of homework has become lax. It is difficult for parents to share in the support of learning and to see how their children are getting on if homework is not set on a regular day, is completed in various different books and is not always returned marked.

54. A significant number of parents do not feel that they have sufficient information about their children's progress. Overall, the quality of information, particularly of a more general nature, still remains good. The headteacher sends out regular, cheerful and informative newsletters and parents are always welcome to arrange to see her if they have any concern. In addition, the newly erected notice board and the school website allow parents to catch up on the latest news. The governors' annual report is useful and attractively presented, although it does omit the comparative national test results for pupils in Year 2. Similarly the prospectus gives a good flavour of the school to prospective parents. It is good that parents receive comprehensive details every term on what their children are going to be taught in each subject. As in most schools, the parents meet their child's teacher each term for an update on progress. However, the inspectors agree with some parents that they would find out more about their children's work if the appointment took place in the classroom where display and books are to hand, rather than in the hall. The end of year reports give a satisfactory overview of what the pupils have been learning, although they tend to dwell too much on whether the pupil enjoys learning at the expense of accurate and vital information on the pupil's progress in each subject since the last report. On the positive side, the reports are perceptive and helpful on personal development.
55. The contribution of parents to learning at school and at home is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Parents are keen to see their children succeed and many are conscientious in hearing their children read at home and completing the home-school contact books. The attendance at sports events and church services is good and gives a clear message to the pupils that they are right behind the pupils and school. Some parents and other volunteers give valuable help in the classroom and on trips, but this assistance has been partially curtailed by the stringent requirements of police checks. The school association is run by a hard-working and committed band of parents. Their well-organised summer and Christmas fairs are strongly supported by the rest of the parents and provide welcome funds for extra educational resources. Consultation of the parents is not yet sufficiently established to ensure that they play their part in educational decisions. However, the new headteacher has made a good start by inviting parents to a coffee morning to meet her and she has concrete plans for an annual parental questionnaire. Overall, the impact of the parents' involvement in the school is having a beneficial effect on the pupils' progress and development.
56. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept appropriately informed of the progress they are making. Individual education plans are shared and the support that parents can give is discussed.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

57. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. From September 2002 and April 2003 the school was led by an acting headteacher, a Year 6 teacher. As a consequence, some temporary teachers were needed to continue with class duties. The previous post holder left in July 2002 a school development plan to last until the end of the Autumn 2003 term. The school did not have any strategic leadership from this time, as the governors were awaiting the appointment of a new headteacher. On their first attempt they were not able to appoint. However, a new headteacher started in the summer term 2003 and has, at the time of the inspection been in post four weeks.
58. Currently there is no school development plan although the headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which identifies what needs improving. The inspection team agrees with the headteacher's analysis of the school. Clearly staff are committed to the schools mission statement and are hardworking; however there has been insufficient focus on ensuring initiatives started are finished and their success judged by the positive impact on pupils learning. A few key issues from the last inspection, notably assessment, are still weaknesses; there is clear evidence of staff addressing the assessment issue, though not yet fully or with sufficient rigour.
59. The role of governors is satisfactory overall and there are clear procedures and committee structures in place. The governors are aware of the inconsistencies in the school. They identify the

appointment of the headteacher as central to their key task of raising standards. However, they recognise that they need to apply more rigour in holding the school to account for its actions and to weigh up the impact of this on pupils' learning.

60. Subject leaders are insufficiently involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. As a result, they are not all fully aware of the weaknesses and inconsistencies in quality across the school and this is unsatisfactory. The school is developing its expertise in target setting and the tracking of pupils' progress, particularly in Years 3-6. The process is not yet in an electronic format to help with detailed analysis, but staff are developing their skills in this area.
61. Traditionally the headteacher is responsible for overseeing the work of the teachers and other staff who support the pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The co-ordinator for special educational needs also looks after the interests of pupils with English as an additional language. Due to the recent changes in staffing, the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team, particularly in relation to the monitoring have become less clear. The monitoring of the provision for pupils with EAL is not sufficiently rigorous at present or useful in evaluating the success of the school's strategy.
62. The school is appropriately staffed and there is a suitable balance of experience and expertise. The procedures for inducting staff new to the school have been effective and, as a result, there is a good team spirit, shared commitment and confidence in the school's systems. Teaching assistants have access to a good range of training opportunities and newly qualified teachers benefit from a good induction programme during their first year.
63. The accommodation available to the school has some unsatisfactory features. Infant classrooms are small and experience disruption, as classes have to use linking doors in other classrooms to access the main building. Furthermore, one Year 2 class is housed in a 'temporary' mobile classroom of deteriorating quality: it lacks a water supply and there are no toilets and a humidifier has to be on constantly because of the water running down the walls. The reception classes have been accommodated in the junior hall, thus depriving them of this useful resource to support their learning. The outdoor area for the reception children is too small and located too far away from the infant department. The school grounds are large and very attractive with a hard-surfaced playground that is inadequate to accommodate all the pupils. The buildings are well maintained internally and supported by bright and stimulating displays that value the pupils' work. Learning resources are good to support the curriculum. Resources for ICT have improved since the last inspection with the development of a suite of computers. The library has been improved, relocated and redeveloped since the last inspection.
64. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the special educational needs within the school and how they are being met through individual education plans. Records are thorough and reviewed regularly as specified legally. Teachers and learning support assistants have had appropriate training related to special educational needs provision. Most teachers are responsible for writing and reviewing individual education plans for the pupils in their care, but the special educational needs co-ordinator supports teachers where necessary. Funding is used appropriately.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- (i) Improve the leadership and management by:
- improving the quality of monitoring and evaluation by senior managers and subject leaders so they know what works well and what needs improving and then find out the impact on learning; and  
*(Paragraphs 50, 57, 58, 60, 61, 96, 98, 106, 107, 114, 126, 127, 134, 135, 141, 147, 149, 152, 153)*
  - ensuring the governors are more rigorous in evaluating the work of the school in order to raise standards;  
*(Paragraphs 57, 58, 59, 61, 86)*
- (ii) Raise standards throughout the curriculum by:
- improving the match of work to the needs and abilities of higher attaining pupils;  
*(Paragraphs 4, 6, 8, 21, 28, 30, 86, 96, 98, 105, 114, 125, 126, 127, 132, 147, 149, 152)*
  - providing more detailed guidance to class teachers so that they:
    - Identify clearly in their planning a range of learning activities to meet the needs of the whole range of abilities; and  
*(Paragraphs 4, 6, 8, 21, 24, 28, 30, 49, 86, 105, 114, 125, 126, 127, 132, 152)*
    - ensure work is systematically built on in subsequent lessons and years as pupils move up the school.  
*(Paragraphs 4, 6, 8, 28, 30, 86, 105, 114, 125, 126, 127, 132, 152)*
- (iii) Improve the quality of assessment by:
- the consistent marking of pupils' work so they know what is expected and also what they have to do to improve; and  
*(Paragraphs 20, 21, 50, 86, 95, 96, 112, 114, 126, 139, 149, 152, 153, 156)*
  - implementing consistent procedures that inform teachers what pupils have learnt and what needs reinforcing and so forms the basis for the next stage of learning.  
*(Paragraphs 20, 21, 50, 86, 95, 96, 112, 114, 120, 125, 126, 139, 149, 152, 153, 156)*
- (iv) Improve pupils' attendance by:
- reducing the incidence of parents taking their children on extended holidays in term time.  
*(Paragraph 16)*
- (v) Improve accommodation by:
- providing an appropriate learning environment for pupils in Years 1 and 2 that includes toilet facilities.

