

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC
VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stockton on Tees

LEA area: Stockton-on-Tees

Unique reference number: 111684

Headteacher: Mrs A M Benfield

Reporting inspector: Andrew Clark
21596

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th May 2003

Inspection number: 255088

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior school |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Ragworth Road Norton Stockton-on-Tees |
| Postcode: | TS20 1HR |
| Telephone number: | 01642 397356 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Peter Walker |
| Date of previous inspection: | June 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 21596 | Andrew Clark | Registered inspector | Music; foundation stage curriculum; English as an additional language | What sort of school is it? How high are standards. 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? |
| 19443 | Nancy Walker | Lay inspector | | The pupils' attitudes and values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 21585 | Tony Kingston | Team inspector | Science; information and communication technology; physical education; educational inclusion | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 32165 | Christine Barsby | Team inspector | Mathematics; art and design; design and technology | |
| 2893 | John Manning | Team inspector | English; geography; history; special educational needs | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic Primary School serving the area of Norton in Stockton on Tees. The school is larger than average with 284 boys and girls on roll and a further 52 children who attend the nursery part-time. Almost all the pupils are from white British families. A very small percentage of pupils speak English as an additional language. The majority live locally in an area of mixed private housing and rented accommodation. Approximately 14 per cent of pupils are eligible for a free school meal which is broadly average. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, 15 percent, is also average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The pupils have a wide range of special educational needs including learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities. The children's attainment when they start school is typical for their age. Over the last two years there has been a large turn over in staff as a result of promotion and retirement.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with very good features. Pupils achieve well in many subjects and standards in English and mathematics are sound. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good and the school is very well led and managed. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The children get a very good start to their education in the foundation unit. (nursery and reception classes)
- Pupils write with clarity and fluency in many subjects
- The school is successful in encouraging boys to achieve well
- Standards in art and design are excellent
- Pupils are mature and responsible because of the very good provision made for their personal development
- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, senior staff and governing body. The aims and values of the school are very clear to all the school community and guide improvement well

What could be improved

- The pupils' ability to correct their own spellings
- Pupils' ability to perform division and subtraction sums efficiently

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in June 1997. Standards have improved and the quality of teaching is much better. The pupils now present their work very neatly and write well for many different reasons. The aims of the school are now very apparent and form the basis for all the school's work. The monitoring of teaching and learning is effective and teachers' subject knowledge is good.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 |
| English | B | A | C | D |
| mathematics | D | B | D | E |
| science | C | A | C | B |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

Since the last inspection standards in English by Year 6 have largely been above average and pupils have achieved well. Test results were lower in 2002 although the majority of pupils achieved the level expected for their age. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels was also similar to the national average. Almost 30 per cent of the pupils taking the tests in 2002 had special educational needs and a significant number of those did not arrive in the school until well into the juniors. The results for mathematics have varied a lot from year to year. The overall trend of improvement in test results for the last five years for English and mathematics has been similar to the national one. Standards in science have also varied from year to year, but average and above average ability pupils have often attained above the national average. In the Year 2 tests, pupils have often attained results above the average in reading and writing. The standards in mathematics have been more variable, as in the juniors. In 2002 they were below average because not many pupils attained the higher levels. Despite the variations in test results, most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in English and mathematics as they go through the school. The boys make better progress than they do nationally because the work is skilfully tailored to their needs. Pupils with special educational needs also make suitable progress because of the good provision made for them.

In the work seen, pupils' speaking and listening and reading skills are good throughout the school. A particular strength in the pupils' writing is their ability to write for many different reasons with a clear purpose and appropriate style. However, the pupils, especially the less able, are not accurate enough in their spelling. In mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills are generally sound and they apply them well to solving problems. They are not as good at calculating division and subtraction as they are at addition and multiplication. Pupils have good investigative skills in science and apply their knowledge well. Standards in information and communication technology are at nationally expected levels and this is a good improvement from the last inspection. Standards in art are excellent throughout the school with pupils' knowledge, technical skills and application being very good. Pupils' work in music is good particularly singing. Standards are above average in history and geography and design and technology. In physical education standards are average.

By the time children leave the reception class the majority attain the goals expected for their age and many are working above these levels. Their progress, particularly in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development and creative development is often very good.

