

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OUR LADY QUEEN OF HEAVEN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wimbledon

LEA area: London Borough of Wandsworth

Unique reference number: 101051

Headteacher: Mrs Carmel Macmillan

Reporting inspector: John William Paull  
22028

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> July 2002

Inspection number: 250241

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary with nursery
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Victoria Drive Wimbledon London
Postcode:	SW19 6AD
Telephone number:	(0208) 788 7420
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Frank Gahan
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22028	John William Paull	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art Music Special educational needs Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? (a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9465	Elizabeth Cooke	Lay inspector		How high are standards? (b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
31525	Sue O'Sullivan	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Geography History French	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30695	Geraldine Dinan	Team inspector	The curriculum for the Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady Queen of Heaven is a Catholic primary school that has its own recently opened nursery. Earlier in the term of the inspection, it received the information that it was to begin work as a Beacon School in September. Beacon Schools are recognised as having practice of sufficiently high quality to be shared with other schools. The school admits three-to 11-year-olds. It is administered by the London Borough of Wandsworth and the Catholic archdiocese of Southwark. Currently, 223 pupils are on roll, which is about the same as other schools of its type. Numbers of boys and girls are similar in nearly all classes, although variations occur in a couple of year groups. Forty-one attend part-time in the Nursery. The largest ethnic group is white. A few of these pupils are from other European countries. Others are from Brazil and another significant group is black. At over 20 per cent, the number of pupils with English as an additional language is high and several of these are at an early stage of learning English. About 12 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is about average. Approaching 20 per cent are identified with special educational needs, which is average. Most of these pupils experience learning difficulties of a moderate nature, although a few have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, or a speech or physical difficulty. Two pupils have a statement of special needs, which is a little below average for a school of this size. The overall attainment of pupils entering the school is about average and the socio-economic circumstances of most families with children at the school are also around average.

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

Our Lady Queen of Heaven is a very good school. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, overall attainment is frequently well above national averages in English, mathematics and science and achievement is nearly always good in relation to pupils' starting points. The headteacher is a very strong leader. Governors are supportive and knowledgeable and the staff are conscientious and plan their lessons carefully. Teaching is often very good. As a result, pupils of different prior attainments, including those with special educational needs and of various ethnic backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language, acquire basic skills well and make good progress. Behaviour is very good. Taking these and similar factors into account, value for money is very good.

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

- By the time pupils leave in Year 6, overall attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. Attainment is also generally above average in these subjects towards the end of Year 2.
- In design and technology, information and communication technology, French and physical education, standards are high at the end of Years 2 and 6 and, in history, at the end of Year 6.
- Overall arrangements to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good, so their attitudes, behaviour in and around the school and relationships with others are also very good. Personal, social and emotional development is similarly of high quality in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good and pupils of all groups show a lot of interest in school, learn basic skills well and make good, often very good, progress.
- Planning is good, so what is taught through the school and in the Nursery and Reception is of good quality and breadth.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or with English as an additional language is good, so they make good progress.
- Leadership and management are very good, so the school's effectiveness and care for pupils are good.

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

- Assessment and analysis of pupils' progress are not consistently rigorous in all subjects.



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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the time of the last inspection, June 1998, the quality of education that was provided was identified as very good and standards were generally well above average. The school has done well to maintain such high standards. No key weaknesses were identified in the last report and only a few minor features were identified as in need of review. The school has responded well to these suggestions. For example, a behaviour policy that is consistently applied in all classes has been developed and opportunities for pupils' cultural development are more apparent in texts used in literacy hours, and in music and art. Opportunities for parents to contribute to the life of the school through fundraising and organising social events have improved with the formation of a committee of elected representatives. Further developments to improve the partnership with parents are planned. In addition to such improvements, the quality of teaching is better now than it was previously. Although teaching was adjudged "very good" in the last report, only a little over a third of lessons were of this quality and a significant proportion was satisfactory. Furthermore, a little unsatisfactory teaching was found. However, during this inspection, the proportion of lessons adjudged in both "very good" and "good" categories were higher, and no unsatisfactory teaching occurred.

## 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	A	A	B	A	well above average    A above average        B average                    C below average         D well below average    E
mathematics	A	A	B	B	
science	B	A	B	B	

The table shows that National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science are consistently above average. However, the school's results in 2001 were not as good as those of the previous years. National results have been improving year on year, so these results caused the school's overall trend to drop below the national trend. The main reasons were that pupils who took the tests in 2001 had a larger number with special educational needs than in previous years and pupils who spoke only a little English joined the class just before the tests. Nevertheless, the school still succeeded in meeting its target in English, although it did not quite reach that for mathematics. Early indications of results in 2002 are that overall attainment is up, which reflects the quality of work that was seen during the inspection. In all three subjects, this work was well above relevant averages. Pupils therefore achieve well in comparison with their starting points in Year 1, which are about average overall. This judgement applies equally to different groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs, boys and girls and those of various ethnic groups in the school, whether or not they speak English as an additional language. At the end of Year 6, the proportion that attains at a level higher than that expected for the age group is above the national average, suggesting that more able pupils also achieve well. At the end of Year 2, what was seen in the inspection was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science. In all other subjects, at the end of both Years 2 and 6, nearly all pupils reach nationally expected levels for their ages. In French, however, standards are very high. The recently opened Nursery is likely to make a positive impact on overall standards on entry to the school. Whereas, available evidence suggests that attainment on entry has been around average in the past, nearly all children who are currently in the Nursery are reaching the higher stepping stones (nationally written descriptions of what children should know and do as they pass through Nursery and

Reception classes), so attainment in the Reception is starting from a more advantageous point. As a result, attainment at the end of the Reception Year is set to rise; so higher proportions will reach and exceed the early learning goals (nationally written descriptions of what children should know and do when they begin the National Curriculum). Attainment in the Reception class is currently above what is usually found.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils speak highly of their school. Nearly all of them enjoy learning and value what their teachers do for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good – pupils are polite and helpful, opening and holding doors and offering cheerful greetings to visitors. They behave well in and around the school and pupils in Year 6 provide very good role models for younger ones.
Personal development and relationships	Very good – pupils are sympathetic towards others and clearly understand ideas of fairness and right and wrong. They work and play well together and show respect for the customs of countries that they hear about in geography.
Attendance	Satisfactory – attendance is in line with national figures. Pupils are nearly always brought to school punctually and lessons start and end on time.

These judgements reflect the school's Catholic aims and mission statement very closely.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teaching in a high proportion of lessons was of this quality and occurred frequently in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) and in English, mathematics and science in lessons through the school. Examples of very good teaching were observed in all classes. Two excellent lessons were also observed: one in a literacy hour in Year 2, the other in a numeracy hour in Year 6. Significant amounts of good teaching also occurred. The rest was satisfactory, with no unsatisfactory teaching. This high quality is built on thorough planning, good understanding of the National Curriculum, methods of teaching that match pupils' needs and very good organisation of classrooms, including effective control of pupils. As a result, pupils are interested in their work and remain busy on appropriate tasks. Basic skills are therefore learnt quickly and securely, so progress occurs at a fast rate. Skills of literacy and numeracy are grasped well and pupils build and consolidate knowledge as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and, when necessary, supported effectively by teaching assistants. As a result, they make progress at a good rate. Pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, whether or not they are at an early stage of learning English, also receive the teaching and support that they need. Consequently, they too acquire basic skills effectively.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good - what is taught in the Nursery and Reception is adapted to meet the needs and requirements of the age group. The National Curriculum benefits from good planning, ensuring its relevance to pupils. The range is enhanced with French.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good – the co-ordinator is knowledgeable and conscientious. She ensures that individual education plans are understood and used by teachers and teaching assistants. Therefore, identified pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good – pupils with English as an additional language are supported well. Teachers ensure that they understand how to make progress. Other pupils involve them fully in work groups and playground activity.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good – both spiritual and social provision are very good and moral development is excellent. Pupils receive frequent opportunities to reflect and pray in their classrooms and in assembly, focusing on values such as tolerance, care for others, right and wrong and the created world. Opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and to support each other are planned and valued. Opportunities to appreciate a range of cultures and artefacts are provided in art, religious education, music, literacy hours, history and geography.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good – procedures for monitoring, recording and using information about pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour are good. Procedures to monitor personal development are less extensive, but are still sound.

The school's links with parents and the information that it provides for them are generally satisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good – aims that set high expectations and Christian values permeate the school's policies. The headteacher and staff pursue these principles successfully in the work of the school, maintaining its high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good – governors understand the work of the school. They are conscientious in carrying out roles of supporting and advising the headteacher and staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good – monitoring of teaching and what is taught has led to improvements in what is provided from an already high quality. Information that is gathered is shared with governors and used to set

	priorities effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Good - spending is monitored well and funds that are provided for specific reasons are spent accordingly.

Governors and senior staff are fully aware of the need to achieve best value for public funds. Competing suppliers' prices are checked before orders are sent out and expert advice is sought before committing money to capital projects. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate to teach the National Curriculum, although play areas are rather barren.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents' support for this very good school is high. Exceptionally, 100 per cent agreed that the school is well managed and that their children are expected to do their best. Ninety nine per cent agreed that teaching is good and that pupils behave well.</li> </ul>	

After the pre-inspection meeting, one or two parents expressed the view that negative features had not been raised because members of staff were present (employees and governors are permitted in the meeting if their own children attend the school). However, this comment was not born out in responses to questionnaires, which were unusually high in their support of the school. A few parents felt that the school does not work closely with them and neither responds well to criticism, nor informs them well enough about their children's progress. However, these numbers were low, compared with those who indicated contentment. Furthermore, the school is planning to canvas opinion as part of a review of how it informs them about their children's progress. Inspectors agreed with parents' generally very positive views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The last inspection reported that standards were generally very good. In English, mathematics and science, for example, overall attainment was well above what was expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and the results of National Curriculum tests supported that finding. National Curriculum test results over the past few years show that the school has generally maintained these high standards. However, in 2001, results of pupils in Year 6 were not quite as high as previously. These results were above, rather than well above, national averages. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators have identified two main reasons for this apparent fall and inspectors agree with these explanations. First, the year group that took the tests contained a slightly higher proportion than usual of pupils with identified learning difficulties. Secondly, two pupils joined the school from abroad, shortly before the tests and both of these pupils spoke English at only an early stage of understanding. As a result, the school's results could not reasonably have been expected to remain as high as they were. Nevertheless, progress had still occurred at fast rates. For example, in English, mathematics and science, the percentages of pupils who attained at a level higher than that expected for their age, were above the national figure. This progress is directly related to very good teaching in age groups throughout the school. In the light of these factors and, compared with overall average starting points when pupils begin the National Curriculum, pupils' achievements are good at all stages of education. The cumulative effect over the years results in very good achievement overall. Generally, trends support these judgements. Nevertheless, the dip in results in 2001 caused the school's overall trend to drop below the national trend. Early indications of the 2002 results, supported by standards of work that were seen during the inspection, are that this situation is likely to be temporary.
2. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests of pupils in Year 2 were fairly close to attainment in previous years. In comparison with all schools in the country and with similar schools, standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The results of statutory teachers' assessments in science were also above average. As with the older age group, the percentage that attains at a level higher than that expected exceeds the national figure and does so considerably in reading and writing. Such results suggest that the school provides well for more able pupils, helping them to achieve the higher standard of which they are capable.
3. In common with nearly all schools, overall targets for pupils in Year 6 are agreed with the local authority for the results of National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics. The targets set for Our Lady Queen of Heaven are challenging, but realistic. In recent years, the school has usually achieved them and, even in 2001, its results were very close to what had been set. The likelihood is that targets for 2002 will at least be met. These targets are focused on the percentage that attains the expected level for their age, whereas it is a feature of the school's results that many pupils exceed this level.
4. The school has a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language and a few enter the school with little or no English. These pupils come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including white European, Brazilian or Asian. Their mother-tongues include Brazilian-Portuguese, Filipino and Spanish. Other groups are from families that originated in Africa, the Caribbean or the Asian sub-continent. Owing to good teaching, these groups of pupils make good progress. Those at early stages of learning English soon acquire sufficient competence to join in all lessons. When they reach this level, they eventually attain overall standards as high as, sometimes higher than, other pupils, which represents good achievement that is indistinguishable from the overall rate.
5. In the main, individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs demonstrate that these pupils' requirements are understood well, too. Emotional, behavioural and literacy targets are strongly related to pupils' needs in these aspects although, in the sample that inspectors

viewed, very few targets were related to numeracy. Classroom assistants are well trained to help pupils attain their targets, supporting them well. Teachers adapt their planning appropriately, so these pupils make good progress.