*(Paragraphs 63)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	14	19	24	3	0	0
Percentage	0	23	32	40	5	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	418
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	110

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	36	24	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	31	34
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	54	54	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (93)	90 (93)	97 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	34	32
	Girls	23	24	24
	Total	54	58	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (91)	97 (91)	93 (97)
	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	27	32	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	19	24
	Girls	27	25	31
	Total	50	44	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (90)	75 (95)	95 (95)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	20	23
	Girls	27	26	29
	Total	48	46	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (92)	79 (92)	90 (90)
	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	352	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	15	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	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)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.8
Average class size	29.9

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	213

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	797936
Total expenditure	859918
Expenditure per pupil	2097
Balance brought forward from previous year	95368
Balance carried forward to next year	33386

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	418
Number of questionnaires returned	142

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	43	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	44	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	49	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	57	9	1	1
The teaching is good.	67	31	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	46	10	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	25	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	46	11	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	47	43	4	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	43	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	40	11	6	15

## **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**

65. The Foundation Stage in the school consists of 59 children attending the school on a full-time basis. Four year olds are admitted in September or in January, and the younger children have only two terms in the reception class. The two reception classes are organised on the basis of the children's age.
66. Teaching is good overall for this age group and has much improved from the findings of the previous report. A bright and attractive learning environment has been created so that children's curiosities are raised and they want to learn. Play is given due importance in the children's learning and there are opportunities for child-initiated play activities. The planning is well structured for teaching all areas of learning, including the literacy and numeracy areas, and is firmly based on the recommended guidelines. Teachers take due account of the children's age and abilities and of their individual needs while planning lessons and during activities. This is because of the good procedures for assessment by all adults involved in working with the children. There is very good teamwork and a shared approach to planning activities, in teaching and in organising areas of learning. This is particularly useful, given the nature of the accommodation for the reception classes. The close working relationship between the adults benefits the children's learning and the smooth running of the daily routines.
67. There are good procedures for assessing children's individual needs and for tracking and recording progress in all areas of the learning. There are comprehensive records of children's responses and progress in the day-to-day activities. Consequently, the needs of the younger children, mostly summer born, are well met, as are those of the children who speak English as an additional language. Their linguistic needs are well recognised and good strategies are used to develop their confidence in speaking. Children with special educational needs are well supported in the reception classes and those who have a statement of special needs are supported appropriately through their individual educational plans. They achieve well in lessons and make good progress towards their targets. Gifted and talented children have been identified but there is no specific planning to further their special talents and interests.
68. The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all the expected areas of learning for this age. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of indoor and outdoor activities, including religious education and collective worship. The curriculum has much improved since the last inspection. The need for improving the outdoor provision is an identified priority: the restricted space outside hampers opportunities for free movement during child-initiated activities, and consequently, physical development is restricted. The need to improve transition arrangements, particularly to ensure continuity in children's learning and to support their transfer to Year 1, is another identified priority. Overall, there is good provision for the children, which provides a good foundation for the children for their future schooling.
69. Partnership with the parents in the children's learning, particularly in the development of the early reading skills, is good. Parents are well informed about what the children learn in the school and how they are progressing. There is less evidence of parents being involved in supporting the classroom activities. The school's 'open-door' policy is less effective in this regard and the parents would like more opportunities to be involved in the reception class activities. The management is good and there is sound monitoring and evaluation of the provision.
70. Children's initial assessments confirm that they enter the Reception Year with below average attainment in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics and well below average social and emotional development. Attainment is average and the progress is good overall by the end of the Reception Year for most children in all areas of the learning. By the time they join Year 1, most have reached the expected standards for this age in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics, and a small minority exceeds these in some elements. Attainment

is largely affected by the amount of time children have in the school, although to some extent, the quality of teaching and learning makes up for the difference in age, and the younger children make rapid progress towards the expected standards for this age.

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

71. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very well promoted through other areas of learning. This contributes well to their very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. During a music lesson, excellent behaviour was observed and a high degree of involvement, despite the large group. Children are motivated to learn and remain absorbed in activities. They respond well to the structured literacy sessions and remain focused for a good length of time. They help to clear up after activities when expected, and wait sensibly for adult help when required. They treat others with respect. Through established routines, they are developing a good awareness of what is right and what is wrong. Children are learning about self-care, health and hygiene through role-play activities, such as the 'vet's surgery'. They play well with others from a different ethnic background. Through assemblies and religious education, they are beginning to develop an awareness of the existence of different faiths, cultures and ways of worship.
72. Teaching is generally very good and makes a significant contribution to the children's achievement in this area. The teachers and support staff plan and share activities that children find interesting. They encourage them to work independently during child-initiated activities, and collaboratively during small group work. During whole group sessions, they encourage children to share their personal news and their ideas. There are limited resources in use to increase multi-cultural awareness.

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

73. Most children reach the expected standards for this age, with a small number exceeding these in some elements, particularly reading. Children have good listening skills and most speak with confidence and self-assurance. Some younger children and bilingual learners tend to be quieter but with encouragement, participate more freely in talking in smaller groups. Story tapes, role-play areas and 'the puppet theatre' are useful in providing interesting contexts for developing literacy skills. Through planned activities and experiences, children are developing their vocabulary well and using language in a variety of contexts.
74. Children learn to name and sound the letters of the alphabet. They have increasing awareness of the links between letters and sounds and can name them. They know the initial letter /sound in their own name and in familiar words they read in their books. They are learning to recognise and say initial and final sounds in words. Children enjoy reading books and they listen attentively to stories that are read by adults. They are encouraged to re-tell sequences of stories and predict which picture is the next in the sequence or what might happen next. They show some understanding of the elements of stories, such as the names of the characters and some events. While reading, they use a range of strategies to guess new words. They use picture and context cues as well as their knowledge of letters and sounds. There are graded reading books for them to read to their teachers and their parents at home. Parents are well involved in supporting their children's reading and take an active part in their assessment of progress.
75. Children attempt to write for different purposes, for example, writing labels for a story map. Many are able to write their name accurately, using a capital letter at the start. Most five year olds use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and some write labels and captions. Some more able children attempt to write lists and more complex words independently, spelling words phonetically and showing a good knowledge of the letter/ sound relationships. They practise the correct formation of letters. Most children use their pencils skilfully to form recognisable letters and words and can copy out words. More able children form their letters and words more accurately - one or two begin to join their letters.
76. Teaching and learning are mostly good. Lessons in literacy are well structured and there is a good programme of work. As expected, there is some flexibility in applying the Literacy Strategy

taking account of the children's ages and abilities. The classroom provides a print-rich learning environment. The reading areas are well organised and equipped. Planning is thorough in all elements of language and literacy. Learning objectives are clearly identified and shared with the children. At times, children are involved in their own assessment and this helps them to take an active part in their learning and to reflect on their progress. Ongoing assessment is good. Consequently, individual needs are well met at different levels of ability and needs. Assessment is used well to plan the next stage of learning. There are detailed individual records for tracking children's progress in reading, writing and their awareness of letters and sounds.