The school has a robust process of target setting based on the pupils' earlier learning and they are on course to achieve them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils are eager to learn and take a pride in their work. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. Pupils are courteous and considerate of each other. A small group of boys in the infants find it difficult to concentrate and can be fussy. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities to take responsibility, for example, through the school council. They show a mature understanding of the physical or learning needs of other pupils. |
| Attendance | This is above average. Pupils are punctual and ready for work. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Nursery and Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Very good | Good | Good |

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. This is a good improvement from the last inspection. Lessons are very well planned and work is carefully set to challenge pupils in most lessons. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. The teaching of literacy is good, but pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to find and correct their own spellings. The teaching of numeracy is also good although there is not enough emphasis given to division. In the majority of lessons, work provides challenge to pupils of all abilities and those with special educational needs are given good support. The teaching of information and communication technology is sound. The pace of most lessons is good and pupils motivated and interested. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good overall, although that of a few infant pupils is not dealt with firmly enough. Teachers often use imaginative techniques such as role-play and 'hot seating'. This has a positive impact on the pupils' confidence and eagerness to learn. The teaching in the foundation stage is very good because the range and quality of activities throughout the day are accurately based on the children's needs. Pupils' work hard during their lessons and persevere with challenging tasks. The use of homework is often good particularly in science.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Very good. There are good links between subjects which helps their learning, for example in writing. Activities are often practical and stimulating. The work is often well matched to boys' needs because it is creative and focused on factual information. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Pupils' needs are identified early and individual education plans provide clear guidance for making good progress. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good. The very small percentage of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because of strong support at an early stage and close monitoring of progress. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. The whole ethos of the school is one of stimulating and motivating the pupils in every aspect of their lives. There are many opportunities for reflection and pupils are clearly taught right from wrong. The school council provides real responsibilities for pupils. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Very good. The pupils' daily welfare is well managed. The procedures to measure and record personal and academic achievement make a good contribution to their learning. |

The parents have positive views of the school and contribute well to children's learning. The curriculum is imaginatively planned to link different subjects which motivates pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher places a strong emphasis on the professional development of all staff and this leads to a strong and purposeful team. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Very good. The governing body works closely to support the staff by ensuring policies are in place to manage change and improvement well. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good. The school makes regular and accurate analysis of test and other data. They also poll the view of parents and pupils when planning for school improvement. The school applies principles of best value very well. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good. The school is extremely thorough in assessing its needs and ensuring that it gives the best value. This is very evident in the development of the new nursery and other building work. |

The accommodation is good and used very well to support specialist teaching in English and music. Staffing levels are good and the teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. The Chair of Governors is very helpful to the school through his management experience and strong commitment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school • The children make good progress • They become mature and responsible • The quality of teaching is good | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for parents • Activities for children after school |

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. They largely disagree with the parents' concerns. The information for parents, especially about their children's learning and progress, is better than that often seen. It is regular and precise. There are many learning opportunities both within the school day and after school which enrich the children's learning. However, most of these are for older pupils and the team would suggest that the school considers opportunities for infant pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 In the most recent national tests in 2002 standards were similar to the national average for English and science by Year 6 and below average for mathematics. The results in 2002 are not typical of the standards that the school normally achieves. For example over the previous three years the school's results for pupils aged eleven improved each year and in 2001 standards had been well above the national average. There were special circumstances that adversely affected the school's results in 2002. There were a large number of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 class. Also their progress was impeded in Year 5 because of several staff changes. The results were below those for similar schools and well below for mathematics. The trend in the school's average national curriculum points for all core subjects was broadly in line with the national trend. The work observed indicates that standards are high enough and well placed to improve well.
- 2 In 2002 the standards in Year 2 were above average in reading and writing. There has been a good trend of improvement. The results in the infants have been variable over the past five years because of the differences in the basic skills that pupils have when they start school.
- 3 In both the infants and juniors standards in mathematics have varied considerably from year to year. This seems to reflect both the pupils' ability when they start school and the development of the teaching of mathematics. There has recently been a change in the leadership of the subject and the action plan in place and the quality of teaching and learning seen indicate that weaknesses have been addressed and standards are more secure.
- 4 A strength of the school is its systematic analysis of the pupils' attainments in each year group. Key areas for improvement are identified and worked towards. These issues are fully explained and action is taken to address each issue. The outcome is that the whole school is fully aware of the issues and committed to raising standards. The school sets challenging targets based on the pupils' previous attainment. It assesses pupils on a regular basis to ensure that the right amount of progress is being made. It is implementing specific strategies to stretch higher attaining pupils to ensure that they reach the higher levels in the national tests.
- 5 Currently the pupils' work in English is in line with the national expectation. By year 2 pupils are reading fluently and with good expression. The Year 6 pupils are independent readers with an interest in a wide range of books. Pupils are developing good writing skills and write effectively for a number of purposes such as letters, stories and instructions. However the standards of spelling are not always high enough especially for the less able pupils who do not have strategies for independently correcting their own spellings.
- 6 The pupils' work in mathematics is in line with the national expectation. The pupils are skilful at addition and multiplication but not as good at subtraction and division. They are learning how to solve word problems effectively.
- 7 Currently the pupils' work in science is above the national expectation. The pupils are particularly good at conducting experiments and using their knowledge and understanding.
- 8 Standards in information and communication technology are average and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school's investment in resources and staff development has resulted in the teaching of the subject being sound and pupils working enthusiastically and confidently. There is still room for a greater use of computers in other subjects.