6. During the inspection, standards in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) were high. In the Nursery, at appropriate ages, nearly all children are currently reaching what is described in later *stepping stones* in the important areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development (stepping stones are descriptions of what young children are expected to attain at different points as they move through Nursery and Reception classes). This high attainment is also found currently in the Reception class and nearly all children are attaining or even exceeding the early learning goals for their age, so attainment is now above what is normally found (early learning goals are also descriptions of attainment, but these indicate what is expected at the end of children's Reception Year). These judgements represent good achievement as most children are at about average levels when they enter the Nursery. However, it should be remembered that the Nursery has only recently been opened. The very good planning, which occurred at that time, has not yet influenced the levels of knowledge and skills of pupils currently in the main school. Current attainment on entry to Year 1 is, for that reason, unaffected by such high standards and remains only average. However, it is evident that it is set to rise considerably from next year onwards, owing to the very good teaching and general provision for the young children who are now passing through. Standards in other areas of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development are also reaching standards above those usually found.
7. In English, standards of work that were seen during the inspection were well above average, both towards the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6. Very good teaching ensures that pupils' achievements compared with their starting points are very good. For example, in speaking and listening, pupils grow steadily in confidence as they move through the school. In lessons, younger pupils answer teachers' questions willingly and recognise the need to project their voice, so everyone can hear. They also listen sympathetically to each other. By Years 5 and 6, nearly all pupils speak clearly in accurate English, putting together logical arguments to support the opinions that they express. In Year 2, pupils begin to write for different purposes, understanding that layout and setting out change from one form to another, so a letter to a friend looks different from a poem. By the end of Year 6, pupils write stories, letters, biographies, summaries, poems and persuasive tracts. Nearly all pupils achieve well, with many attaining highly in these different genres, using flexible, well chosen vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also achieve well, making good progress.
8. Pupils' literacy skills are employed well across the curriculum. For example, they are taught about "the contents page", indexes and glossaries and examples of using these pages to pinpoint relevant information were seen in, for example, science and history. Factual writing is used, when appropriate, to record information in subjects across the curriculum. As might be expected, this written work increases in length and complexity, as pupils move through the school.
9. In mathematics, in work that was seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 was well above average. By the time pupils leave, their achievements are therefore generally good, sometimes very good, compared with their attainments on entry to Year 1. Teachers understand how to organise and plan work in numeracy hours very well. As a result, pupils learn basic skills thoroughly and use them to work out problems and to apply them in a range of more complex mathematical situations. For example, in Year 2, nearly all pupils knew several different words and phrases for multiplication. Good teaching had thus enabled them to recognise situations when it would be appropriate to use this skill to reach an answer. Higher attaining pupils successfully answered questions that included the three and four tables and quick methods of multiplying by ten. Work in pupils' books showed that nearly all of them were beginning to recognise properties of many two- and three-dimensional shapes, including correct uses of vocabulary such as edges, faces, corners and angles. By the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils understand the value of different digits within numbers (place value), up to at least 1,000.

They use this knowledge well to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Approaching half of them go beyond this, showing confidence and accuracy up to two places of decimals. Pupils' understanding of shape and space is good and they collect data of their own, presenting it in tables, graphs and charts. Several pupils develop further understanding and reach higher than normally expected levels of work. For example, they relate fractions to an equivalent percentage and use long methods of calculation to multiply or divide three or four digit numbers by two-digit numbers. However, a few lower attaining pupils, identified with special educational needs, had no mathematical targets in their individual education plans. Although no evidence emerged that these pupils were failing to learn adequately, it was, as a result of this omission, unclear that their needs were fully met. Pupils with English as an additional language were taught and supported well, so they knew what to do to make progress at similar rates to other pupils.

10. Numeracy skills are used well in a range of situations. Pupils read and record information, using graphs and charts in, for example, science and geography. Timelines are used to promote an understanding of historical eras. Younger pupils count beats to help them keep to rhythms in music. Pupils display a good understanding of the relative sizes of different numbers, according to their age, as they move through the school.
11. In science, current attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average. Pupils successfully develop a good knowledge of natural and physical science and they relate their knowledge well to the world around them. Nearly all pupils acquire basic skills well across all aspects of the subject. By the time they leave the school in Year 6, nearly all pupils achieve well, often very well, compared with what they knew in Year 1 and standards are well above average. For example, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, know many facts about living creatures and how they live. They also carry out simple tests and experiments on materials and their properties and within physical science, such as how electrical circuits work and the effects of applying forces to simple objects. Distinct groups of pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds, whether or not they speak English as an additional language, make progress at similar rates to all other pupils. Furthermore, many pupils attain at a level higher than that normally expected. For example, in a very good lesson, they showed understanding of the uses of different types of electrical circuit. They evaluated their ideas by employing simple tests that took account of issues of fair testing and came to sensible conclusions based directly on their evidence and observations.
12. In information and communication technology, overall attainment is above what is usually found at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has invested wisely in resources and training in the last few years. These features have enabled teachers to develop pupils' skills effectively. For example, in Year 2, pupils are adept within word processing programs, using the mouse, toolbars and buttons to control a good range of applications. By the end of Year 6, good teaching has refined pupils' practical skills considerably. For example; they combine graphics and text, understand the use of applications such as *autoshares* and send their own e-mails independently. Attainment is above what is usually found in several other subjects also. For example, pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding and work skilfully at the end of Years 2 and 6, in design and technology, physical education and French. In Year 6, standards are also above what is usually found in history. In all other subjects, overall attainment is around expected levels.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development and behaviour, including children in the Nursery and Reception classes, are very good. This aspect was generally strong in the last report, so high standards have been maintained and, in some respects, been improved further. This judgement reflects the views of 98 per cent of parents who returned questionnaires, including a very high proportion, who agreed strongly. These figures are even better than four years ago, when fewer parents responded. Pupils' responses within areas of spiritual, moral and social development are particularly good. The school's Christian aims and mission pervade everything that takes place. As a result, pupils value each other and their teachers. They give strong indications of feeling at ease with themselves and special in the eyes of God, as members of "his family at school". An example of this was seen when monitors in a class of younger pupils were described as "today's very

special people". They went about their jobs with considerable aplomb and pride. As a result of good teaching in the area of personal, social and emotional development, even the youngest children in Nursery and Reception classes are beginning to reflect on their actions and how they affect others. This good start continues in classes through the school, so pupils relate very well to other people, including visitors, for whom they have friendly smiles, cheery greetings and offers of help with directions.

14. Attitudes are very good amongst all groups of pupils, from the youngest in the nursery to Year 6. For example, in a support session for pupils with English as an additional language, they were ready and willing to listen and work hard. Attitudes to learning are very good, partly because all families share the school's Catholic faith and partly because lessons are paced well, involving pupils with good questioning and interesting tasks. Pupils settle quickly at the start of each day and are ready to begin work promptly. They respond politely during registration and are quiet and attentive. Lessons start on time and little time is wasted, because as a clear result of pupils' good self-esteem, they are keen to learn. Almost always, pupils respond readily to teachers' instructions and enjoy lessons.
15. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. Those with special needs in the area of emotional or behavioural difficulty are well catered for. As a result, their behaviour in lessons is nearly always acceptable and, sometimes, as good as that of other pupils and learning is not hampered by their presence. Pupils move around the building sensibly and quietly. Moral development is such that older pupils, especially in Year 6, provide very good role models for younger ones. Behaviour in assemblies is good and pupils are attentive and respectful. Pupils play well together at break and lunchtimes. Supervision at lunch and playtimes is calm and friendly and from time to time groups of pupils will chat naturally with any adults present on the playground. As befits such very good behaviour, no pupils have been excluded from school. No incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection, although one or two parents reported that minor incidents do occur, albeit infrequently. However, the same parents agreed that these incidents were taken very seriously, were investigated, and dealt with. The school's records, which were available to inspectors, were in line with parents' comments.
16. Relationships throughout the whole school are very positive. Pupils show interest in other cultures and beliefs. They follow the example of their teachers, who value everyone in the school community, taking opportunities to praise different groups. For example, pupils applauded generously when Brazilian pupils were asked to stand and represent their heritage, following their country's victory in the World Cup final in Japan. The school is well decorated throughout with displays of work and photographs of activities. Pupils respect these displays and their environment as a whole. Pupils are keen to talk to visitors to their school and to share their work and ideas. For example, in discussions with inspectors about books and reading, boys and girls were very keen to share thoughts about their reading records, explaining who had written in them and what had been said. In a similar discussion children of reception age took turns well and listened to each other's contributions patiently and with interest. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and to help each other. Older pupils act as monitors or captains, demonstrating responsibility and co-operation. Younger pupils frequently run errands for teachers and help to organise the classroom.
17. Attendance is satisfactory. It is in line with national averages for primary schools and is similar to what was found in the last inspection. Learning benefits because almost all attend regularly. Parents generally bring their children to school on time, so few children arrive late into the first lesson.

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

18. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was described as "very good". However, only 36 per cent of lessons were adjudged of this quality. In this inspection, this figure is higher and so, although the overall judgement that teaching is very good has been maintained, improvement has occurred. Furthermore, unsatisfactory teaching, albeit a very small amount, was reported last time, whereas no unsatisfactory lessons were observed during this inspection. The remaining lessons included a significant proportion of good teaching and a smaller proportion that did not



reach this high quality, but that was still satisfactory. A strong feature of teaching is the importance that is placed on finding time to develop pupils' personal development, spirituality and self-esteem. At the end of each session, pupils reflect and pray. Often, they are asked to think about anything that has gone wrong, either in their work or relationships and to ask themselves how they could have acted differently. Almost always, the emphasis is on helping pupils to understand that actions have consequences for other people and that to feel good about themselves, their actions must be good. The main strength of this teaching is that it is explicit and promotes self-esteem. Pupils are told clearly that they need to consider other people's viewpoints and feelings.

19. Teaching is very good in all stages of education through the school, including excellent teaching in two lessons. One of these was a literacy hour in Year 2 and the other was a numeracy hour in Year 6. At least one example of very good teaching was observed in each class and a high proportion occurred in Year 6, including literacy and science and in a range of areas of learning in Nursery and Reception classes. Teaching in Year 2 was nearly always good, including elements that were very good. This overall high quality is occurring through the school because teachers understand the National Curriculum very well and plan effectively, so basic skills are very well taught. Another very strong feature is that teachers question, manage and organise pupils very well. As a result, time is well used, so pupils put in a very good effort and produce a lot of work. All these strengths promote learning well, especially in the important areas of literacy, numeracy and science. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used and adapted effectively to meet the needs of different groups. These groups include pupils of different ethnic backgrounds, whether or not their English is at an early stage. The requirements of those with special educational needs are also included. However, in the case of the latter, individual education plans do not sufficiently target mathematical skills to be certain that adaptations in this subject are consistently meeting individual needs. Nevertheless, in general terms, well-planned uses of support staff help different groups of pupils to be fully included in lessons at their own level. Consequently, pupils experience success, maintain a good level of self-esteem and usually make good progress in all age groups through the school. The cumulative effect of this consistent progress produces very good achievements, when overall attainment in Year 6 is compared with attainment on entry to Year 1.
20. At the time of the last inspection, the school had no Nursery and the work of Reception was not separately reported. Comparisons between teaching of these young children then and now are therefore not possible. However, the overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception together) is currently very good. Teaching of this quality occurred regularly in all classes and featured in a wide range of areas of learning, including literacy and numeracy hours that had been adapted very well to suit the needs of young children in Reception. Planning of work that is suitable for the age group is particularly strong. One of the main reasons is that the Nursery, as a recent addition, has been purposely planned to teach what is required in the curriculum for the foundation stage. At the same time, very good co-ordination ensured that provision in the Reception class would support seamless development within all areas of learning for children moving up. This strong management has been successful. Children's knowledge, skills and understanding are developed in a continuous sequence based on very good planning, knowledge of what should be taught and successful management strategies that reflect the development of children in the age group.
21. During the inspection, teaching in English lessons was generally very good across Years 1 and 2 and from Year 3 to Year 6. It was never less than good in any lessons that were observed. Teachers are skilful in their use of time, resources, questioning and in the development of speaking and listening skills. Subject knowledge is very secure and planning is thorough, generally meeting the needs of different groups, including those with special educational needs. Teaching assistants know pupils with whom they work well and help them to follow what to do in order to progress well. Tasks are usually adapted successfully for groups of differing capabilities. However, higher attainers are not always given sufficient independence to research and explore themes at their own level. Teachers understand well the importance of teaching literacy in other subjects. They concentrate strongly on extending vocabulary and on uses of factual writing to record information.