### **Mathematical development**

77. Most children reach the expected standards for this age, and a small minority exceeds average standards. Children count everyday objects reliably to ten at least, and many count to 20 in a range of contexts. There are many opportunities to count, use and order numbers. Most children know the sequence of numbers to 20 and some beyond. This was evident from the children's use of the 'snakes and ladder' game with adult support, which involved numbers from 1-100. Children recognise numerals and learn to form numbers to 10. Older and more able children use practical activities to solve simple problems involving addition and subtraction to 10. They understand 'one more' or 'one less' and relate addition to combining two groups of objects and subtraction to 'taking away'. Children use the language of position, such as 'over', 'under' and 'through'. Many children recognise two-dimensional shapes and can describe them.
78. Teaching and learning are good. Planning is good and suitably differentiated. This is because of the good ongoing assessment and recording. Practical activities are used well to develop age-appropriate mathematical ideas and understanding. Expectations are high and the language is used well to enhance children's understanding and to extend their vocabulary. Through practical activities, children are developing a good understanding of the comparative mathematical vocabulary, for example, 'heavy', 'lighter' or 'tallest', 'shorter'. There are good opportunities for practical shopping - for using one to five pence coins in the classroom 'garden centre'. The mathematics areas are well organised and create a good learning ethos.

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

79. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is sound, often better. Children show good observational skills. They use resources well to observe carefully, for example, the caterpillars in class or ladybirds outside. They grow their own sunflower seeds and observe their growth. Adults help them to re-pot their plants. They have good sensory experiences in and out of class. The classroom 'garden centre' and 'the vet's' provide useful opportunities for learning from role-play. Children know that they need to look after plants and animals. Through religious activities, children are developing a good awareness of their own culture. They are learning about other people and faiths, but are at the early stages at present.
80. There are opportunities to make three-dimensional toys and models using different materials. Children cut, stick and join materials for their pictures and models, using re-cycled materials. They use scissors and tools with increasing control. Children have easy access to the classroom computer and they often use it to support their learning. There is a weekly slot for using the computer suite. Children use the computer programs to paint pictures or to draw their 'mini-beasts'. They learn to control the mouse with increasing skill and click or drag with some help from adults. They learn to write their names and to print pictures.
81. Teaching and learning are good, especially in aspects related to science. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing well as a result. Lessons are well organised and resourced and there is a good level of adult support through small group activities. Teaching builds systematically on the children's previous learning. Children investigate mini-beasts in and out of class, and become increasingly curious about the features of living things. They develop a good understanding of the growth of plants and of the life cycle of a butterfly. There are limited multicultural resources on display. During inspection, books and posters about different faiths were used well to learn about the names of major world faiths, special ceremonies and

celebrations, and special places for worship. Good comparisons were drawn with the Christian faith. Children listened with great interest.

### **Physical development**

82. Children's physical development is generally good. They move with confidence and with increasing body control and co-ordination. There are regular opportunities to take part in structured lessons in the school hall. Children make good use of the space and remain aware of others during the lesson. They develop a good awareness of the effect of their movements on their bodies and show good imagination, while moving and following a story. They understand the importance of staying healthy. Within classroom, they develop their fine motor skills well, by using tools and equipment, such as scissors, pencils and glue sticks. They use malleable materials safely and with increasing control.
83. Teaching and learning are at least good, and often better. Interesting activities and experiences are planned in a good sequence. Teachers give careful instructions. Ongoing assessment is good and used in planning the next stage of the children's learning. Children are expected to listen well and to follow instructions carefully, including health and safety rules. Children respond appropriately and all children are involved: good role models are chosen to show others and this helps to raise their confidence and self esteem. There is limited use of the outdoor area, mainly due to the limited space available for using moveable toys. There is a satisfactory range of toys and equipment in the school for outdoor use.

### **Creative development**

84. Children take part in musical activities with great enthusiasm and enjoy singing songs and ring games. They sing familiar songs and rhymes co-operatively, showing good rhythm and moving and stamping in a sequence. Using musical instruments, children explore how sounds can be changed and they learn to recognise repeated sounds and sound patterns. They have a good ear for representing the different sounds of 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', with suitable instruments. They listen well and use their independent choice effectively, for example, by selecting bells or drums to represent different parts of the story. They use their imagination well in music.
85. Teaching and learning are very good in this area. Children experience a good range of creative activities, including art and design and technology. They use a good range of resources, tools and materials to help express their ideas and feelings. Children use clay, plasticine and other mouldable materials to cut, roll, shape and try out their own ideas. There are good opportunities for imaginative play. The two role-play areas are well organised. Through these areas, children recreate outside experiences and develop talk, reading and writing skills as well as knowledge and understanding of the world. There is free choice of activities when often children choose to play outside, use the computer or play with construction material. Children are taught a good range of art techniques and the use of materials. Some of their observational drawings and paintings are very effective, at times inspired by real artists such as Van Gogh, showing children have explored colour using pastels and paint. These are well mounted and displayed on the walls, thus creating a pleasant learning ethos for children in reception.

## **ENGLISH**

86. The results of the 2002 national tests show that at the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level was above the national average in reading and in line with the national average in writing. At the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level was above the national average. Progress overall is satisfactory. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was above average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards observed for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations. A number of factors have contributed to this. For example, there is a large number of pupils with learning difficulties, 33 per cent, and this year group has experienced a great deal of ambiguity due to the school being without a headteacher and Year 6 teachers being called upon to cover this role. Standards in Year 2 have been maintained. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.



### Strengths

- Good teaching, particularly in Year 6.
- Good cross-curricular links.
- The effective implementation of the school's literacy strategy.
- The school's appropriate priority on improving pupils' writing skills.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to work.