- 9 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The school is effective in identifying pupils with special educational needs at an early stage to make sure that they receive help as soon as possible. Teachers write clear individual plans for pupils who then make good progress in the targets that are set. They are involved in all aspects of the curriculum and receive extra help from classroom assistants.
- 10 Pupils achieve well in all subjects. In art and design standards are very high because of the very good leadership and the stimulating activities that pupils undertake. In history, geography, design and technology and music, standards are above average because of good planning and the use of specialist staff. Standards in physical education are average.
- 11 The attainment of boys is often higher than the average expected for boys. This is because the school has invested heavily in reviewing the curriculum to make subjects more practical and with a focus on non-fiction. This seems to appeal to the boys and has led to good success in tests and assessments. The school has made very good use of the support and funding from the Education Action Zone in this. There is no evidence that the girls are not also doing well over time.
- 12 Children make very good progress through the nursery and reception classes and achieve well. This is a direct result of close teamwork, well developed long and short-term planning and very good teaching. The majority of children in the present reception class are working at, and often above, the levels expected for their age. Standards are particularly good in personal and social development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics and creative development. They are at least sound for knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Progress through both the nursery and reception classes is at least good and often better.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 13 Standards in pupils' attitudes, values and personal development have improved since the last inspection and are now very good indeed and a significant feature of the school. As a result, the school is a very calm and orderly environment where everyone is very well respected and pupils can learn. The children make a very good start in the nursery and reception class. They learn to be very independent in choosing the activities they wish to do and persisting with their work for long periods. They are good at sharing and working with other children because of the many opportunities created especially on the 'Foundation' day when nursery and reception pupils work together.
- 14 Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and their learning. Parents confirm that their children are happy to come to school. They arrive on time and they settle very quickly in lessons both at the start of the day and after break and lunch times. They consistently achieve attendance levels above those found in other primary schools across the country. The vast majority, and particularly those in the junior classes, listen very carefully to their teachers and are clearly very keen to learn. There is, however, some minor inattention at times in younger classes, particularly when teachers are more lenient in their expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The vast majority of pupils throughout the school play a full part in discussions and activities and they consistently produce a good amount of quality work. They take care in how they present their work and are proud to show and talk about it to adults.
- 15 Standards of behaviour throughout the school are very good. Pupils are very polite and well mannered towards each other and towards adults. They know the school rules and what is expected of them and they follow instructions promptly. The school has had no cause to exclude any pupil, even on a short term basis, over at least the past six years.