22. In mathematics, the overall quality of teaching is very similar to that observed in English. It is generally very good through the school. During the inspection, teaching was never less than good and, in half the lessons, it was very good, including an excellent lesson in Year 6. This high quality teaching is based on very good understanding of how to plan and teach numeracy hours.

As a result, pupils are fully engaged with what is taught and therefore learn basic skills securely and with confidence. Teachers maintain a good pace in their teaching with the use of purposeful, effective questioning. In return, pupils remain interested, concentrate well and nearly all of them work at a good pace. In the excellent lesson, these attributes were all present and enhanced further by the teacher's skilful recognition of how well his pupils were following each point. Every so often, a question would ascertain whether pupils fully understood. These questions were often directed to individuals who had seemed unsure or who had not raised a hand. Further explanation then followed if understanding required further reinforcement. The result of this skilful technique was that the learning requirements of all groups and individuals were addressed.

23. In science, the overall quality of teaching is very good and it is good across Years 1 and 2. In a lesson that was observed in a class in the younger age group, planning, use of resources and subject knowledge were all good. However, an overlong introduction reduced the effectiveness of this otherwise good teaching, as it restricted the available time for pupils to carry out scientific tests. Opportunities to learn practically were thus shortened. So much information was covered in this introduction that pupils were unlikely to remember it all. Nevertheless, by the end of the lesson, satisfactory progress was achieved. Teaching in other lessons that were observed, all of which were in classes spread between Years 3 and 6, was very good. One of the main reasons is that planning is very good. It ensures that teaching focuses strongly on what is important and builds strong links with related ideas in other subjects. These links help pupils to build their ideas on broader bases, helping them to remember what they learn.
24. Teaching in other subjects is nearly always good and sometimes very good. For example, it is consistently good in information and communication technology, in which careful planning focuses on the development of skills and understanding. As a result, pupils make good progress, acquiring varied skills that they use in other subjects. Teaching is also good in art and design, history and geography. In design and technology, French and physical education, teaching is very good. The quality of learning in these subjects matches this quality, so that many pupils attain levels above those expected for their age by the time they leave school. In music, the teaching that was observed was satisfactory. However, other evidence suggests that, over time, progress has been good, indicating that teaching is usually better than that seen during the current inspection.
25. Pupils who need additional literacy support, including pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, receive this support as their group activity during literacy hours. Teaching in these groups is invariably good and focuses well on the learning and development of vocabulary, understanding and oral fluency. Pupils' progress is carefully checked and recorded. Although this work is often undertaken away from their classrooms, these pupils are nevertheless well integrated into the ongoing work of their classes, owing to good communication and planning that occurs between their teachers.
26. Marking of pupils' work was up to date in all classes. Teachers' written comments were encouraging but opportunities were missed in literacy and numeracy to refer to pupils' targets and to explain what to do to meet them. Teachers use homework well. What was set in the inspection related closely to the knowledge and skills that pupils were working on during the day. Reading books go home in all classes and it is clear from pupils' home record books that nearly all of them are supported by adults at home, who discuss their reading with them.

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

27. At the last inspection, what was taught was judged to be broad and balanced and met statutory requirements. Since then a Nursery has been opened in which teaching focuses closely on the curriculum for the foundation stage and, at the same time, planning in the reception has been brought into line with what this nationally prepared document suggests for the age group. The school continues to provide a rich curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6. This richness is based on the addition of a good range of sports, such as tennis and cricket, musical activity outside lessons, visits to places of interest and visits to the school from agencies that support what is taught in lessons, as well as a residential journey to Somerset for pupils in Year 6. The school also puts on drama performances twice a year in which all take part. French continues to be taught to all classes, including the Nursery. The quality of planning is good, ensuring that what is taught is relevant to pupils' needs and previous understanding, as they move through the school. Strengths have therefore been maintained and, in some respects, improved since the last inspection.
28. In the Foundation Stage (the Nursery and Reception classes) what is taught follows recent national guidelines for the age group closely. In the Nursery, all areas of learning are taught with due regard to developments in levels of skills that are described in *the stepping stones* for children of this age group. As they move into the Reception, what has gone before is built on carefully, so they progress well towards the Early Learning Goals.
29. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively implemented throughout the main school. Adapted versions for young children are used in the Reception class and help to prepare them well for what will follow in Year 1. Opportunities in additional literacy classes are provided to support the progress of targeted pupils to ensure that they do not fall behind. Pupils with special educational needs, those at early stages of learning English and lower attainers derive particular benefit from these lessons. The school has named co-ordinators for all subjects, which results in long-term planning to ensure that statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum are properly met.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are enabled to participate in all activities. Individual targets are clear and concise, so teachers and teaching assistants can easily understand how to adapt planning to suit them. However, these targets tend to concentrate on literacy and emotional and behavioural matters, rather than numeracy. Class teachers and their assistants, who are well deployed, know these pupils well and ensure their full participation in lessons, preparing special materials if necessary. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also good. Individuals and groups receive work that is well matched to their needs and levels of development.
31. Provision for health education and drugs awareness is incorporated within aspects of religious education, personal education and science. The school accepts the support of relevant external agencies to extend this work including theatre groups, police liaison officers and the school nurse. The governing body's sex education and drugs awareness policies meet statutory requirements and are compatible with the school's Catholic principles. This policy adheres to the recommended guidance of the archdiocese.
32. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the school's attempts to include all pupils in what it provides are based on its Catholic values. It is currently exploring the possibility of admitting a greater range of pupils with identified special needs or disabilities, in partnership with a local special school. Ways of meeting the needs of gifted pupils and those with particular talents are also being reviewed and explored.
33. Personal, social, health and citizenship education are strong elements in what is provided, meeting the school's Christian aims and values very effectively. For example, in physical education lessons, ways of looking after the human body and the importance of daily exercise were emphasised and reasons were made explicit. During the inspection, the importance of warming up muscles before vigorous activity was often raised and reinforced. Furthermore, pupils in Year 5 attended a local citizenship forum.

34. The school maintains close links with local primary and secondary schools. It regularly receives and successfully supports the work of students from two colleges that train new teachers. The school's contribution to local education has been recognised in the award by the Department for Education and Skills of the status of *Beacon School* from September 2002. Good links with the community include visitors who contribute to pupils' appreciation of, for example, the arts. These include theatre groups, an opera company, an African artist, a drummer and poets. Representatives of charities are also welcomed. A strong link with the local Catholic church and the archdiocese of Southwark also exists. Classes visit the church on a rotating basis to witness and take part in the celebration of Mass.
35. At the time of the last inspection, overall provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was good. This good quality has been further enhanced. Arrangements for these aspects of personal development are now generally very good. What is provided to promote pupils' spiritual and social development is very good; for cultural development, it is good and for moral development it is excellent. All staff act as good role models, demonstrating calm attitudes and strong values of integrity and co-operation. Expectations of behaviour, politeness and attainment are high and they use praise whenever appropriate to foster pupils' self-esteem and to motivate good relations between them.
36. Very good opportunities for spiritual development include time for pupils to reflect and to pray using both set prayers and ideas of their own. Assemblies contain stories and real examples of situations that promote care for others, responses to the love of God, compassion, generosity and co-operation. Furthermore, teachers provide special moments during the day when pupils are encouraged to reflect on their personal responses to work and actions. These moments are supported with prayers that teachers lead sensitively. Each classroom has an area with a picture or artefact of Christian significance in order to help pupils focus their thoughts during these times. Daily acts of worship comply fully with the current legal requirements. The school's provision strongly reflects its Catholic identity and the faith of those in its community. However, spirituality is not confined to this faith; pupils learn about other religions and show interest and respect for them. During the inspection, aspects of Judaism, Sikhism, Islam and Hinduism were displayed sympathetically in the hall. Examples of promoting spiritual development were also apparent in the teaching of science, music, personal and social development and art. For example, whenever pupils demonstrated moments of excitement, particular interest or absorption, teachers were sensitive to the opportunity to make the reasons explicit. For the youngest age groups to the oldest, the school's policy covering such matters shows good insight into the importance of developing self-awareness and esteem. For example, in the Nursery, children sat in a circle and the story of *Rosie and Jim* was used successfully to explore the value of prayers and reflection in learning to do the right thing.
37. Opportunities to develop pupils morally are excellent. Pupils are explicitly taught about differences between right and wrong and are taught that they must accept responsibility for their own actions. In assemblies and personal and social education lessons, they are frequently encouraged to think about such matters and how their actions might affect how others behave and feel. For example, in a Year 6 class, at the end of the afternoon, pupils were asked to consider whether they had upset or hurt anyone earlier that day and what should be done to put things right. During an assembly, stories of *Pandora's Box* and *The Butterfly of Hope* were linked to ideas of Catholic belief, so pupils could relate the embedded moral values to their own experiences and future behaviour. Pupils are taught that Christian values are important and should be lived from day to day. Parents are rightly very confident that their children are taught to know right from wrong and that they receive very strong support to develop a robust morality. Teachers' very clear and positive approach leads to self-discipline, loyalty, commitment to working hard and respect for others.
38. Opportunities for pupils' social development are very good. In the Nursery and Reception, this provision is well planned and taught in the area of personal, social and emotional development. A comprehensive policy exists for personal and social development that includes ideas produced with the help of the Catholic archdiocese and approved by the governors. This policy provides a good framework for teachers and its content is entirely suitable for pupils in primary education. Many opportunities are planned for pupils to share, co-operate and learn collaboratively. Well

resourced lessons also offer pupils good opportunities to investigate and explore together. For example, a design and technology lesson in Year 4 included sharing, tasting and discussing the properties of a wide range of bread products in collaborative groups. In Year 6, a science lesson required pupils to co-operate to solve problems in their practical task and to reach a shared conclusion about the circuitry of traffic lights. These developing social skills across all age groups are closely linked to pupils' learning and the high standards that are achieved. Pupils have opportunities to reflect upon and share views about their own and other's work. All children, from an early age, are given the chance to act as classroom monitors and helpers and it is pointed out that this work is special, because it benefits everyone. The system of houses helps to create opportunities for competition, but within a framework of belonging to a team and working together towards a goal.

39. The provision for cultural development is good. Opportunities are provided for pupils to study their own and other people's cultures. Pupils undertake a good range of trips and visits and the school welcomes a broad range of visitors to share artistic and musical skills. For example, African musicians visited and shared their music; Fulham football club came to encourage participation in sport; and a storyteller entertained with exciting tales. Parents from varied ethnic backgrounds come to the school to share dress and experiences. Pupils make visits to cultural centres such as the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Festival Hall. Pupils are introduced to British cultural heritage in history. Sometimes in design and technology, music, religious education or art, the contribution and value of other cultural styles is explicitly pointed out. During the inspection, for example, a display of work highlighted different styles of tents used by different peoples. Pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds attend the school and difference in backgrounds is celebrated as important and exciting.

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

40. The school takes good care of its pupils' welfare. It has successfully maintained the good position that was reported in the last inspection. Questionnaires show that parents are confident that their children like school. Procedures for promoting and keeping a check on behaviour are good. Sensible policies have been drawn up to cover bullying and oppressive behaviour, as well as discipline and control. These policies are well understood and consistently applied by all adults who have care and responsibility in the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the behaviour that is expected of them. Procedures for child protection are good and the policy complies with local arrangements and has the headteacher as the named person, responsible for related matters. She has a good relationship with the education welfare officer attached to the school and has established sound lines of communication with social services, where necessary, to report cases of children in need.
41. Good procedures for monitoring attendance are in place. Attendance rates are in line with national averages for primary schools. Parents are well aware of the need for prompt, regular attendance. In their pre-inspection meeting, they agreed that the headteacher is, rightly, unsympathetic towards requests for family holidays during term time and discourages the practice. Registers are computerised, well kept and carefully checked. Few parents bring their children to school late. Late arrivals and patterns of non-attendance are watched for by the administration officer. Any concerns that this procedure brings to light are noted promptly through computerised summaries produced each week and referred to the class teacher or headteacher as necessary.
42. The school is conscientiously kept clean and is regularly checked for safety and security, including checks of fire equipment, which are up to date. Fire practices are carried out regularly. Sound and sympathetic procedures are practised for the care of pupils who are unwell or injured. Good records of accidents and minor injuries are kept to ascertain whether previously unidentified hazards might be a cause. No such patterns have been recorded recently. The school's most recent health and safety inspection, of April this year, confirmed it as a safe environment. Pupils' calm, orderly conduct is a strong contributory factor.
43. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Teachers have a class record book where points related to this area are written. However, the use of this

document is inconsistent. Sometimes, it is thorough in what is recorded but, just as often, very little is recorded. Nevertheless, all adults in the school know the pupils for whom they are responsible very well, partly because staffing is fairly stable and partly because human relationships are so good. Overall, this situation appears to work well enough. However, current levels of staffing continuity cannot last forever and, if teachers were to move without sharing their knowledge, gaps in written records would be difficult to fill. Records of the development of pupils with special educational needs are an exception to this finding. These records are kept in their individual plans and relevant targets are set. Emergency and/or confidential information passed to the school about pupils or their families is shared verbally on a “need-to-know” basis. Provision is adjudged satisfactory because, despite a few gaps, it works effectively.