#### Areas for improvement

- To implement a whole school policy to reflect consistent practice of recording pupils' progress and agreeing procedures to assess how pupils can improve so that they build on what they have learned each year.
  - To ensure the consistent use of the marking policy throughout the school.
  - To tailor work to the pupils' individual needs.
  - To develop the role of the co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluating the subject.
87. Overall, standards of pupils' attainment are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The quality of teaching is good, but stronger in Years 5 and 6, where some lessons were very good.
88. Pupils make a good start in the reception class and in the infant department they make sound progress both in lessons and over a longer period of time. Progress accelerates in the junior department, due largely to the good teaching and the positive impact of the literacy hour. By the end of Year 6, progress is good both in lessons and over time.
89. Speaking and listening skills are developed appropriately in Year 2, where pupils reach the required standard. They are becoming skilled in answering and asking questions during the literacy hour. They usually listen attentively to instructions, to stories and to the contributions of others. In Year 6, speaking and listening skills are above the expected standard. In all years, speaking and listening skills are developed through planned discussions and individual pupils are able to speak confidently in school assemblies and to adults. Pupils generate ideas during scientific investigations. For example, in Year 6, pupils predict which shoes have the best grip. One pupil recorded, "I predict the plimsoll would win because it has lots of tread lines to keep it up." Skills in speaking and listening are fostered through the work planned for the literacy hour and in other subjects, such as music and history and through drama. Pupils listen considerately to each other's contributions. For example, in a music lesson in Year 5, they listen with amusement to the recording of "Spooky Spinney" and discuss how to create scary sounds by using their voices, while pupils in Year 6 effectively enact what the children feel like on being evacuated during World War II. The question, "If this teddy could speak, what wonderful stories could he tell?" evokes a range of emotions and memories. Pupils also review their work at the end of many lessons and this adds to their confidence and ability to express themselves clearly.
90. Standards in reading across the school are in line with national expectations, although a significant proportion attain above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils in Year 2 read well enough to make sense of texts that are appropriate for their age and retell stories or the main points of non-fiction extracts. Lower-attaining pupils use a variety of strategies to work out words they find difficult, such as sounding out the letters and gaining clues from the illustrations. The majority of pupils have a sound knowledge of the structure of books and know about the contents page, the index and the difference between the author and the illustrator. In Year 6 pupils read very well, with most of their skills being above average. They read longer texts silently and with good concentration and read fluently, accurately and with expression. Most can name favourite authors and explain their preferences. Pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy reading, attacking unfamiliar words with confidence. All pupils enjoy poetry and one higher-attaining pupil accurately recited the first verse from "The Lady of Shallot", which had been the focus for homework.
91. Scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that the majority of pupils in Year 2 attain the expected standards. They write for a range of different purposes, sequence their ideas appropriately and use simple punctuation. For example, higher-attaining pupils show an increasing understanding of exclamation and question marks. They write more imaginative stories and effectively develop punctuation and spelling skills. For example, one pupil writes his own version of a story by putting, "Mr Grilling has lots of ingenious plans to stop the seagulls." Satisfactory progress is evident in the scrutiny of a sample of pupils' past work.
92. Attainment in writing at the end of Year 6 is in line with national expectations, with a significant proportion of pupils attaining above expected levels. Work is neat and well presented, which shows the pupils' positive response to the teacher' high expectations and most pupils join their writing.

They are clearly encouraged to concentrate on grammar, spelling and punctuation. For example, pupils of average attainment are able to understand the use of commas, inverted commas and the apostrophe, while higher-attaining pupils have a good understanding of the use of paragraphs in their work and use a variety of connectives and more complex language. For example, "Becca, they were screaming at me. I knew it. I could hear them perfectly well, but the problem was that I had gone into one of my paralysed trances. I couldn't move..." Another pupil makes good use of personification to colour the language. For example, "Winter enters and appears...She greets the trees with a splendid sight... She stares and everything turns to ice," while another pupil wrote, "The rough surfaced moon casts a dark tantalising shadow over the golden hills, making them go midnight blue with orange peaks..." A pupil in Year 4 uses simile effectively to describe a fire. For example, "It burnt like a piece of toast." Pupils use their skills for a suitable range of purposes, including letter writing, collecting factual information, writing in the style of Shakespeare and Charles Dickens and in producing book reviews. Pupils use word processors effectively. Homework is set regularly, which appropriately supports and reinforces pupils' learning in the classroom.

93. Overall, pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress, when taking account of their previous learning. The teachers' planning does not always take account of the needs of these pupils. However, when an individual pupil from, for example, a Year 3 class is withdrawn from the lesson and taught by the special needs co-ordinator, very good support is provided and very good progress is made.
94. Pupils are encouraged to apply the skills they have acquired in literacy to their independent writing to support other subjects across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 are beginning to identify the key features for writing instructions to make a cup of tea, while pupils in Year 6 produce accounts of each stage of an engineering project on constructing a car. These form a good link with the design and technology curriculum. In most classes, good use is made of ICT to support their English work. For example, pupils in Year 4 create persuasive posters to sell "Scoffochoc", while pupils in Year 5 write letters to friends and relatives to discuss the Great Fire of London. One pupil wrote, "Dear Brother, at 10 am a tragedy went over London. A sudden fire..." They effectively use the evidence they have researched to write in the place of a character from history. "I, Daniel Pew, am the navigator on Drake's ship, Golden Hind. I was press ganged at thirteen years old..." Art and design is used to support English in Year 2 when the pupils compare their paintings to that of a famous artist, such as Claude Monet, and say "I liked using different colours. I used red and pink..."
95. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Teaching is always at least satisfactory, with instances of very good teaching. This has a positive effect on pupils' attainment, particularly in Year 6. In the most effective lessons teachers' good subject knowledge is shown in the setting of challenging work that is carefully matched to pupils' differing capabilities. Lesson introductions are used well to promote discussion and kindle pupils' interest so that they listen attentively. Skilful questioning and explanations ensure that pupils understand their work. Behaviour is good and is based on the positive relationships amongst pupils and between adults and pupils. Praise is used well to show pupils that their work is valued and to encourage higher standards. Marking is inconsistent across the school. It is good, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where it is constructive and encouraging and where written advice is given to pupils on how to improve their work. This is not consistent practise across the school. This is the same judgement as at the last inspection.
96. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has not had enough release time to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning effectively and to ensure that initiatives are implemented throughout the school. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. The pupils' progress is monitored inconsistently across the school. Although teachers assess the progress that their pupils are making, there is no consistent practice being applied throughout the school, to ensure that information gained enables teachers' planning to meet the needs of all the pupils. This has not improved since the last inspection.

97. There is a newly developed, bright and colourful library that is well stocked, with supporting mini libraries in each classroom. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged that the library was cramped. Pupils now have a weekly library session to further develop their library skills. Resources are good: they are well organised, accessible and in good condition.

## **MATHEMATICS**

98. Standards in mathematics in Years 2 and 6 are average and all pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards have fallen slightly since the previous inspection and this is due to a larger intake of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language into the school, since that time. The school identified many of these pupils underachieving when they were in Year 4 and inspection evidence indicates that they have caught up and achieved their potential.

### Strengths

- High quality of teaching, especially in Years 4 and 6.
- Successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy format.
- Appropriate tasks provided for different ability pupils in most classes.
- Generally good use of learning support assistants with pupils with special educational needs.
- Some emphasis on the using and applying aspect of mathematics when solving problems.

### Areas for improvement

- Overuse of commercial workbooks in the infants.
- Presentation of pupils' work and teachers' marking in Years 1 and 2.
- Pace and challenge of some mental activity sessions.
- Data handling in Years 3 to 6.

99. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are average. Most pupils are able to solve simple addition and subtraction problems by using their mental numeracy skills. They understand the link between repeated addition and multiplication and can make up a subtraction story using numbers up to 20. In their work on data handling they are able to sort different coloured two-dimensional shapes and place them into the appropriate section of a Venn diagram and record.
100. Higher attaining pupils are able to recognise odd and even numbers and they indicate a sound working knowledge in their use of numbers up to 100 in their addition and subtraction work. They have a good knowledge of hourly, half-hourly and quarter-hourly times and can recognise most three-dimensional shapes like; spheres, cuboids and pyramids. Nearly all higher ability pupils are able to choose their own criteria when forming Carroll and Venn diagrams and record on criteria sheets.
101. Standards in Year 6 are also average. Year 6 pupils can recognise square numbers and they are able to convert a tangram into other shapes leading to the development of an understanding of simple algebraic equations. Pupils are able to divide by a single digit number. They use investigation methods to work out the area and perimeter of squares, rectangles and triangles. Most pupils use the appropriate mathematical vocabulary when describing the properties of hexagons, octagons and pentagons.
102. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 can divide by using a double-digit number. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of prime numbers and can use a calculator to calculate higher number squares and square roots. Most are able to work out percentages using a calculator to check their answers. They can identify and describe the various triangle shapes like isosceles, right angle and equilateral and can recognise when they are congruent. However, there is little evidence of challenging data handling work for this age group.
103. There is an appropriate emphasis on numeracy in lessons and standards are in line with those expected in Years 2 and 6.
104. Teaching and learning were good overall in the lessons observed, but stronger lessons were observed in Years 4 and 6. Teachers generally have clear learning intentions, which are usually

shared with the whole class so those pupils are aware about the purpose of the lesson. In the better lessons the plenary session is used for the teacher to ascertain whether pupils have achieved these intentions. Pupils are generally managed well and lessons are planned appropriately to build on pupils' previous learning. The main activities in mathematics lessons are generally introduced by revision, questioning pupils to find out their previous knowledge. A good pace and challenge was evident in the better lessons and these teachers had high expectations for pupils' performance. For example, in the Year 4 lesson, pupils responded well to the challenge of using their knowledge and understanding of the four rules of number to solve quite difficult problems.

105. Most teachers organise and manage lessons well to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL are given support and encouragement by learning support assistants. However, the pupils with higher ability are not always given suitably challenging tasks. Marking is not consistent in quality, especially in the infant classes. Not enough workbooks are notated by the teacher to ensure that pupils are aware of how they can improve their work. Pupils' work in the infant school in their exercise books is generally untidy and poorly presented, due in part to the over-use of commercial workbooks.
106. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken up responsibility for mathematics and is at present on maternity leave. She has carried out some monitoring of teaching and learning but this has mostly comprised of scrutinising pupils' work and teachers' planning. Although pupils are being assessed by individual teachers throughout the school by the use of an objectives grid linked to National Curriculum levels, there is not a whole school tracking document for the subject. However, this has been recognised as a priority and the various mathematics assessment documents in the school are due to be computerised into a single grid in the near future. Resources for the subject are good and the scheme of work is based on the National Numeracy Strategy, reinforced by commercial textbooks and workbooks.

## SCIENCE

107. Standards in science are average at the end of Year 2. Results of the national assessments in 2002 at the end of Year 2 are average, both at the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. Progress is satisfactory overall. During inspection, standards in lessons throughout the school are satisfactory overall. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

### Strengths

- Pace, challenge.
- Teachers' questioning.
- Science enquiry skills: predicting, fair testing and obtaining evidence.
- High quality displays used as an integral part of teaching and learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Underdeveloped monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Lack of opportunities to use ICT to enhance teaching and learning in science in some classes.
- Identifying appropriate improvements to their investigation technique.
- Opportunities to analyse and interpret measurements and observations that do not fit the main pattern or trend shown.
- Lack of opportunities to present and analyse data.

108. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2, overall standards in science are average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Some pupils in Year 1 are achieving less well than they should because of low teacher expectations. Tasks are not extended effectively enough to provide additional challenge for them. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 overall and inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 6, standards for this cohort this year will be in line with national averages. Since the last inspection the number of pupils with special educational needs has risen by 10 per cent.

109. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with EAL make satisfactory or better progress. These pupils enjoy practical work and make good progress when well supported in recording and evaluating scientific ideas. In one Year 5 class, a pupil with severe learning difficulties made good progress in understanding sources of light through effective praise and support from both class teacher and learning support assistant. Where teaching is weaker, there is a lack of differentiated activities, support for recording or opportunities to promote independence to meet the needs of all pupil ability levels. In some classes, work lacks challenge through missed opportunities to develop higher order skills for higher attaining pupils.
110. Work seen during the inspection in displays and pupils' books is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory or better in Years 3 to 6. In Year 6, standards are good, but the volume of written work is limited. Some displays at both key stages show a clear understanding of the science enquiry process, with pupils' predictions and planning valued and explored. In all year groups there is a lack of graphical representation and detailed analysis of results, especially for higher attaining pupils. During the inspection, however, more able Year 6 pupils used the excel program to plot line graphs to illustrate investigative work, measuring in Newtons and could explain the relationship between measurements in air and water appropriate to Level 5. In Year 6, pupils have studied in detail the lifecycle of the Puss Moth through purchase of larvae. Pupils have constructed a suitable cage and have recorded progress, keeping photographic evidence and detailed diaries.
111. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, there was weak subject knowledge, lack of pace and missed opportunities to focus on key scientific vocabulary clearly. Previous teachers' assessments or information in individual education plans are not consistently used in teachers' planning to build effectively on pupils' achievements. Planning for pupils with special educational needs in these lessons does not ensure that the learning provision and organisation meet their needs. Where teaching is better, teachers' explanations are clear and teaching styles and resources appropriate to meet pupils' needs. In one good lesson in Year 2, effective cross-curricular links with ICT were used to ensure good progress was made. Pupils used the Canterbury Naturegrid Website in pairs to research information about creatures from a particular habitat in advance of a planned visit to Riverside. Good organisation and understanding of pupils' needs ensured that good progress was made. One pair of pupils explained that a water spider could construct a bubble nest under water that would help them to breathe.
112. In Years 3 to 6 teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good teaching. When teaching is effective, lessons are based on practical investigation and high quality challenging questioning from the teacher develops pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and pace effective. Learning is scaffolded through teachers' good understanding of the science enquiry process. In one Year 4 lesson, pupils made very good progress in understanding how to construct and solve sorting diagrams for habitats through clear visual modelling using actual pupils' height, hair and eye colour, an interactive display and targeted questions. In a Year 6 lesson, investigating the forces involved in air resistance and upthrust, pupils' oral responses illustrated a clear understanding through describing relationships between cause and effect. Where teaching is only satisfactory there are missed opportunities in planning to develop pupils' analysis and interpretation of both first-hand and secondary data. Time is wasted and planning fails to build upon previous assessments.
113. Pupils have a good attitude to their work. They listen well and are keen to participate in practical activities. Analysis of displays, photographs and recorded work in Year 3 showed pupils working effectively together in small groups to investigate the permeability of different kinds of rocks. Pupils sketched and described rocks carefully, collaborating well in groups, concluding that the samples of rocks seen with small holes absorbed more water. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils worked well together to plan and carry out a fair test using paper spinners to test the effects of air resistance.
114. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has a clear vision and understanding of the need to improve the subject. The systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are currently not taking place due to increased commitments of the school management team during the recent time when the school was without a substantive headteacher. Results from national tests are analysed effectively, however, there is a lack of

consistency in the way teacher assessments are used across the school to raise standards. In some classes, marking of pupils' work focuses clearly on the learning needs of individual pupils, but pupils are not consistently given time to reflect or given targets to understand how to improve.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

115. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. Art and design retains a high priority in the curriculum and is taught regularly and well to all classes. Pupils achieve well, take full part in art lessons and produce good quality work. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic about their work in art, sustain their concentration and take pride in their efforts. Art continues to be strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to enriching the curriculum across the school, as reported in the previous inspection. Pupils make very good progress overall. There is good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning and in the use of ICT to support art. The quality of the three-dimensional work, however, is not as good as rest of the work that is seen across the school.
116. From Year 1 to 2, pupils make good progress. Pupils in Year 2 mix their own primary and secondary colours to get the desired effect. Their classroom display 'Impressions of Monet' shows creative use of pastels and exploring colour, line and texture in printing a flower garden in Monet's style. Pupils in Year 2 take their own photographs of the school garden and use these photographs as a basis for their work in clay, and for drawing sketches of a section they find most interesting. They show very good observational skills. Pupils use their observations well to examine the visual elements of line and pattern in the environment. During inspection, they made very good use of charcoal and charcoal pencils to draw their black and white sketches, later repeating their efforts in colour; the results were striking. They worked like real artists. The computer was used well in exploring line, pattern and colour and to create graphic images, with good results. Pupils use their sketchbooks well to develop further their ideas and approaches. Some of their sketches are drawn after listening to music, for example, after listening to the 'Carnival of the Animals' and 'March of the Lion'.
117. Pupils' good progress continues through Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Year 3 explore repeated patterns in shapes and create attractive displays. Pupils in Year 4 make sculpture, using natural resources from the environment and learn that art is not always permanent. In Year 5, pupils learn about the art from other times, places and cultures. They show a good understanding of the art of people of Ndbele in South Africa, who paint and decorate their homes in striking patterns and colours. The very good use of books, posters, music-tapes and artefacts by the teacher helps pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of African art. Pupils in Year 6 examine movement in art by looking at L S Lowry's work. They explore drawing repeated movements, using different materials, tools and techniques to represent movement in different types of sports. Pupils are taught to examine body proportions by using a skeleton. They evaluate their finished drawings to check if the proportions are right and make repeated efforts to improve their results. Some of the work produced at the end of the lesson was of outstanding quality. Pupils showed mature attitudes towards their work.
118. A strength of the school's provision is successful links made with subjects, such as science, history and design and technology. Pupils investigate the lives and styles of different artists through time and place. Pupils have benefited as a result, and are able to find out aspects of history through art in different times and countries. The multicultural dimension is also strong. Pupils are developing a good awareness of similarities and differences in art between Western art and art from some non-European countries. There is sound use of ICT in supporting art. Pupils use 'Paint' program and 'Colour Magic' to explore the use of colour, shape and line. The Internet is also used to explore the work of artists and to research their life history. There are strong links with mathematics; geometrical patterns are explored in different types of art, and pupils appreciate lines of symmetry in shapes. Teachers also make use of poetry and music to support work in art, for example, to say what they think and feel about their work, and that of others. The good quality of displays across the school celebrates pupils' achievements and stimulates their further efforts. Art makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

119. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers demonstrate good models of art, to inspire pupils and to encourage them to explore their own ideas and approaches. This results in pupils becoming more skilled at their observations, and in exploring the visual and tactile qualities of the materials they use. Much of their work is inspired by the art and styles of real artists, such as Monet, Kandinsky and Braque. Visits to museums and art galleries are also used to explore new ideas and techniques. All this helps to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials and processes used in art, craft and design by different artists, and to learn how these can be modified to suit their own ideas. The planning is good and the teachers are well prepared for their lessons. They organize the resources very well, and use the support assistants effectively to help pupils needing additional support, and to organise resources, such as clay, paints, tools and textiles. The use of the sketchbook is encouraged, to help explore and develop ideas. The quality of marking seen in sketchbooks, however, is variable, and the feedback is not always useful in improving work. Ongoing assessment by teachers is good while the lesson is in progress, or at the end of a lesson. These assessments are useful in planning the next stage of the work and in modifying approaches that were not as successful.
120. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader shows enthusiasm and commitment. This has a significant impact on the quality of the work and enthusiasm for art throughout the school. She has clear ideas about the subject's continuing development. She is very experienced and has ensured that her own skills and subject knowledge continue to develop. She has been successful in achieving a high priority for art in the curriculum and has organized a successful 'Art week', when an artist was invited to work with pupils and teachers. This has stimulated everyone's interests and enhanced the physical and learning environment of the school. Pupils explored Japanese art, and used a variety of resources in creative ways to decorate the hall and the library. The subject leader monitors the teachers' long-term planning, but has not yet had time to analyse if there are any gaps in the curriculum, or in the pupils' learning. In the one day non-contact time that has been made available, she has managed to monitor teaching and learning in Years 2 and 4, through sampling pupils' work in their sketch books, by looking at teachers' plans, classroom displays, and by holding structured discussions with pupils. Due to time constraints, it has not been possible for her to make direct observations of lessons. The school works well as a community and art is a common area of interest. Open discussions with teachers have highlighted areas for professional development. The school identifies gifted and talented artists and gives them additional support, where possible. The school has rightly identified the need to implement manageable and informative assessment arrangements for checking pupils' progress; some of these have started but are not yet in use across the school. A model of assessment is available for a trial for the school as a whole.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

121. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily. Pupils design and make objects using a range of materials, tools and techniques. Since the last inspection, there is good improvement in standards by the end of Year 6, and in the range and quality of the pupils' work.
122. Pupils in Year 6 took part in an environment-friendly engineering project, which involved assembling a working electric car by using a construction kit. Pupils designed and constructed the bodywork and learnt to create a battery circuit, brake-system and a steering system. They used a digital camera to record their work progress. Ten boys and girls took part in this project, and later tested and raced against 16 schools in the locality. The project was successful in generating much interest in engineering and in learning skills in drilling and cutting safely, measuring accurately and assembling. Pupils strengthened and modified the body-work and made it work. In a discussion they reflected on and evaluated the whole process, as a team, and were able to give further suggestions for improving the car. The school won an award for designing the greenest car, as they had used the most re-cycled materials to assemble the car. At times, girls took a more active part than boys, and both collaborated well and enjoyed taking part in the project, learning many lessons as part of the process. An important lesson learnt was that 'It's not about winning the race, but taking part in it, and carrying on with it, despite difficulties'.