- 16 Relationships are also very good. Pupils respond very well to the examples that all adults in school set and so there is a very high level of mutual respect balanced with appropriate friendship. Pupils like their teachers and say they are one of the main reasons why they like their school. Pupils also like each other and are clearly happy in each other's company. They work very well together in lessons sharing ideas and equipment and they are particularly supportive of one another. For example, when a pupil struggled to write clearly on a projection screen, fellow pupils were very patient with several commenting that they too had found it difficult to manage. At break and lunchtimes pupils play and socialise very well together in the ample and attractive grounds and make few demands on adult supervisors.
- 17 Pupils develop well as individuals and parents appreciate the part the school plays in this. Pupils display high levels of confidence and self-esteem and so they are prepared to try new experiences and take advantage of what is on offer to them in school. Even the youngest pupils are independent and organise their belongings very well but opportunities for older pupils to engage in independent learning, such as research, are limited and consequently they do not always use their initiative to best advantage in lessons. Nevertheless, when they are entrusted with specific responsibility, they are keen and sensible in carrying out their duties. For example, pupils in Year 6 help in the dining hall and they are so good at the job it is not immediately obvious to visitors that they are still children. They have been sensible in the changes they have implemented through the pupil school council, for example, pupils themselves have been responsible for introducing fruit as a snack at break time, and being able to sit together in their own chosen groups at lunchtime regardless of whether they have a packed or school lunch. Pupils also have a very well developed sense of fairness and justice and Year 5 pupils demonstrated this in an English lesson when they discussed civil war and the part politics may play.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 18 The quality of teaching is good and is making a significant impact on the behaviour of the pupils, their attitudes to learning and the standards of the work that they achieve. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Some of the teaching is excellent or very good and inspires the pupils to try their hardest and creates a desire in them to want to learn more. The teachers work well as a team and give each other support by sharing their expertise in the subjects for which they are responsible. A significant proportion of the teachers are new to the school but the effective procedures for welcoming and supporting new staff and the high priority given to professional development means there are good levels of consistency in the teaching.
- 19 Where teaching is least effective it is because there is a lack of clarity about what the pupils are to learn and the pupils become confused about what they are expected to do. The marking of pupils' work is variable and needs to be more consistent if all pupils are to benefit from the best practice. Where marking is of high quality pupils are given detailed written and oral feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of their work and what they need to do to improve. However, in a minority of cases, pupils' work is merely ticked and no advice is given as to how they can do better. In a small minority of lessons in the infants the management of pupils' behaviour is not good enough and this reduces the pace of teaching and the overall effectiveness of the lessons.
- 20 Teaching for children aged five and under in the nursery and reception classes is very good. This is because of the thorough planning of activities and many opportunities provided for imaginative and creative play. The teachers and support staff work extremely well as a team.
- 21 Teaching has improved in a number of important areas. The systems for planning what is to be taught are good. Teachers are very clear what the objectives of the lesson are and these are shared with the pupils so that they are aware of what they have to do to succeed in the lesson. This leads to pupils learning effectively and having opportunities to check at

the end of the lesson what they understand and what they need to do next. The systems for assessing pupils have improved and teachers now use the information about their progress to plan the next stage of their learning. This means that higher attaining pupils are given tasks that are challenging and allow them to do as well as they can. Teachers give constructive and supportive feedback throughout lessons and the result is that pupils hard work and show good levels of concentration.

- 22 Teaching has many strengths. Teachers and support staff work very effectively as a team and are consistent in what they expect from the pupils. This means that very good use is made of the time in lessons and pupils are always aware of the tasks that they have to do. The relationships between the staff and the pupils are very good and pupils are given many opportunities to work independently and take the initiative in what they are learning. In art, for example, the pupils research their own plants as the basis for their designs. The staff are warm, friendly and firm and treat pupils with respect. They trust them with responsibilities and expect them to persevere when they find the work to be difficult. This means that pupils develop a positive attitude towards what they are learning and work well in groups and pairs to overcome problems.
- 23 Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. The good progress that pupils make is unquestionably aided by the contribution of support staff. They are very clear about their role in lessons and frequently focus on individuals and groups who are in most need of support. Teachers identify pupils who are experiencing difficulties at an early stage and make sure that they are given additional support to help them with their learning. Pupils' individual education plans are precise and specific targets are set so those pupils can progress at the pace that is most suitable to them.
- 24 When teaching is very good or excellent teachers question pupils skilfully, probing pupils to make decisions for themselves and express their own ideas and thoughts. In these lessons the teachers have a high level of expertise in what they are teaching, use additional resources imaginatively and succeed in capturing the attention and motivation of the pupils. As a result pupils are enthusiastic, actively engaged in the activities and learn quickly. Where teaching is particularly effective, it is because teachers make pupils think for themselves and set them problems to overcome by using their powers of deduction. This is so in mathematics and science when pupils are involved in experiments and have to prove that their answers are correct.
- 25 Teachers are confident to use a range of approaches in their teaching and are very effective in using resources and other adults directly in the pupils' learning. The teamwork in most classes is impressive and ensures that pupils get the most out of what is being taught. Teaching makes effective use of trips and visits to supplement what is being taught in school and pupils find this very helpful in making their learning even more enjoyable.