44. Records of academic performance and uses of assessment to set targets and plan work are generally good. For example, every term, assessments are made of pupils’ work in all subjects of the National Curriculum and these are recorded in each class’s record book of achievements, which contain individualised pages for each pupil. Particularly thorough assessments are made in English, mathematics and science. Targets are set for each pupil and used to decide upon group targets and targets for the whole class. Teachers use this type of information well in planning pupils’ work and share it with pupils, especially in older age groups. However, pupils often keep the information in their desks and forget to refer to it, so they are not always clear about how such targets relate to their own work and the same rigour is not always found in other subjects as it is in English, mathematics, science and, to some extent, in information and communication technology. As a result, clarity about what pupils must do to improve is not as individually obvious in these other subjects. For example, in geography, what is recorded is related to statements of the work that was covered in the classroom during the term, rather than to a level of skill that was achieved, thus it is unclear how much individual progress has actually occurred and at what rate. Nevertheless, these records are useful in producing and presenting information in annual reports to parents and in making comparisons over extended periods of time.

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

45. At the time of the last inspection, parents’ views of the school were very positive. The school has successfully maintained the very good opinions of its pupils’ parents. In their responses to the questionnaire and at their pre-inspection meeting, parents were particularly complimentary. They praised the school highly, noting especially the quality of management and teaching, high expectations and very good behaviour of their children at school. In questionnaires, there was an unusually low level of dissatisfaction, even in aspects of the school’s work that one or two parents had queried during and after the meeting. These areas included how closely the school works with parents and how families are informed about their children’s progress. At their meeting, parents suggested that a change in the timing of consultation evenings, when they are invited to meet their children’s teachers, might be beneficial. They suggested that during the spring, rather than waiting until the summer would be better, as they already have a good written report towards the end of the year. The headteacher has taken note of this suggestion and is planning to consult parents about the possibility of changing these meetings as suggested. One or two parents expressed discomfort about approaching the school with a problem, although in written comments on the reverse of questionnaires, others stated complete satisfaction and good resolutions to issues that they had raised.
46. Inspectors agree fully with parents’ overall positive opinions of the school. Provision for homework, as detailed in the school policy and observed being set during lessons, is adequate for the age groups in the school and usually meets pupils’ needs. Extra-curricular activities offered by the school are judged to be good for a school of this size.
47. The school’s links with parents are satisfactory and it provides a satisfactory range of information for them. The previous report noted a rather formal approach to written communication with families. This finding remains true, although information is clear and sufficient. The school provides noticeboards, a reference area in the foyer and regular newsletters to ensure that parents and

carers know what events are planned. Newsletters share information about outings, as well as social and religious occasions. The headteacher also uses the newsletters to remind parents about such issues as attendance, punctuality and matters related to pupils' health and well being. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report provide clear guidance and information on the work of the school each year. Both these publications comply with statutory requirements.

48. Annual reports to parents also comply with legal requirements and provide a wealth of information about work covered by children and what they can do. However, minor inconsistencies occur in providing information about the next steps that children should take in order to improve, especially in subjects other than the main core areas, whereas targets for literacy and numeracy are systematically reported. An oversight is that French is not included in the reports, which is a pity, as standards are very high and, unusually in a primary school, the subject is taught in all classes. New families to the school are invited to visit before their children begin and the families of children about to enter the Nursery are invited to social events to help them to feel included in school life, which is very good practice.
49. The school seeks parents' views from time to time on issues that might affect them all and a committee of elected parents' representatives has been set up. The constituencies for the election of these representatives are based on the classes in which their children are placed. This system provides a useful forum for discussion and the group organises successful fundraising events that are well attended and provide significant financial support.
50. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. Parents are recruited to help in classrooms at the beginning of each year, but only a few remain as regular helpers throughout the year. These parents and a few others help on visits and outings. However, this amount of direct parental involvement in classrooms is unexceptional compared with what is often found. Nevertheless, parents support their children's learning by hearing them read at home, helping with homework and by ensuring that they attend regularly and promptly. Parents' positive attitudes towards their children's school are likely to contribute strongly to the high standards of motivation and hard work observed amongst its pupils.

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

51. At the time of the last inspection in June 1998, the quality of leadership and management were adjudged very good. The headteacher provided a clear and strong direction with a powerful vision of the school's future development, which included future provision of nursery education. Governors were committed to the life of the school and played an active part in its development. These judgements remain broadly the same. The headteacher communicates strong aims and Catholic values. The consistency with which these values run through everything that the school attempts for its pupils is excellent. The aim of providing a nursery has been very successfully realised, contributing to a sharp rise in attainment amongst children of reception ages. In the last report, the school was identified as very good and it had only a few minor issues to address. It has achieved this work successfully. For example, a behaviour policy is now consistently applied through the school. Its development has laid down procedures that are practised in all classes. Opportunities for pupils' cultural development are now more apparent in texts in use in literacy hours and in music and art. Improvements in opportunities for parents to contribute to the life of the school are available through the formation of a committee of elected representatives. Further developments to improve this partnership are planned. The school has a full complement of staff with responsibilities to co-ordinate subjects of the National Curriculum delegated to them. These co-ordinators are effective and knowledgeable and carry out their duties well. The same level of commitment and support is found in contributions to management that are made by the deputy headteacher and co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO). It is this successful leadership and management that has sustained the school's quality of education at such high levels since it was last inspected.
52. The contribution of the governing body in its support of strategic management is good. Chairs of committees are knowledgeable in their areas of responsibility and carry out their roles effectively. For example, the chair of the finance committee is aware of the borough's funding arrangements

and how future needs are likely to develop. In the current year, costs are high compared with a reduced income, but the resulting deficit can easily be met from accrued surpluses built up in the past. This past surplus is high compared with what is usually recommended. However, the local authority has, over the years, devolved a relatively high proportion of its overall education budget to its schools. In turn, its schools must plan further ahead for decorations, repairs and maintenance and any contingencies that might arise. Thinking has begun to ensure that the school will not run into financial difficulties, if high costs continue. Governors with particular responsibilities visit the school to ascertain how it is responding to initiatives in their areas. The link governor for special educational needs, for example, is knowledgeable about the numbers of pupils who have been identified in different categories of need and the types of provision that they require. She meets the co-ordinator regularly, visiting her classroom and is aware of necessary responses to recent legislation about admission of pupils with disability. Another example of this close liaison and understanding of the role was demonstrated by the governor with responsibility for literacy, who is also a parent governor. Governors receive, review and ratify the school's policies, ensuring that statutory requirements are met. These policies include those for race equality and procedures to see that individuals and distinct groups progress equally. As a result, all pupils make progress at similar rates.

53. Procedures that are used to check, evaluate and manage the school's performance are very good. Subject co-ordinators ensure that what is taught matches the requirements of the National Curriculum. The headteacher speaks regularly with members of staff about their performance. These conversations include information that is gathered from classroom observations and involve setting targets for future development and in-service training when required or desirable. As a result of these procedures, the high quality of teaching that was reported in the last inspection has been maintained and even improved further. Pupils' learning reflects this judgement, as standards also remain high. Recent targets for improvement, such as setting up the new Nursery, adapting provision in the Reception class to take full advantage of the new situation and maintaining high standards are appropriate. The co-ordinator of information and communication technology is also very aware of limitations that lack of accommodation places on the subject and is constantly seeking means of ameliorating this difficulty. Action to meet such targets has been good and the commitment to further successful development, and capacity to succeed with it is very apparent. Furthermore, newly appointed and newly qualified staff are complimentary about the school's arrangements to welcome and induct them. However, they feel that local arrangements have not been well attuned to the needs of those who arrived after the end of the September term.
54. Resources, including funding, are used well to support the overall quality of education and climate for learning. In each year since the last inspection, a workable budget has been set and priorities have been successfully targeted with adequate funding. Good use is made of new technology to support both the curriculum and administration. For example, a program to help with the monitoring of attendance has recently been purchased and is used to check trends and to identify both overall and individual patterns. Elements of curricular planning are held on computer and the budget is administered through an accounting package. Printouts are regularly provided for the headteacher and governors to keep a check on patterns of spending. Funds that are provided for specific purposes are recorded under separate budget headings and are spent legitimately. Clerical staff are efficient and effective in their roles and are an asset in helping the school to run smoothly. The caretaker is similarly efficient and the buildings are clean and well maintained. Best value is very well understood and is linked to decisions about what is likely to raise standards. The effectiveness of this approach is seen in the success of spending on the new Nursery, which is already paying dividends in raising attainment on entry. Prices in different catalogues are compared and governors seek quotations and expert advice for repairs or capital expenditure.
55. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate for the successful teaching of the National Curriculum. A full complement of teaching staff is available for classes through the school. Support staff are well trained and clear about their roles. Accommodation is generally adequate. However, owing to the lack of space for a computer suite, rapid changes in resources for information and communication technology and how best to deploy them require almost constant review. Learning resources are generally good in most subjects. However, several books



in the school's library are showing signs of ageing, which suggests a review of the stock is due to ensure that it continues to meet pupils' needs to research information across the curriculum.

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

56. Our Lady Queen of Heaven is a very good school at which standards of attainment and pupils' achievements are already high. Neither the staff, nor headteacher and governors demonstrate any complacency about these standards. On the contrary, they express the desire and capacity to raise them still further. During the inspection, some inconsistencies in the rigour with which progress is assessed and recorded were found. It is in this area that the school could look to achieve its laudable aim of raising standards even higher.

57. The governors, headteacher and staff should:

Raise standards of work in those subjects where attainment meets expectations, so it rises to above expectations by:

- applying systems of assessment with consistent rigour in all subjects (paragraphs 44, 98, 111);
- using information gained from assessment to match planning more closely to the needs of individuals in, for example, art and design, geography and to some extent in music (paragraphs 44, 98, 111); and
- raising the profile of pupils' individual targets with the pupils themselves, so they are better understood and used more frequently and effectively (paragraphs 26, 44, 81).