123. Pupils in Year 2 learn about food hygiene and find out about what makes a healthy snack. Their recorded work shows that they had experienced the process of making bread. They read their writings but were not able to remember and evaluate the process. Pupils have worked with textile, paper and card in a range of contexts and have learnt to use tools safely, although written record and evaluations are missing. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 made good progress in designing their fire engine and learning the rudiments of a car design. By the end of Year 2 they learn to design and make a model car or a fire engine using cardboard boxes, with fixed or moving axles, and can say how they would plan, develop and improve their work.
124. During inspection, pupils in Year 4 designed a functional mini-beast for domestic use. Their work was linked to a science lesson on habitats and adaptation. Pupils made good use of their imagination to develop design ideas for their imaginary mini-beasts, which could perform different functions and adapt themselves according to need. They observed and made comments on one another's design ideas. At this stage of the lesson, they had not considered how, in practice, they would make it and which materials they would select in order to get the best results. There was some dependency on the teacher for initiating this. A discussion with pupils in Year 5 revealed that the displayed robots in the library were made as part of homework. Some of the models are very sophisticated and battery-operated. A wide variety of materials are used by the pupils and all models are different, showing pupils' own imagination. Their evaluations were good but there is limited recording, as there was no expectation to make a detailed record of the process and of suggestions for improvement. Pupils in Year 6 discussed a variety of slippers that were brought by the pupils with a view to designing and making their slippers at a later stage. They discussed various characteristics of the slippers, for example, the purpose, the intended user, materials and other qualities, such as warmth, comfort, appearance and safety. By the end of the lesson they learnt how important it is to consider these before designing a product.
125. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection; all were introductory lessons, mainly involving developing design ideas and communicating these, leading to making and evaluating the end products at a later stage. The use of different tools or construction kits by pupils was not observed during inspection. Teachers' planning is sound or better but often does not show how work will be differentiated to suit the range of abilities within the class. The work is at times over-directed by the teacher and there is insufficient challenge. Ongoing assessment is generally good but assessment is not used well to plan and develop the work. Pupils' computer skills are used satisfactorily, to record pupils' design processes and work progress. Although pupils draw and label their design ideas, design and technology is generally not used well to extend pupils' writing skills.
126. There is no subject leader for design and technology on a permanent basis at present. Temporary arrangements have been made to manage the subject for the short term, but the situation is less than satisfactory. The subject leader is new to this area of responsibility and acknowledges that she needs to improve her expertise. She has identified areas for improvement. The school has adopted the nationally recognised schemes of work, and in theory, all the required elements of the National Curriculum are being covered. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, as yet there has been no monitoring and evaluation to consider how effective the teaching practice is across the school. At present, the subject manager has had no opportunities to monitor teaching and learning at first hand. As in the last inspection, assessment procedures are not yet in place to support teaching and learning. In the longer term, this results in pupils not building consistently and systematically on their previous learning. The subject leader has devised checklists for assessing pupils' progress in the units of work her pupils have completed. These are useful, but the good practice is not yet widely spread. There has been some improvement in the resources and in the range of design and technology books in the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

127. Standards in geography at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Progress is satisfactory overall.

Strengths

- Geographical enquiry and skills.
- Breadths through cross curricular links with history, literacy and school visits.

#### Areas for improvement

- Underdeveloped monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Inconsistency in planning and work seen across year groups.

128. In Year 1, pupils can distinguish between natural and man-made features on a seaside landscape. They can use and understand geographical terms such as the 'promenade'. They describe why different people would want to visit a seaside. No lessons were observed in Year 2, but work seen illustrates effective use of the 'Katie Morag' stories to stimulate pupils' interest in the study of a contrasting location. Most pupils could draw a simple map using symbols and could produce a basic key. They have started to compare a contrasting locality with Gillingham, drawing simple comparative sketches.
129. In Year 6, when work is carefully planned to enhance literacy or historical cross-curricular links, subsequent written work is often of a good standard. Pupils in one class had written high quality persuasive letters supporting or disagreeing with the local campaign for a new runway at a local airport. Examples of writing showed a clear understanding of the effects of human activity, using a variety of sources of evidence. Work seen generally, however, shows inconsistency in geographical content across both Year 6 classes, with an inequality in emphasis on geographical skills.
130. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with EAL make satisfactory progress when teachers' planning meets their needs and they are well supported. More able pupils make good progress when challenged effectively. In Year 3, a more able pupil was challenged to interpret a pictorial source of evidence and devise an alternative scenario. A group of pupils with learning difficulties were well supported through carefully questioning in a lesson on the importance of clean water.
131. Only one lesson was observed in Years 1 and 2 and this was judged to be satisfactory. However, some pupils in Year 1 are achieving less well than they should because of lack of challenge and low teacher expectations. Tasks are not always extended effectively enough for able pupils to provide additional challenge for them.
132. Two lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6 and teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory overall. Better teaching occurs when lessons are based on practical investigation and effective modelling and when good subject knowledge from the teacher develops pupils' knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is less good, pace is slower and resources outdated, presenting stereotypical viewpoints of geographical environments. Planning for teaching and learning does not always take into account individual pupils' needs.
133. Pupils generally have a good attitude to their work. They like to find out where and how other people live, but some pupils also explain that geography is their least favourite subject. Oral responses in lessons show a consideration for others. They listen well and show sustained concentration.
134. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The subject co-ordinator has been in position for two terms and has not yet had opportunities to develop systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to ensure consistency and progression. This has resulted in unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. However, she is enthusiastic and has taken steps to start to improve resources and learning opportunities in Years 1 and 2.

## HISTORY

135. Four lessons were observed in history during the week of inspection. On the basis of these lessons together with work scrutiny, displays and discussions with pupils and subject co-ordinator, pupils' standards of work are judged to be in line with national expectations at the end of

Year 2 and above national expectations at the end of Year 6. Progress is satisfactory for pupils in Year 1 and 2 and good in Years 3-6.

#### Strengths

- Teachers' subject knowledge.
- Strong emphasis in Years 3 to 6 on key historical skills and uses of sources of evidence.
- Resources.
- Effective use of cross-curricular links and school visits to stimulate learning.

#### Areas for improvement

- Pace and time in some lessons.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in lessons.

136. In Year 1, pupils draw comparisons between now and one hundred years ago through sketches of the changes in what pupils did at school and the toys they played with. They talk with confidence about changes at the seaside through their cross-curricular geographical study. Year 2 pupils show understanding and factual knowledge of the lives of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole.
137. In Years 3 to 6, there is an emphasis on historical enquiry skills and pupils uses sources of evidence confidently, demonstrating their understanding that the past is interpreted in various ways for different reasons. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils evaluated the reasons for bias in BBC news articles. Pupils evaluated photographs, paintings and an article by a Gunner Officer. Perceptive higher attaining pupils described the painting as being able to exaggerate the danger and make the men seen more heroic, keeping morale alive at home. ICT is used effectively to develop presentation styles in cross-curricular links.
138. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with EAL make satisfactory or better progress when teachers' planning meets their needs and they are well supported. Pupils with severe learning difficulties made good progress during lessons observed. More able pupils make good progress when challenged effectively.
139. Teaching and learning are good overall. Where teaching is effective, the teacher's good subject knowledge and well-chosen resources enable good progress to be made. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils used artefacts from a World War II evacuee to draw conclusions about changes in lifestyle and emotions of the evacuee, comparing effectively with life in 2003. Pupils were very perceptive in their understanding of the sources of evidence. In this lesson clear planning effectively challenged the needs of different ability groups. Pupils of all abilities showed a depth of understanding of Michelle Magorian's "Goodnight Mister Tom", and could explain detailed comparisons between the artefacts and how the main character in the story, Willie Beech, was sewn into his clothes and evacuated to the country carrying only a paper carrier bag. Where teaching was less than satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, pace was slow and pupils passive. There are inconsistencies in marking and only some evidence of targets used to improve standards in individual pupils' work.
140. Pupils generally have a very good attitude to their work. They listen well, show sustained concentration, are keen to explain evidence and opinions and take pride in their work. There is a much greater volume of good quality written and cross-curricular work in this subject in pupils' books and on displays around the school than there is in other foundation subjects.
141. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The subject co-ordinator is very committed and enthusiastic. She has monitored pupils' written assessments and disseminated findings to improve the teaching of historical skills, but has not made progress since the last inspection in the systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

142. The majority of Year 2 pupil's reach the standard expected nationally for their age group. By the end of Year 6, standards are also average overall and pupils make sound progress. Standards

have improved since the last inspection and in many ways the subject has been enhanced and developed, so progress since the last inspection is good. There is a new computer suite in which pupils have weekly lessons. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special education needs or EAL, make steady progress overall.