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

- 26 The quality of curricular provision has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. It offers many exciting learning opportunities, is well planned and makes sensible and interesting links between subjects. The curriculum also clearly reflects the school's aims to provide rich experiences as well as clear and challenging targets. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils in art and design. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and is, for the older pupils, enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities. However, opportunities for younger pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities are limited.
- 27 The curriculum for the Foundation Stage of education for pupils in the nursery and reception classes has been introduced very effectively. This prepares them very well for the early stages of the National Curriculum. Teachers' planning is based on accurate assessments of children's attainment and progress and takes into account their needs and readiness for

the next stages of learning. This is further supported by the use of relevant and well chosen everyday topics such as food and families so that children can relate to what they are doing. These factors ensure that the curriculum is purposeful, support learning and make a significant contribution towards the achievement of the early learning goals in all areas of learning for children of this age.

- 28 Provision for pupils with special education needs is good. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified as early as possible and appropriate steps are taken to assess their needs, write individual education plans and provide support. These plans are reviewed regularly and provide necessary detail to enable teachers to plan relevant learning experiences.
- 29 Teachers make good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to plan work and this, particularly in the case of literacy, is one of the reasons why standards are rising.
- 30 Teachers link subjects effectively so that they make more sense to pupils and enable them to use their knowledge, skills and understanding gained in one subject in a variety of meaningful ways across the curriculum. For example, work in history includes reading, imaginative writing and geography. As a result pupils improve their creativity, use of imagination, organisation and expression in writing as well as their understanding of the past. The use of drawing and illustration in science, design and technology, geography and history is very effective in helping pupils to record learning as is the use of drama in, for example, the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills and understanding of moral issues such as stealing.
- 31 The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that they have equal opportunity to succeed in them. Teachers make every effort in all lessons and activities to ensure that the contributions of all pupils are celebrated and valued. The school has developed and implemented a very good and effective policy for the identification and support of gifted and talented pupils across a range of activities and personal attributes including art, drama, music, technology, sport and leadership. This policy is supported well by two secondary schools to which pupils transfer at eleven. Additionally, the school holds 'Master Classes' for pupils who show a particular flair in either art or mathematics. These classes are well supported.
- 32 Teachers give very good emphasis to pupils' personal, social and health education. They promote these areas actively and consistently as part of a carefully structured programme which is embedded in the life of the school. For example, caring for others and raising pupils' awareness of how their actions can affect others is given high priority through discussions in all classes. Pupils value such opportunities to speak, to be heard and, at times, just to listen. These sessions also reflect the school's success in developing pupils' self-confidence and social skills. The school has developed a very effective School Council on which sit elected pupils from every year group in the school. They raise and discuss concerns and ideas put to them by their peers, demonstrating:
- very high levels of maturity
 - a highly developed sense of corporate responsibility for their actions
 - well developed abilities to resolve differences by exploring alternatives and making choices.
- 33 The Council advises the head teacher and is an impressive and integral part of the school's decision making process.
- 34 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development continues to be very good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Provision for their cultural development is good. At the time of the last inspection this was satisfactory, so there has been a good rate of improvement since then.