### **Other features that governors may wish to include in an action plan:**

- seek ways of involving parents in a broader range of the school's activities (paragraph 50, 98);
- review present arrangements for reporting pupils' progress, to see whether a more popular and advantageous pattern of parents' evenings is possible (paragraph 45);
- include the reporting of French in annual written reports of pupils' progress (paragraph 48);
- initiate a review of the stock of books in the library and replace any that are out of date (paragraph 55); and
- increase the use of numeracy targets in individual education plans (paragraphs 5, 9, 19, 30).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	18	19	8	0	0	0
Percentage	4	39	40	17	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	21	207
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	62

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	34

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	17	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	14
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	28	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (94)	90 (97)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	28	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (88)	97 (91)	97 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	10	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	9	7	9
	Total	24	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (94)	85 (94)	93 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	16
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	23	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (97)	89 (97)	93 (97)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	13
Black – other	10
Indian	1
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	145
Any other minority ethnic group	21

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	29.6

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	655,093
Total expenditure	642,486
Expenditure per pupil	2,425
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,970
Balance carried forward to next year	52,577

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate:

Number of questionnaires sent out	228
Number of questionnaires returned	72

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	31	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	70	24	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	29	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	60	28	9	1	2
The teaching is good.	71	28	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	46	9	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	36	11	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	34	13	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	90	10	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	28	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	27	8	0	17

## **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**

58. Very good improvement has taken place since the last inspection. In 1998, the school had no nursery of its own. Since then, a new, attractive nursery building has been established. This vital period of change for the school has been managed very effectively by the co-ordinator and nursery teacher, supported by the headteacher. It shows very good understanding of young children's needs at this stage of their education.
59. This accommodation has been purposely designed to meet recently introduced national requirements for children before they begin the National Curriculum (these requirements are published as *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage*). Furthermore, this planning has also been introduced into the school's Reception class. Its high quality owes much to the dedication and thoughtful attention to detail on the part of the teachers involved. The new schemes of work and rigorous assessment procedures match the required stages of progress, known as *stepping stones*, leading to *early learning goals*, (descriptions against which children's early development is carefully measured at the point when they enter Year 1). Another very good feature of the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is the extent to which teachers use assessment to track the progress of children as individuals. It is a constant daily feature. In the Nursery, for example, while the teacher is teaching and organising, other staff record qualitative judgements related to individual children's progress during activities. This information is sensitively shared when teachers plan future work. It enables them to know exactly where children are with their development and, thereby, indicates clearly what activities should follow.
60. In the Nursery, 27 children attend the morning sessions and 16 in the afternoons. Another 30 children attend full-time in the Reception class. A few children speak English as an additional language. Nevertheless, children's overall attainment on entry is about average. Initial baseline assessments, carried out shortly after the start of their Reception Year, confirm this judgement.
61. The overall quality of teaching is very good. The same team of teacher, nursery nurse and teaching assistant is employed in both the morning and afternoon classes. Very well organised routines are apparent in the Nursery and Reception, ensuring that children feel secure and are helped to grow in confidence. All areas of learning are planned with equal care. Good adaptations of literacy and numeracy hours are provided in the Reception, so children are prepared effectively for the style of teaching they will encounter in Year 1. As a result of all this very good practice, learning and progress occur at fast rates. One of the main reasons is that assessment is used very well to adapt the provision to meet the needs of individual children in all areas of learning. For example, a few shy and reticent three-year-olds were identified in the Nursery class. Additional learning activities focusing on creative play were planned to promote their self-esteem. As a result, these children settled more readily and made good progress. Evidence of past year groups suggests that overall attainment on entry to Year 1 has consistently been about average. However, as the effects of this new provision work through and are built on strongly in Reception, it is likely that standards will rise. Already, a high proportion of children in the Reception class are set to match the early learning goals, with many exceeding them.

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

62. A few children enter the Nursery lacking the previous experience and skills to work, play and communicate with others. The quality of teaching is very good and teachers place great emphasis on providing structure and consistency. Planning of learning activities, which are appropriately matched to the variety of learning needs of individual children, is very clear and purposeful. A cheerful atmosphere prevails and children learn to co-operate, share and value each other's work and ideas. All staff promote independence effectively, allowing children to choose some of their own activities within the established classroom rules. All children in both age groups can get themselves ready for physical education, but a few still need help to dress again afterwards. A



clear majority sustains concentration for good periods of time. This attribute was particularly so when it included the extra incentive of working with foodstuffs; nursery children made fresh fruit salad with a range of familiar and exotic fruits! During this activity, children demonstrated good social skills of sharing with others.

63. The overall quality of teaching is very good. For example, teachers use very effective strategies to help children develop a sense of morality. These strategies were observed when children sat on the carpet in a circle. Life-sized dolls were used to simulate right and wrong actions and behaviour. Children enjoyed these enactment's and, through discussion, they offered sensible and often sensitive ideas of what sanctions should apply and of how behaviour should be reformed in future. In Reception, the teacher is particularly good at reassuring young children about what they will do next. As a result, they are comfortable and at ease about their learning and acquire skills very effectively. For example, in the observed lessons, they were frequently encouraged to feel good about their achievements, which produced a warm and sympathetic attitude. In turn, it had the effect of building self-esteem and motivating children to enjoy their work. All adults are good role models. They treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This example fosters trusting relationships and helps develop awareness for the feelings and needs of others. As a result, children learn to co-operate and play together well. They are friendly towards each other and include each other in activities well. The range of resources to support this learning is good.

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

64. The quality of teaching is very good in the Nursery. Through careful planning, the teacher provides a wealth of worthwhile opportunities and resources, including the computer, to encourage writing to emerge, dialogue and new vocabulary. For example, on the computer, children develop the language of story telling by putting pictures on the screen into the correct order. In the case of a sinking ship, for example, a child said that the boat was "drowning". The teacher intervened skilfully with a series of questions that drew the distinction between the ideas of drowning and sinking. In Nursery and Reception classes, teachers use every opportunity to develop children's early reading skills. For example, they encourage children to match a selection of toys and objects such as a bus or model animal to letters on flashcards. In this way, understanding of initial sounds is developed thoroughly, helping children to recognise them. The teacher's engaging manner ensures willingness on the part of boys and girls equally to seek involvement in these activities. For example, on one occasion, when they were permitted to make their own choices, a language group consisted of all boys, who chose it ahead of more practical tasks on offer. They related very well to their teacher, who has a firm but warm and kind attitude, which ensures that the needs of young boys, as well as girls, are fully met in the class. As in the best of nursery and reception practice, an element of play constantly underpins learning activities. Children develop concentration, observation and memory well. For example, they play *What's on the Tray?* In this game, objects are removed from the tray and described, but not named. By listening to the description, children guess what is missing. In these and similarly innovative ways, they develop specific speaking and listening skills, in a relaxed and friendly manner. All adults play a good supportive role in children's learning. For example, the teaching assistant used puppets very well to tell the story of *The Gingerbread Man*. Her good expression and gesture increased the suspense as the tale unfolded. Children listened spellbound, joining in the repetitive refrains, encouraging the gingerbread man to run as fast as he could. They held their breath as they sensed the impending danger and empathised strongly with his sad demise!
65. In Reception, too, the quality of teaching is very good. Questioning is used very effectively to help children acquire understanding. For example, the teacher shared a big book of a traditional Russian folk tale. She asked the class about openings to fairy stories that they had heard before. As a result, children correctly identified "Once upon a time", "Long, long ago" and "Once, there lived a..." demonstrating clearly that they had understood the point and were developing good knowledge about the conventions of the genre. New vocabulary is developed well and strong teaching tests children's present understanding, challenging them to provide alternative words to those in the story. The teacher very skilfully directs children to look beyond the superficial meaning of what is read. For example, in a very good lesson, she asked what children thought was happening and why characters behaved in the ways that they did. This teaching helps them to

understand that stories often contain complex meanings, including characters' motives. All children knew that fairy tales often finish "They all lived happily ever after". The teacher extends children's experiences of language and communication through discussions, songs, poems, stories and role play. An adapted form of the National Literacy Strategy is also used. It prepares children well for the style of teaching that they will find in Year 1. Nearly all children are reaching what is described in the Early Learning Goals. They recognise simple words and are beginning to write them down. They recognise similar words in suitable texts, handle books carefully and speak confidently and clearly. Several children go beyond this level. They write full sentences, use capitals and full stops and are beginning to produce well-formed, legible handwriting. Work is often neat and well presented for young children of this age group. Children clearly take pride in their completed work and demonstrate enthusiasm when showing it to visitors and other adults. The few children of lower attainment are supported well and make good progress.

### **Communication in French**

66. The teaching of French begins in the Nursery class. It continues into Reception and then throughout the school. The children enjoy listening to French songs. For example, this activity made a strong contribution to creative development in the Nursery when they were invited to copy and join in. At this young age, very good teaching means that nearly all children understand the French for basic classroom instructions such as "sit down, please", "all stand" and "listen". Children listened to the teacher's pronunciation very well and made creditable attempts at repetition back. Their experiences within the lesson that was seen made a good contribution to their overall development in language and communication.

### **Mathematical development**

67. This area of learning is well taught. By the end of Reception, children have received a thorough introduction to mathematical ideas and developed skills that match what is laid down in the Early Learning Goals. In the Nursery, many children can count up to five and backwards again to zero. Nearly all of them achieve well, working towards *stepping stones* that reflect and sometimes exceed what is usual for their age and experience. They develop good understanding of uses of measurement across a range of practical activities involving sand and water. They use a wide range of standard and non-standard measuring vessels. The language of comparison, such as more, less, full, empty, half-empty, longer and shorter, is introduced at relevant moments. Very good teaching methods are used to develop understanding of these ideas. For example, children were observed rolling out pancakes of plastic dough, over printed and laminated templates. Teaching is often linked to other areas of learning. For example, when they made gingerbread men, they decorated them with square, round and triangular features, which they were taught to identify correctly and name.
68. In Reception, the teacher builds on previous work thoroughly. She plans interesting activities to help children develop deeper understanding and refine skills. What they will learn is clearly explained to children, which helps them to understand the point of what they are expected to do. Games and activities that are provided meet the requirements of *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* closely. Careful planning, based on good procedures for assessment, ensures that work matches the capabilities and needs of individual children closely. For example, the class toyshop is the focus for learning about money. Children were observed handling coins and shopping for toys. These toys were priced to help them develop their understanding of numbers up to ten, adding amounts together and saying how much two toys would cost. Several children were capable of higher attainment. These children were encouraged to work up to 20 pence. Good links with children's creative development developed skills in subtraction when they sang songs such as *Ten Flamingos standing in a Row*. They used their fingers to check as each bird disappeared in turn. The teacher often provided worksheets of good quality, which matched children's individual needs well, producing good levels of challenge and interest. Resources are good and are also well used. These items include a good range of counting, weighing and measuring equipment, as well as materials to support understanding of two-and three-dimensional shapes. A high proportion of children are currently meeting the Early Learning Goals and several exceed them. The relatively

few whose attainment does not yet meet the goals have been identified accurately and are supported well.

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

69. The quality of teaching and learning is good, both in the Nursery and the Reception classes. In the Nursery teachers provide a good range of resources and use them well. For example, strong and weak magnets were seen, together with metal objects. These objects included nuts and bolts, paper clips and tin lids for children to test with magnets. Good teaching included good questioning, which promoted scientific language. For example, during a well led discussion, “strength of the pulling force” was introduced and explained as “how well it sticks to the magnet”. Children knew that paper and plastic objects are not attracted. Another example of good provision in this area occurred when children made folded paper kites. They used a variety of decorative printing patterns to individualise them, which helped them to acquire skills of creative development at the same time. After testing for properties of flight, their own evaluations told them that they needed to redesign the tails to achieve more success. A few higher attaining children measured and lengthened them. On a daily basis, children were encouraged to talk about weather conditions. Again, language development featured very strongly in the teaching, so children learnt terminology such as “dull and cloudy”, which, perhaps unfortunately, featured rather strongly in their accurate observations. Early historical skills were developed well, focusing on the passage of time in their lives. For example, reports of their own activity from breakfast to bedtime were put on to a timeline. They were also shown how to identify features of the past from the direct experiences of their families. All of them showed interest in the stages of growth from babyhood to old age.
70. Earlier skills are developed well in Reception. For example, children successfully designed and made hand puppets from fabric. Good mathematical links were employed when they sewed, using a counting technique to ensure even stitches. Appliqué eyes and felt shapes were joined on to add features. Other work demonstrated that good teaching had encouraged useful evaluations of their own work. Children had recognised difficulties when attempting to combine and join clay, plastic, fabrics and wood. Good development of specific language occurred alongside investigation of forces. Differences and similarities between pushes and pulls were explored to build understanding of the scientific uses of these words. Many children also named parts of the body correctly and knew that young creatures, including babies must be cared for with food, rest and play. The school’s strong development of spiritual, moral and social thinking was evident when many children added “and love”. Teachers mark books regularly, using encouraging remarks for work well done.
71. In each of the classes, children are introduced to different uses of computers. They know how to click a mouse accurately on areas of the screen, indicating their answers to questions that programs generate. Adults show them how to control applications within programs such as, for example, how to make patterns or shapes and how to colour them.

## **Physical development**

72. The quality of teaching is very good in all classes. In both the morning and afternoon nurseries, children make very good progress in developing physical control, mobility and awareness of space. A safe, attractive outdoor area supports children’s running, jumping, balancing and co-ordination very well. Ample clambering and climbing equipment of good quality and a suitable number of large wheeled toys provide inviting challenges. Children use this equipment with considerable enjoyment. At the same time, they understand the need for good sense and safety, developing balance and steering skills with good levels of control and manoeuvrability. Teachers plan and intervene well to ensure that children experience the full variety of outdoor experiences. A session indoors in the hall is also available. Good links with other areas of learning are also planned. For example, a pit-stop depot, with hard-hats, provides good opportunities for role-play when children enact the repair and service of selected vehicles for each other’s use.
73. Children in Reception extend their repertoire of physical skills and continue to make rapid progress. At the time of the inspection, all of them had reached the Early Learning Goals for this area, demonstrating good basic co-ordination and balance. Very good teaching ensured that children listened carefully to instructions, discussed their work sensibly and made simple

adjustments in the style, speed and accuracy of their actions and exercises. In outdoor lessons, children worked in groups, pairs or alone, as required, with equal skill and relish. They were enthusiastic for any task that offered new challenges. Very good planning ensured that such challenges were provided. Good levels of hand and eye co-ordination were also evident when they used small equipment such as bats and balls and, during links with creative development, when they used tools and resources such as scissors and glue. Good opportunities for personal development are also linked to this area. For example, children are encouraged to co-operate and to work together when putting equipment away. They are told explicitly that they should do this task cheerfully, because everyone benefits from it.