143. By the end of Year 2, pupils name items of computer equipment, such as the mouse, keyboard and printer. Most use a keyboard to type simple text, producing short sentences. They place gaps between words using the space bar, and many pupils introduce capital letters and full stops into their writing. Using a paint program, pupils are learning to produce images for greeting cards. Most pupils know how to access the menu to print their finished work. Pupils have opportunities to give instructions to an on-screen turtle to produce movements over varying distances.
144. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have good skills in word processing. They change the font, colour and size of their work, and move portions of text from one place to another. Most pupils use the mouse accurately to merge pictures into their text. Pupils have good experience of multimedia presentations. Most pupils are independent in printing the work they have produced. Pupils continue to have good experience in using both a programmable robot toy, either to follow a set course or to produce their own patterns. Pupils use simulations and are familiar with locating information on CD ROMs and the Internet. Some pupils can access the Internet, as well as a range of computer programs, to gain information, for subjects such as history.
145. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school Teachers are generally keen and enthusiastic and communicate this to pupils. Staff are well advanced on their own computer training. Through careful preparation of lessons, together with ongoing training, teachers are providing pupils with good learning experiences. Teachers provide clear and careful instruction as to how to use equipment and computer programs. As a result of these aspects of teaching, all pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding.
146. Where teaching is good, the teacher has very secure subject knowledge. The pace of the lesson is very brisk and keeps pupils involved and concentrating. Expectations of pupils are high, and they make good progress as a result. However, in weaker lessons pupils fail to follow what is done on their screens, as they are too noisy and unsettled to follow what the teacher is saying. Instructions in these circumstances are not always clear enough for pupils to fully understand what they are to do. In the best lessons, they listen carefully and, even though a number lack confidence, they settle well to all tasks. All teachers provide help and advice throughout lessons as pupils' work on practical activities.
147. Resources for ICT have improved since the last inspection. The school has introduced national guidelines into its scheme of work and these are being systematically implemented. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and manages the subject effectively. The very good subject knowledge of the ICT technician has a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Through the work in word-processing, the subject is beginning to make a steady contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. The collection of data and its presentation, for example in the form of graphs, is having an effect on the development of numeracy skills. Overall computing is not fully exploited across some curriculum areas. Nevertheless, many pupils find the use of computers exciting, and the excitement generated, such as when adding sounds to text helps enhance pupils' enthusiasm to learn.

## **MUSIC**

148. Standards and progress at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are satisfactory.
149. Little direct teaching of the subject was observed during the inspection. Inspection findings are therefore based upon scrutiny of planning, an interview with the co-ordinator and discussion with pupils. Consequently, there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching throughout the school. However, music provision is good and pupils gain a number of positive experiences as they move through the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

#### Strengths

- Secure knowledgeable co-ordinator.
- Wide range of instrumental provision.
- Participation in charity performances and concerts.
- Very good learning resources.

#### Areas for improvement

- The role of the co-ordinator in monitoring the subject.
- The consistent use of assessment to monitor pupils' learning.

150. In the three lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. In Year 5, pupils are keen to participate and appropriate opportunities are provided for them to develop their listening skills. For example, the pupils listen to a taped poem and use this as a basis for adding voice sound effects to create suspense. Useful questioning helps the pupils to focus their group efforts. They work well collaboratively to perform thoughtful and 'scary' presentations. In the lesson seen in Year 2, pupils make good use of untuned percussion instruments to respond to loud and soft instructions. After a noisy start, the pupils settle down to produce some simple group compositions. The lessons have a suitable balance of demonstration, practice and performance. Good opportunities are provided for listening and appreciating the efforts of others. ICT is not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning.
151. Specialist instrumental tuition is provided for a growing number of pupils to learn to play, for example, the recorder, guitar, cornet, trumpet, clarinet, flute and violin. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to participate in the extra-curricular activities provided, such as the choir. Visits from music specialists to demonstrate, for example, Tudor instruments, a variety of string and brass instruments and the drums enrich the pupils' learning. Pupils are given effective opportunities to perform publicly through concerts, charity events, assemblies and celebrations of religious festivals.
152. The subject is usually strongly led and managed. Currently, the co-ordinator is on leave and so the school is without her expert support. A national scheme has been adopted to support teachers' planning. No opportunities have been provided for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning. There is no standard form of assessment and the recording of pupils' progress is not consistently applied across the school. There are very good resources to support teaching in the subject. The subject contributes effectively to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

153. Evidence from lesson observations and discussion with the subject co-ordinator indicate that standards and progress in both Years 2 and 6 are average. This judgement is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. However, there is evidence of higher attainment in dance in Years 5 and 6. No gymnastic lessons were observed during the inspection.

#### Strengths

- Standards in dance in Years 5 and 6.
- The very good quality of teaching by the subject leader and in Year 6.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and interest in the subject.
- Wide range of resources available and well used.
- Sporting after-school activities, soccer, netball, rugby, and athletics.

#### Areas for improvement

- Pupils seldom given the opportunity to observe and comment on their own and others' performance.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning leading to staff development in teaching.
- Assessment of pupils' progress in learning from year to year.

154. In Year 2, most pupils can throw and hit a small ball accurately and they are capable of using this skill to improve their individual performance. They recognise the effect of exercise on their bodies and understand the reason for 'warm up' and 'cool down' sessions during their physical education lessons.
155. Nearly all Year 6 pupils can use the stimulus of music well to devise their own imaginative dance routines. They work well with a partner to control and co-ordinate rhythmic patterns of movement, although each partnership consisted of the same gender. They are able to sustain energetic activity over a reasonable period of time and understand the effect of exercise on their bodies and this knowledge is well linked to their science and personal, social and health education. Approximately 85 per cent of Year 6 pupils are able to swim for 25 metres by the time they leave the school.
156. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall throughout the school, but examples of very good teaching were observed in Year 5 and 6. In both of these lessons the teachers were actively involved in the lesson, demonstrating and encouraging good practice. Their enthusiasm for the dance aspect of physical education was transmitted to the pupils to enable most of them to achieve a high standard of learning. Mood music like 'Cavatina' was used very well to encourage all pupils' imaginations in their dance routines. Pupils were used frequently to demonstrate their routines but they are not always asked to comment on the good aspects of performance.
157. The subject is co-ordinated by an experienced and enthusiastic teacher who has had some experience of monitoring pupils' performance by teaching other year group classes. However, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are under-developed. Resources for the subject are good and the curriculum is enhanced by a number of extra-curricular activities, especially for junior pupils. These pupils also participate in tournaments with other primary schools in soccer, netball and athletics.