- 35 The way the school cultivates pupils' spiritual development is firmly rooted in very many aspects of school life. In assembly, there is an atmosphere of reverence when pupils and staff pray and sing. There is ample opportunity for them to reflect on their lives, and for quiet contemplation. This extends to classrooms, with pupils finishing morning and afternoon sessions with a short prayer, and ending on Fridays with a more lengthy time to reflect on the week gone by, consider how it has affected them, and what they will do as a result. The Catholic ethos is very strong. The school's policy for religious education sets out ways in which it links with all other subjects. Displays in classrooms and corridors reflect this. For example, photographs of the pupils who are about to make their first communion, with a request that people should pray for them, together with prayers written by the pupils themselves, are exhibited in an entrance. Here, in a place that all the pupils walk by frequently, the school prayer is prominently displayed. The very rich learning environment also contributes to spiritual development, with pupils responding with sensitive writing and artwork. For instance, in one junior classroom there is a selection of the pupils' very perceptive and empathetic charcoal drawings of Christ's suffering on the road to Calvary. These were inspired by a visit to the church to look at and discuss the "stations of the cross". In another class, pupils wrote in a very thoughtful way about issues of loneliness, showing empathy with those less fortunate than themselves. As well as studying the catholic religion, they learn about the codes, values and traditions of other major world religions.
- 36 Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong through assemblies and religious education and personal, social and health education lessons. They apply this knowledge in art, English, geography, history and science lessons, where they have very good opportunities to discuss issues, for example, about the rights and wrongs of exploiting the Earth's rain forests, the plight of refugees in wartime and issues around tobacco smoking. Moral and social values in the school are very strong and reinforced by all adults. These result in pupils' very good behaviour in classrooms and around school. The relationships between adults and pupils, and their relationships with each other, promote a very warm and positive atmosphere. Every opportunity is taken to raise pupils' self esteem. This is seen in the way their work is valued in beautiful wall displays, and by the posters around school that tell them that everyone can be SMART (Special, Motivated, Artistic, Reliable, Talented).
- 37 Pupils have a good understanding of their own local history and their British heritage, built up through history lessons and many visits within the locality. They explore stories and art from other cultures, and learn about different traditions in history, geography and religious education lessons. This study of other cultures gives the pupils an insight into the beliefs and values of other groups of people, and teaches them to respect these differences, thus laying the basis for learning about life in the diversity of British multicultural society.
- 38 The school has established good links with the local community and these enrich the range of experiences and contribute to pupils' learning and personal development. For example:
- the local priest is a frequent visitor to the school enabling pupils to appreciate the importance of Christianity as the basis of beliefs and values
 - community engineers provide excellent help and guidance to teachers and pupils during the school's annual technology week
 - the help provided by groups of parents and grandparents who possess a range of talents and skills benefits individual pupils and the learning experiences of whole classes.
- 39 Educational visits to places of interest and a residential visit to London are used effectively to support and extend the range of pupils' experiences and contribute well to their learning and social development. Visitors to the school including theatre companies provide further exciting opportunities for pupils to learn about science, history and geography. The school has satisfactory links with partner institutions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 40 The care of pupils has improved since the school was last inspected and it is now very good. Routines are very well established and so there is a calm but purposeful ambience in school where pupils feel welcome, valued and secure.
- 41 The school has good child protection arrangements. Staff have had appropriate training in this aspect and they adhere to reporting and recording requirements. Nevertheless, the school's policy document provides only brief guidance to staff on the actual signs of abuse. Pupils themselves receive good guidance in leading a healthy and safe life including expert training in what to do in an emergency situation through an annual visit to 'Crucial Crew', and regular reminders about 'stranger danger', road and water safety. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day and staff are particularly vigilant in ensuring pupils are safely handed over to a known adult at the end of each day. There are a number of adults in school with knowledge and qualifications in first aid and they are thorough in checking the severity of any injury sustained in school. Staff are kind to pupils and comfort them when they need it. Pupils are seen as important and their views are actively sought. For example, there is a pupil school council through which ideas have been raised and implemented to improve school life even further. Kitchen staff also take note of pupils' views on their likes and dislikes and adjust the lunch menu accordingly to provide very good quality meals that pupils like. Indeed, many of the pupils say 'school dinners are great; cheese flan and cottage pie are gorgeous'. There are regular health and safety inspections of the school site and the County's health and safety officer very recently inspected to school and found no shortfalls. The school's policy on educational visits out of school is very thorough in what it expects from staff regarding the well-being of pupils but it does not include a formal risk assessment record.
- 42 There have been good improvements in the procedures to assess pupils' progress since the last inspection. In English, progress is tracked carefully using test results and reading and spelling scores. Pupils are set targets that they understand and the teachers' marking reinforces what they have to do to get better. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully monitored and their individual education plans are reviewed regularly. There are the beginnings of more formal procedures in other subjects though in mathematics, assessment is not yet rigorous enough. Teachers are starting to use information about pupils' progress to plan lessons with greater precision for individual needs. They phrase questions well to ensure pupils understand the work and follow this up by providing appropriate activities to help them achieve well.
- 43 The educational and personal support and guidance given to pupils is very good. There is a very consistent and effective approach throughout the school to promoting good behaviour. The majority of staff have very high expectations of pupils and they use praise and rewards very well. Equally, staff are very quick to deal firmly but sensitively with any incidents of misbehaviour, including any rare occurrence of intimidation or bullying, and parents are fully involved at an early stage. Attendance and punctuality is closely monitored and because of the very positive atmosphere and relationships in school, pupils simply want to come to school. However, registers are not always completed with sufficient diligence. Staff know pupils well and they celebrate any achievements and keep records of particular strengths or weaknesses in pupils' personal development and so they can address or build on these.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 44 The school is very committed to working with parents in the care and education of pupils. As a result of what the school does to inform and involve parents, there is a very effective partnership with high levels of mutual respect and appreciation for the part that they each play. As a result, pupils benefit both academically and personally.
- 45 Parents hold the school in high regard and their opinions of much of the school's work are considerably better than those of parents at the last inspection some five years ago. Prior to the recent inspection, a small percentage of parents shared their views with inspectors and others were spoken to during the inspection. The vast majority of this small sample are pleased with everything that the school does. In particular, they are pleased with how the school works together as a team involving pupils, staff, parents and parishioners in its day-to-day functioning as well as in specific events. Parents are also pleased with the expectations of their children to work hard and to do their best, with the quality of teaching, that their children are happy here and with the progress they make. A very small minority of parents are not entirely happy with how closely the school works with parents, and with the range of activities on offer to their children outside lessons. Inspectors believe there is no justification for parents' dissatisfaction with what the school does to involve them, and that the range of activities outside lessons is satisfactory overall but limited for the infant classes.
- 46 The quality of information provided for parents is very good and has improved since the last inspection. There are regular and informative newsletters and notices which keep parents very well informed of the general life and events of the school. Information on what will be taught in each class is provided at the start of each term, including clear explanations and sensible suggestions as to how parents can best help to reinforce their child's learning at home. Home/School reading records are an effective communicate on reading and there are many opportunities for parents to visit school and see pupils' work and exchange information with staff. For example, there are two formal parents' evenings, plus an open day, curriculum meetings, special assemblies, and a programme of meetings as part of pupils' preparation for First Holy Communion. In addition, relationships between staff and parents are very well established and so parents and teachers often have informal exchanges of information before and after school. End of year reports mostly provide parents with good quality information on what their child has learned and can now do in all subjects as well as pointing out areas which need to be worked on.
- 47 Parents respond very well to the school's efforts to inform and involve them. They understand the routines and the school's expectations including attendance, uniform, behaviour and courtesy, and so they are able to support their children in achieving those expectations. A number of parents and friends of the school help in classes on a regular basis, and very many parents hear their children read and encourage them at home. The whole community, including parents, have worked extremely hard over the past three years to raise substantial funds which have improved the school accommodation considerably.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 48 Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has established a very positive and high achieving ethos. She has successfully addressed issues from the last inspection when she was new to the school, improved the quality of teaching and raised standards. She is energetic, enthusiastic and committed setting a good example in all her work. She is well supported by a developing senior management and the rest of the staff team. Several members of the senior management, including the deputy headteacher, are quite new to the school but have already forged effective roles. The governing body fulfil their statutory requirements well and provide very good support in planning the strategic development of the school.