### **Creative development**

74. The overall quality of teaching is good in this area and consequently children learn well. Good opportunities are planned and provided for drawing, painting and craftwork. All adults have good regard for well being, ensuring that children use scissors and implements safely. A range of methods to join things together are introduced, such as spreading glue and using sticky tape. Because of good teaching, children express themselves well artistically, using colour, texture and pattern in their work. Teachers plan for children to develop skills that are linked to other areas of learning when, for example, they print shapes in mathematical sequences, or match alternate shapes. Children join in songs, nursery rhymes and poems, with equal enthusiasm. They enjoy listening to music and then talking about it afterwards. Good scientific links are made when they explore how musical instruments make sounds. In Reception, children learn to listen, appraise, sing and improvise on instruments. Planning of these activities is good and leads to nearly all children meeting the Early Learning Goals. Children demonstrate this knowledge and understanding when they choose and play a variety of small percussion instruments, such as shakers, beaters, drums and clicking and ringing instruments. They play these instruments with developing levels of skill to accompany recordings, such as *Baby, Sleep my Little One*, which they know is a lullaby. Lower attaining children and those with English as an additional language make equally good progress as other children. They understand that illustrations can be used to convey meaning. They use illustrations well to extract meaning in other areas of learning, especially knowledge and understanding of the world, in which they look at pictures to acquire, for example, scientific and geographical facts and then record their own results and findings.

### **ENGLISH**

75. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above average towards the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. Overall attainment is now well above average at both age groups. Compared with their average starting points, achievement is therefore very good. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are making progress at similar rates to other pupils. These standards are confirmed in the results of National Curriculum tests, when those of the past few years are taken together. Year on year fluctuations occur, owing to differences in the characteristics of subsequent year groups, rather than to any differences in the quality of education in the school. The school has done very well to maintain its high standards from the previous inspection and, in some respects, has even improved upon them, for example, in improving the overall quality of teaching and learning.
76. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 indicated that nearly all pupils attained at least the expected level for their age in reading and writing. Furthermore, higher proportions than normally found exceeded this level. In reading, approaching half attained at a higher level. The 2001 tests of pupils in Year 6 showed above average percentages of pupils reaching the expected and higher than expected levels for their age. In comparison with similar schools, these figures were well above average. Provisional results for 2002 arrived in the school during the inspection and early indications suggest that results are better than in 2001 and that the school has exceeded its locally agreed targets.
77. Attainment in speaking and listening is often well above average. Pupils through the school, including those at the end of Year 2, talk about their work with confidence and enjoyment. They offer ideas and opinions in front of their classes whenever they are asked. They are good listeners,

providing a willing and sympathetic audience for others. By Year 6, most of them speak in clear accurate English, adjusting to a more formal pattern of speech when it is appropriate. Pupils are quick to respond to questions, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Pupils listen attentively to each other and to teachers, with good concentration. During discussions, they sometimes demonstrate techniques of attempting to carry their audience. Phrases such as “I think you might agree with this” and “I think it’s fairly obvious really” were employed to this effect. By the end of Year 6, pupils are discussing stories and poems with very good understanding of the complexities of structure. They point to examples of how writers use language to express humour, emotion and to pinpoint ideas of wide significance. In a very good lesson in Year 3 the teacher explicitly helped pupils to develop oral presentation. As a result, many pupils gave lively performances of humorous poems, often from memory, which showed a good understanding of the writers’ intentions.

78. Standards in reading are well above average throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those of a variety of ethnic groups, whether or not they are learning English as an additional language, are making good progress through all parts of the school. The cumulative effect of this progress results in very good achievement by pupils. Higher attaining pupils in all classes speak engagingly about books. They recall and predict events in the narrative, expressing opinions freely and offering examples to support their views. Very good teaching has clearly endowed nearly all these pupils with a strong enjoyment of reading and willingness to probe authors’ underlying intentions. From Year 1 onwards, pupils know about contents pages and older pupils use an index to find information in reference books.
79. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about different purposes for which writing is used. In Year 2, nearly all of them are now achieving well after a disrupted start to the year caused by instability in teaching. Attainment is now well above average. By the end of Year 6, pupils write confidently in a wide range of forms and styles that include stories, letters, biographies, summaries and accounts that set out to persuade others’ opinions. A particularly good example of the latter was seen in letters to *Friends of the Earth*, from pupils in Year 5. These letters expressed views on environmental issues, which showed lively concern and flexible uses of language. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. As a result, skills are developed well, according to age. In turn, pupils’ work shows good development in understanding of how to construct a sequence of events in a story as they move on through the school. Uses of an increasing range of vocabulary are also evident as pupils get older. Spelling and punctuation are usually good and handwriting is well formed and legible. Nearly all pupils grasp the basic skills of writing and many attain higher skills.
80. What is taught follows the National Literacy Strategy and the school’s related schemes of work. Pupils receive opportunities for drama through role play in lessons and in productions that are performed to parents. Literacy is used well in a range of other subjects. Pupils write factual accounts in, for example, history and geography and use sections with headings such as “My Prediction”, “What I did” and “Conclusions” to write up scientific experiments. Illustrations and sketches are also emphasised well as ways of complementing meaning. Opportunities to develop skills in word processing are provided in a range of situations, including factual writing in several subjects across the curriculum. The Internet also supports pupils’ skills of seeking information, when they use it to research ideas and particular facts.
81. Very good learning is the direct result of very good teaching. Teaching was at least good in all lessons, including a high proportion that was very good, with an excellent lesson in Year 2. Teachers are skilful in their use of resources, questioning, management of pupils and the development of speaking and listening skills. As a result, time is used well and the pace at which ideas are introduced, taught and practised, supports very thorough learning. In general, teachers accurately pitch the challenge for groups of differing capabilities. However, higher attainers are not always given tasks that allow them to exercise initiative in researching, drafting and redrafting their own work. Several examples of word processing were found and older pupils clearly understand how to choose apt fonts for their writing, how to use dictionary applications and how to load and save work in progress. Marking and assessment of pupils’ progress is regular and conscientious. Teachers’ comments in exercise books praise pupils’ achievements and encourage effort.

Individual targets are set, although pupils are not required to use them often enough; for example, to evaluate whether they are attaining their targets and what they could do to aid improvement on their own account. Nevertheless, procedures for assessment enable teachers to measure pupils' progress well. They use the information to plan carefully and to ensure that basic skills in reading and writing are acquired effectively.

82. The co-ordinator gives good leadership. She supports other teachers well in planning what is taught. Her monitoring of all classes each term helps to ensure consistent practice. It has contributed well to the development of very good teaching and thereby pupils' strong achievements. Resources are generally good and all pupils have access to fiction and non-fiction in their classrooms. The library contains a collection with much attractive new stock, as well as many books that are old and some that are outdated. The review and removal of the older stock from the library would make it easier to use and more inviting for the purpose of research and the teaching of related skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was described as well above average in Years 2 and 6. Teaching was good in classes for younger pupils and, overall, it was very good in Years 3 to 6. These high standards have generally been maintained and, if anything, teaching is now better still, as it is very good in both age groups. The results of National Curriculum tests, when the past few years are taken together, largely support these judgements. Furthermore, over the past few years, at the end of Years 2 and 6, the percentages of pupils who attain at a level higher than normally expected exceeds relevant national averages and averages of similar schools. The main reason for these strong performances is very good leadership and co-ordination and their impact on the quality of teaching. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore adjudged good.
84. By the end of Year 2, average attainment on entry has been brought up to levels that are well in excess of average. Teaching builds on prior learning and skills to very good effect, so nearly all pupils understand numbers of three digits. They add and subtract tens and units accurately and know many simple multiplication facts. In a well taught lesson, they demonstrated this skill well, using two, three, five and ten times table, and a few of them also knew parts of the four times table. This lesson effectively met the needs of pupils with different levels of understanding. Two or three lower attaining pupils were supported with plastic cubes that clicked together to help them with "...groups of three". By linking, for example, four of these "three's", they were able to count out the correct answer of 12. As different groups are catered for well, pupils of differing ethnicity, whether or not they speak English as an additional language and those of lower prior attainments make good progress. Pupils' work showed that nearly all of them knew the names of many different shapes and that they were beginning to understand the importance of properties, such as angles, sides and surfaces, for purposes of identification. They also use simple block graphs to present information. Their work takes good account of what has gone before. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 1, pupils counted the frequency of vowels in their own names and used this information to make block graphs. Some of the higher attaining pupils demonstrated that they could carry out most of the necessary tasks for this activity for themselves.
85. Work in Year 6 contributes further to the judgement that the overall quality of teaching is very good. It demonstrates carefully thought out steps to help pupils understand what is taught. Learning is therefore secure and of a high standard. As a result, pupils' books show that their achievement is often very good. Higher attainers understand the use of decimals up to three places and use them to record and calculate, using measurements such as " $1.032\text{m} + 5.38\text{m} = 6.412\text{m}$ ". Even more average and some lower attaining pupils use decimals that involve tenths and hundredths. Nearly all pupils understand the basic ideas of fractions and good teaching helps them to relate this knowledge to simple percentages. Higher attaining pupils work accurately with proportions and ratios. In work on shape and space, nearly all pupils use degrees to measure and construct angles. Pupils' books show that, earlier in the year, many of them already reached higher levels of attainment when they worked out the areas of irregular shapes by splitting them, then used simple formulae and added the separate answers together. Careful planning also helps

pupils to handle data effectively. They use histograms, tables, charts and line graphs to record and read information. Higher attaining pupils understand the differences and some of the uses of medians, means and modes. Another aspect of very good teaching was observed in an excellent Year 6 lesson. Letters of the alphabet were given numerical values and pupils investigated several problems. The teacher's ongoing use of assessment was outstanding. Each time a point was not fully understood, it was instantly realised. Thorough questioning and probing of what pupils knew was then tailored exactly to their needs. As a result, learning was made clear point by point. All pupils of whatever prior knowledge or background were thus involved and carried forward. This carefully constructed learning builds well through the older age group (Year 3 onwards). A mixture of good and very good teaching was observed in Years 3, 4 and 5. Good teaching in Year 5, for example, clarified difficulties that several pupils experienced in reading times off a rail timetable. The lack of colons in this document had thrown pupils' original understanding of how to read 24 hour, digital times. The teacher spotted this problem and adapted her teaching, so pupils were able to follow. In Year 4, another good lesson involved the addition of travelling time to a starting time, in order to calculate arrivals. Very good teaching in Year 3 led to pupils' clearer understanding of what fractions mean and can tell us. This lesson was very well organised to support the learning of groups with different prior knowledge. For example, higher attaining pupils were challenged to extend their learning by applying fractions to numbers and amounts of money. Average attainers worked on fractions that were represented by shaded parts of shapes, whereas lower attaining pupils developed their ideas of simple amounts such as one half or one quarter. A teaching assistant supported pupils with special educational needs well. All these groups made very good progress owing to this careful planning and consideration of their learning requirements.

86. Computer programs were observed in use in a number of classes. These usually supported mental arithmetic, setting questions for pupils to make a response. However, data handling programs and spreadsheets are also available and used. Teachers have planned and introduced the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. Examples of the use and teaching of numeracy skills were observed in other subjects. For example, accurate measurement was apparent in science and design and technology. Recording and reading results and information was seen in science and geography.
87. Very good teaching overall is helping pupils to enjoy the subject. Through the school, several were willing to state that it is one of their favourite subjects. Attitudes and behaviour were often very good in lessons. Pupils worked hard and showed interest in puzzles and challenges. This type of work also supports their personal development, building perseverance and encouraging them to see the value of teasing away at problems, rather than giving up. Of the lessons that were observed, half were very good and included an example of excellence. No lessons were less than good. This high quality occurs because teachers are confident and know the subject sufficiently well to adapt their teaching to pupils' learning needs as they arise. Questioning is always strong, leading pupils to make connections between points that are made and taught. Very good management of classrooms and firm but sensitive control of pupils contributes to very good behaviour, so time is spent productively on learning.
88. Co-ordination is effective and well managed. As a result, resources are replaced to a good level of sufficiency whenever necessary, so that learning needs are met well. Systems of assessment are strong enough to produce information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses, so what is taught can be adapted effectively to fill any identified gaps and to build on strong areas.

## **SCIENCE**

89. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is currently well above average in Year 6. The school has analysed its drop to above, rather than well above, average results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests. It identified that pupils with English as an additional language, who joined the class late in the year from abroad, were unable to cover enough of the National Curriculum to attain expected levels. Nevertheless, these pupils were able and made good progress. It is reasonable to assume, from inspection findings, that all pupils in the current year will attain the expected level for their age and that a significantly high proportion will attain a level higher than normally expected. Given that these pupils' overall attainment on entry to Year 1 was around



average, their achievements are very good. Differences in the attainment of girls and boys are insignificant. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

90. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a good knowledge of natural and physical science and they relate their knowledge to the world around them well. Pupils in Year 2 dismantle and re-assemble, simple artefacts, which are battery powered, such as torches. In this practical way, they find out about negative and positive orientations of cell-terminals. Teachers encourage pupils to make predictions about what might happen if batteries are placed in random order.

Pupils discuss sensibly, before testing their hypotheses, investigating various permutations of negative and positive positions. They write up findings neatly in their books and take pride in presentation. Because teachers plan well and provide a very good range of practical activities and equipment, pupils enjoy the challenges that the subject provides. The majority of them use good levels of illustration in their recording of investigations. Teachers use every opportunity to introduce and reinforce new technical vocabulary. They promote literacy skills well, including grammar and punctuation. Good teaching results in planned uses of computers to make simple bar charts, graphs and tables. An example showed how far model cars travelled down a ramp. Many pupils are beginning to understand simple implications of the principles of fair testing. They consider what needs to be static and how variables might alter outcomes. They use skills in numeracy well to measure heights of ramps carefully and to record distances of travel. All pupils, of whatever group or background, understand the importance of nutrition to the human body. They correctly identify and categorise foodstuffs as “dairy”, “cereals and bread”, “meat products” and “fruit and vegetables”. They also know about changes that occur in some materials because of changes in temperature, such as bread turning into toast and water becoming ice. Many pupils go further than this and correctly distinguish between changes that are permanent and others that are reversible.

91. By the time that they leave Year 6, pupils have developed a greater depth of understanding and capability in the subject. Because of the strong emphasis all teachers place on first hand, practical opportunities for learning, most pupils have very good investigative skills. They use appropriate subject specific vocabulary when making predictions. Standards of presentation are above average. Pupils present their work in a variety of ways, using computer generated graphs as well as tables drawn by hand, annotated drawings and diagrams. Again numeracy is applied effectively. Pupils use mathematical skills of estimation and measurement to carry out tests and observations. In addition to using reference books, pupils also make good use of the Internet, for example, to research aspects of the planetary system. Pupils in Year 5 successfully downloaded a photograph of the earth from space. This photograph supported their learning about the relative position of the earth in space. In Year 6, teaching builds on earlier learning well. For example, what pupils knew about simple electrical circuits was extended and refined into the uses of different types of circuitry and its characteristics. Teaching employed good levels of challenge that questioned pupils’ observations, making them think about implications. In this way, their problem solving capabilities were improved. As a direct result, pupils successfully worked out how to make three bulbs work in sequence to simulate the conventional pattern of traffic signals. They clearly built on their understanding of simple circuits and circuits in series and parallel. During this work, they related their knowledge to the reality of their classroom’s electricity supply, identifying it as a type of parallel wiring.
92. Pupils’ attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. They cooperate well, discuss sensibly, developing self-confidence and showing respect for each other’s work. Boys and girls are equally well motivated and make very good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special needs make good and, especially in older age groups, often very good progress throughout the school and they too develop good levels of self-esteem because of this.
93. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning well and their achievement is good and the overall quality of teaching in these classes is also adjudged good. However, during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson that was observed at this stage. Planning is clearly good and ensures that pupils’ tasks are appropriate to their learning requirements. In classes from Year 3 onwards, teaching was very good overall. Teachers’ knowledge of the subject is generally very

good and is often well linked to other subjects. In physical education, for example, pupils wrote down changes in their own pulse rates, after jumping on the spot, jogging and then resting again. Links of this type help pupils to remember what they have learnt as they provide practical applications of knowledge and skills. Teachers stress the importance and relevance of accurate measurements and the use of graphs and charts, which supports work in mathematics. The development of a good working vocabulary helps with literacy skills. Assessment is thorough; all teachers record pupils' progress and use the information gathered to match future activities appropriately to individuals and groups with different levels of previous understanding.

94. The subject is well led by its co-ordinator, whose own levels of subject knowledge are excellent. The clear subject policy and scheme of work are the result of modifications to two nationally recognised science schemes. These are skilfully merged and adapted to the required teaching in the National Curriculum and the particular needs of pupils at the school. This careful long-term planning provides a useful framework for teachers to apply in their classrooms. A very good range of readily available resources matches what is suggested for the teaching of this scheme. In this way, good management is facilitating high quality of teaching and learning. Appropriate use is made of the local area, visits to animal handling establishments and outdoor education centres.

## ART AND DESIGN

95. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in art and design was around nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, pupils' work was described as approaching colour, pattern and form imaginatively and included knowledge that artists communicate thoughts and ideas in their work, as well as simple reproductions of what they see. These judgements still hold now. However, the previous inspection placed this level of attainment in Year 6 as above expected levels, whereas it is more indicative of work in line with what is expected, which is the judgement that is made now. Despite the apparent discrepancy, the likelihood is that standards are similar now to those of the last inspection and that pupils' achievements are sound. For example, in Year 2, pupils collected naturally occurring objects, with an emphasis on shape, texture, line and colour and used them to create a collage for display. The completed work demonstrates good three-dimensional techniques of layering and folding. It builds well on the skills that are acquired in Year 1. These skills were evident in pupils' good colouring, using paint and crayon to reproduce different dwellings, such as lighthouses, stilt houses and several others. At the end of Year 6, pupils explore visual ideas carefully and use what they see in their own work. These skills were demonstrated when they looked carefully at ancient Greek designs on terracotta. They then imitated the shades faithfully with the use of paint, textiles, different cards and paper. Their large frieze retells the story of the minotaur.
96. Owing to timetabling pressures, no direct teaching was observed. However, aspects such as planning and the careful way in which pupils' work is presented suggest that the overall quality is good. Another strong feature is that what is displayed demonstrates clearly that new skills are introduced in ways that build well on what pupils have already experienced and learnt. For example, sketches in Year 4, attempting to produce correct proportions of the human face, are developed in Year 5, when portraits in the Tudor style of Holbein are attempted. This work meets expected levels for the age group well. Nearly all pupils made good choices of colour that demonstrate use of gathered information about what was available to the original artist. Strong historical links are evident in this work. Other links are the use of Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World* as a focus for spiritual reflection in Year 4 and the frieze in Year 3, depicting a tropical rain forest. The latter shows that visual information has been collected and discussed well, prior to commencement of the work. As a result, the characteristic richness of shades of green and the shapes and shadows of leaves and branches have been captured effectively.
97. Computer generated art is used to enhance the techniques that are available to pupils. Again, provision has been thought out carefully, so more complex work can be developed as pupils move through the school. Programs such as *Artwizard* are used in the younger age groups and *Colour Magic* and *Clipart* are used further on. A display in the hall shows that pupils use these programs

with increasing skill and imagination. New technology, including digital photography is also available, although it was not observed in use.

98. The co-ordinator is new to her post, but has good ideas for future developments. These ideas include two important features. First, the possible exploration of expertise amongst parents that might be used in lessons to promote particular skills. Secondly, further development of procedures for assessment, focusing on pupils' portfolios, so that information about what individual pupils need to do to progress is better understood.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are well above average, which represent very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils experience a wide variety of appropriate materials to support their designing, making and technological activities.
100. By the end of Year 2, they use simple measuring, cutting and joining tools, such as scissors, staplers and rulers, correctly and safely. They employ a good range of joining techniques, such as adhesives, sewing, sticky tape and various clips to construct prototypes of models and products. Good teaching encourages pupils to use very good technical vocabulary for their age. They use it to discuss their work and that of others. They understand the importance of evaluating ideas, testing out joins and mechanisms for strength and outcome and amending them in the light of trial and error. By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils understand the need for good research into designs. For example, they used the Internet well to study moveable, temporary buildings such as teepees from the North American plains. They considered igloos and a variety of timber lodges, using sawn logs and already twisted living branches. They used these ideas as a basis for their own designs. They adapted them well to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, using glass, plastics and other manufactured materials and employed a good range of very effective craft skills to support their designing and technological innovations. A strong feature of pupils' completed work is the wide variety of their individual and original products that demonstrates very good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and boys and girls show no discernable differences in the quality of their work. High levels of personal development, including involvement and commitment to the subject are therefore evident.
101. The school's scheme employs a simple but effective "design, make and evaluate" pattern of working throughout, which provides a distinctive methodology for this subject. Teachers plan very effectively, building upon pupils' prior experience, in a step-by-step manner. For example, in Year 2, planned activities progress from two dimensional work, requiring paper and card, to three-dimensional models. These models use a good range of more robust materials. As pupils progress through the school, they are challenged to solve more complex problems with each new project. They explore suitable rods, axles and handles to create lifting mechanisms, when designing and making automata (moving toys). By Year 4, after a visit to the Science Museum that stimulated the idea of making alarm systems, pupils combined their scientific knowledge into their designs. They successfully incorporated electric circuitry beneath pressure pads to trigger lighting systems and buzzers. In Year 5, in response to their teacher's well-planned activities, pupils explored a wide range of cams and gears, investigating shapes that produce specific rotary, pop-up or rolling movements.
102. It is evident from the consistently high quality of models and products that the overall quality of teaching is very good. However, in lessons that were observed, teaching was a mix of satisfactory and good. Nevertheless, it is clear that, over time, pupils learn very effectively. This high quality is based on very thoughtful planning and preparation of projects, which ensures all pupils build upon appropriate levels of past success, when tackling increasingly complex challenges. What is taught covers all aspects of the National Curriculum in considerable depth, so pupils work on food projects as well as construction.

103. The coordinator has a very good overview of how the subject has developed through the school. The process of monitoring the quality of learning and what has been taught is well established. As a result, teachers are confident themselves in the techniques of the subject and therefore have high expectations of what pupils can do.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

104. In Years 1 and 2, history and geography are taught jointly. Further up the school, no lessons in geography were timetabled, as the subject alternates with history in a rolling programme. The two subjects are therefore being reported together, as this arrangement reflects the position in the school.
105. At the last inspection the attainment of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 was judged to be above national expectations in both subjects. On the evidence of this inspection, work is in line with national expectations in geography although, in history, it remains above expectations at the end of Year 6. The main reason that standards are not as high as previously is that less time is available to develop skills to those levels than was the case four years ago. This judgement reflects the emphasis that has been placed on literacy and numeracy at a national level, with less time available for other subjects. Nevertheless, teachers use what time is available well and what is taught meets what is required in the National Curriculum,
106. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught history and geography jointly. In Year 2 the current topic is the seaside. Pupils know how to use an atlas to mark place names on a map of Britain. They identify historical differences between the present and the past by looking at photographs and some pupils notice geographical differences that they sort into human and physical features. In the observed lesson, which showed good teaching, pupils listened with interest to a visitor who described his memories of the seaside from the 1920s. Pupils asked sensible questions that they had already prepared. These pupils are meeting expected levels of attainment through this experience of the passage of time within living memory.
107. Both historical and geographical vocabulary is emphasised well, based on good links with pupils' use of literacy. As a result, attainment in this feature is strong. In Year 3, for example, pupils drew on geographical knowledge about the rain forest, when they studied a contrasting locality from that surrounding the school. They knew specialist terms such as "canopy", "under-storey", "forest floor" and "river bank". Information and communication technology employing computer graphics was used well to generate pictures, illustrating several key features of rain forests that affect how people live in such regions. Pupils' work in history showed reasonable knowledge of the Vikings and of the period of their settlement of parts of Britain.
108. In Years 4 and 5, pupils showed good factual knowledge of aspects of Greek drama and of the Egyptians' belief in the after life. Good teaching had showed them how to extract relevant details from information sheets and from reference books and to combine it to answer questions. With the use of such facts, pupils are beginning to describe characteristics of past societies. Geographically, they know several features of rivers and the part that they play in the water cycle. All pupils are involved in similar work, which is adapted to provide an appropriate level of challenge for those with special educational needs and for those from ethnic groups whose understanding of English is still restricted. However, some of the reference texts and worksheets are not sufficiently challenging for more able pupils to develop higher levels of research skills. As a result, they do not develop either their knowledge about past societies or geographical skills to a level as consistently high as might otherwise be the case.
109. At present, in Year 6, pupils are studying World War II and the impact of the blitz in the area around the school. Nearly all pupils know many facts about air raids and the precautionary measures taken to combat them. The teacher aroused pupils' interest by simulating the sounds of a mock air raid and pupils' reactions showed commendable understanding of how to react. Furthermore, they used map-reading skills well in identifying local streets that suffered bombing

and picked out likely targets for bombers, such as transport facilities, factories and power supplies. In these particular aspects, pupils' level of understanding is good.

110. The overall quality of teaching in these subjects is good. In lessons, both satisfactory and very good teaching was observed. Teachers' planning is generally thorough and ensures very effective ways of making history relevant and exciting. It is for these reasons that standards reach the expected levels that they do, despite the shortage of time that is allocated to them. Pupils often study genuine artefacts and real historical evidence such as portraits of famous people. Second hand evidence, such as photographs of historical sites, is also used well. Occasionally pupils enact little plays in class to depict historical events. They visit museums and receive opportunities to question visitors. As a result of these good methods and approaches, pupils show a lively interest. They have good knowledge about aspects of the lives of people in the periods studied.
111. In the context of the school's alternating history and geography schemes, records of assessment and, as a consequence, planning do not sufficiently identify skills of investigation and interpretation that are common to both subjects. As a result, it is difficult to track progress in these skills and to build on them continuously, irrespective of the factual base of the subject that is currently being taught.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. Standards are consistently good through the school and are above what is normally found in Years 2 and 6, which is an improvement since the last inspection when they were only average in Year 2. Developments in electronic technology and software since then have raised expectations of what should be available for pupils. In the light of this rapid change, the school has invested wisely in resources. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator and headteacher are aware that this situation is unlikely to be any different in future, so to keep pace resources will continue to need constant review and replacement. Commitment to achieve this development and the capacity to succeed with it are strong.
113. By the end of Year 2, pupils enter their own text, change fonts and sizes of text and make grammatical and spelling corrections with a checker. They introduce decorative borders and cut and paste graphics from an art program. Work in pupils' books, displays and discussions with them provide ample evidence that they use computers to gain basic skills such as use of the keyboard and mouse, but also to develop and reinforce applications in programs that help with learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 successfully generate simple bar charts. These charts display the comparative popularity of favourite foods such as crisps, pizza, chocolate and ice cream, helping them to reinforce understanding of mathematical data-handling.
114. By the time that pupils leave the school in Year 6, they have refined their practical skills in the subject and developed a range of ways to use computers to support their learning. Pupils in Year 3 use *Wordart* when writing about Christian celebrations, supporting their understanding of religious education. Their skills are good. They know how to click on buttons to control software, switching from one application to another and also combining them. They wrote about what Easter means to them using acrostic poems. Pupils present their ideas well in word-processed form, which they enhance by choosing appropriate fonts and sizes. Pupils in Year 4 use the Internet to explore how people of other faiths celebrate significant events, such as the Hindu festival of Diwali. They import illustrations into their own word-processed work, adding meaning to writing about a young Jewish boy celebrating his bar mitzvah, depicting him reading a passage from the Torah. Pupils in Year 5 explore the Internet to find information on cultural events such as the Notting Hill carnival and Mardi Gras in Rio de Janeiro. Pupils in Year 6 download their own digitally generated photographs into a word document. They confidently add speech bubbles, using applications in *autoshapes* to express dialogue. They also understand how to send e-mail with confidence, including how to use the scanner in conjunction with their messages, saving the need to word process. Boys and girls make equally good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language enjoy the subject and make good progress. All pupils receive appropriate

support and teachers set tasks that challenge them appropriately. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated. They value each other's efforts and handle computers and other equipment with care and respect.

115. The overall quality of teaching is good through the school, an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers plan effectively to promote pupils' capabilities. Their tight and careful planning, which focuses on skills and understanding, is essential, particularly in light of the school's lack of a computer suite. Without this careful planning, such a deficiency would have the potential to inhibit learning. However, the co-ordinator manages the subject very well, so staff are confident and adept at finding solutions. For example, a recently introduced projector enables pupils, wherever they sit in their classrooms, to see what is happening when new programs or skills are introduced.
116. The co-ordinator has very good levels of subject knowledge and expertise. She shows a clear understanding of what might be done to develop the subject further, such as the need for technical support, so teaching time is not lost when equipment breaks down. She has been instrumental in implementing recent initiatives to take the subject forward and in ameliorating the school's lack of space to develop a dedicated computer room. The subject policy is well written with clear aims and objectives and states what pupils should do to ensure progress. What is taught fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and is relevant to pupils' needs.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

117. Pupils in all classes are taught French for one session a week. The aim is to introduce pupils to an understanding of simple spoken French and to teach them to reply within familiar contexts of daily life. A considerable emphasis also exists on teaching them to copy written French accurately and, in older classes, to grasp key grammatical ideas such as the masculine and feminine gender of nouns and of how to alter adjectives to match. Pupils make good progress towards these aims across the school and many express enjoyment of learning another language. The teaching is lively and disciplined, with many opportunities for pupils to learn about French culture. For example, several traditional songs are introduced, although insufficient time is sometimes allowed to ensure understanding of the words.
118. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made very good progress in understanding familiar spoken language. They apply their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar with accuracy in writing simple sentences and phrases. Their speaking demonstrates that pronunciation is very accurate, mainly because teaching is very good and is undertaken by a natural speaker of the language. By the end of Year 6, many pupils attain levels that are normally expected at the start of Year 8 in secondary schools and a few are beyond even this level.
119. The overall quality of teaching is very good because it is well planned and methodical. The teacher's knowledge of the subject, as a natural French speaker, is clearly very good and provides an excellent model for pronunciation. Resources are used well. A good example occurred in Year 4. The teacher used photographs of objects and introduced relevant French vocabulary. Pupils repeated back, capturing the sound of the language well. This learning was reinforced well by playing a game that matched the photographs with their French noun. This type of work is built on effectively. In Year 5, pupils responded very well to the teacher's lively manner, listening carefully and replying to simple questions about food with simple phrases of their own.
120. The same teacher teaches the subject through the school. As a result, she knows pupils' prior experiences well and uses this information to plan what comes next. She uses various good methods that are relevant to pupils' stages of development and understanding as they advance in the subject.

### **MUSIC**

121. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in music was in line with what was expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. In the current inspection, overall attainment remains in line, although taped performances in Years 4 and 6 provide examples of singing and composing that are above these levels. In the last inspection, although good attitudes to the subject were reported, pupils lacked confidence when singing. This feature has clearly improved and singing in assemblies, for example, is now accurate and tuneful and, what pupils in different age groups were rehearsing in preparation for a performance to parents, demonstrated plenty of attack and commitment. During lessons, opportunities are provided for pupils to listen to recorded music and to analyse its structure and effects. For example, pupils in Year 6 used Steve Wright's *Travelling Trains* and based compositions of their own on some of the ideas that they discussed. Pupils also talk about each other's work sensitively with a view to improving it.
122. It was not possible to observe any visiting instrumental teachers. However, class teaching was observed, in Years 1 and 6 and this teaching was satisfactory. The quality of pupils' performances in singing and their good learning, which is evident from the standards of composing and performing in, for example, Years 4 and 6, suggests that the overall quality of teaching is at least good. For example, Year 6 pupils' recordings contained work of high quality.

Songs with complex syncopated rhythms, including different groups taking the lead on refrains and echoes were sung very competently. *Boom-cha-cha (Walking down the Street)* was performed with particular relish and aplomb. The vocalists achieved laudable clarity of diction, handling difficult rhythms and sudden changes of pattern and volume with excellent timing, while instrumentalists gave strong percussive support that remained controlled and accurate throughout. Teaching was not better than satisfactory in the observed lessons because time was not used well enough. The teacher appeared nervous and the flow of the lessons was lost as new tasks were introduced, or after teaching points were made. In the younger class, pupils became fidgety and had to be reminded about their behaviour. By contrast, pupils in Year 6 behaved very well and waited patiently, co-operating sensibly throughout. The use of new technology, including an electronic keyboard with a memory facility, was evident in some pupils' recorded compositions. This work was of good quality, using the keyboard to reproduce repeating patterns of notes, to which pupils added their own percussion or vocal lines.

123. The teacher has good subject knowledge and, by comparing the work of Year 4 with that of Year 6, it is clear that skills are developed well, building on what has gone before. For example, a performance of *Red and Yellow Canoe* showed how an emphasis on rhythm and pulse is already beginning to emerge in the work of the younger age group. This work also provided good cultural links, with its African style. Music contributes well to the life of the school. Performances are rehearsed for parents and singing in assemblies is of good quality, enhancing the spiritual content of these occasions. A very good feature is that live music is often performed as pupils enter and leave the hall. For example, a recorder group played *Ode to Joy* at the beginning and end of an assembly that was led by Year 3. Their performance demonstrated good technical awareness of breath control and phrasing for their age. During the assembly, Year 3 included *Magic Journey* and *Eive*, an African clicking song.
124. The same teacher teaches the subject through the school, so takes responsibility for planning and co-ordinating what is taught in all classes. She combines ideas from a range of schemes well and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum effectively.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above what are normally expected and they are well above at the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievements are very good, based on the cumulative effects of good progress throughout the school. Strong improvement is evident since the last inspection. At the end of Year 2, many pupils have good co-ordination and control of basic skills and actions and are already beginning to use tactical approaches in games. By Year 6, they choose and combine appropriate skills into sequences of actions in a range of different sports and situations. They

understand the need to hone performances through practice and repetition. Furthermore, these judgements apply to all groups of pupils.

126. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 are offered a wide range of physical activities, including gymnastics, dance and outdoor games. They also benefit from coaching in tennis, provided through the local education authority, in the summer term. All teachers ensure that pupils warm up at the start of lessons. Pupils are taught about the benefits of exercise to their mental well being as well as to their physical fitness. Imaginative teaching was observed in gymnastics in Year 2. This lesson linked pupils' work to pictures of clowns and jugglers that were previously used as part of a class topic. Pupils developed a collection of clown-like actions into a series of movements, refining their repertoire after watching each other's performances. Nearly all pupils knew facts related to the importance of cooling down at the end of lessons and spoke sensibly about their changing heart beats. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they have developed their skills well. A wider, stronger and more competitive range of physical capabilities and understanding emerges. Nearly all of them swim 25 metres and a very high proportion reaches a good level for their age in the *Water Skills* test of the Amateur Swimming Association. In lessons, pupils in Year 6 experience very well structured and tightly focused activities, designed to extend each individual pupil's strength, stamina and ability. Teachers use two nationally recognised schemes of work that are adapted well to ensure step-by-step development of skills. As a result, pupils are always working within their own capacity, so self-confidence and esteem are preserved alongside their growing prowess. This system clearly works well, as nearly all pupils seem to enjoy what they do and high standards are produced.
127. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and it contains very good elements. Class teaching is further enhanced with the use of visiting coaches in sports such as tennis and football. Resources are plentiful and used well. In a hockey lesson in Year 4, for example, pupils listened carefully to a brief outline of what they needed to do. They warmed up and moved into the activity quickly and, as a result, little time was lost. Pupils then had a ball and stick each. Knowledgeable instructions and this level of resources meant that skills in controlling the ball were well developed as pupils dribbled through a slalom. Attitudes to the subject are very positive. Girls and boys make equally good progress, as do pupils with special educational needs. Higher attainers are well provided for in lessons and the wide range of after-school sports, which the school provides, helps them to develop further. The school takes part in inter-school competitions for rounders, athletics, football, netball and tag rugby. The trophy cabinet bears witness to high standards. All classes benefit from the tennis coaching on a rotational basis. Older pupils visit a residential, outdoor activities centre in Somerset, where they sample outdoor pursuits and are offered "starter courses" in sports such as fencing, with specialist coaches.
128. The co-ordinator for the subject is a very good role model for pupils and teachers, because of his personal enthusiasm and commitment. He attends various local association meetings and has a very clear vision for further developments. His knowledge is such that he is able to offer an advisory role to the staff and monitors the quality of teaching and learning effectively. Very thorough assessments of pupils' achievements are kept.