- 49 The headteacher is thoroughly involved in the life of the school and her work is a significant strength. The pupils warmly welcome her on regular visits to their classrooms and the majority of parents feel the school is well led. Similarly, working relationships with teaching and non-teaching staff are easy and open and there is considerable mutual respect. The school plans and operates as a team with clear direction from the headteacher. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher in both day-to-day management and strategic planning. The ethos of openness and support has led to continued improvement to the quality of teaching and learning. There is a very good structure to management systems and all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Subject leaders, especially those for literacy and numeracy, are fully involved in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching. They also lead by setting a very good example through shared teaching activities and maintaining a good quality of display. This is particularly evident in art and design. They ensure the school is well resourced and that staff are given every opportunity to maintain their training needs. All staff contribute effectively to school improvement planning through producing detailed action plans based securely on their own monitoring activities. The regular staff meetings and curriculum groups are planned for well and detailed minutes are maintained. This makes it easier for staff to work as a team with every staff member clear about their role in developing new initiatives.
- 50 The governing body plays a full role in planning for future improvement. The governors have a full programme of monitoring activities including lesson visits, observations of pupils' work and regular presentations from subject leaders. They have worked very closely with the local education action zone initiative to improve provision. They also participate in a good range of training both jointly with the school staff and through specific governor training organised by the local education authority. The commitment and enthusiasm of the chair of governors is very motivating in itself. He works very closely with the headteacher to analyse test data and prepare presentations for the governing body. They are effective in closely monitoring financial provision and ensuring that those providing services to the school give good value. They receive good analytical information on the results of both national and internal tests and the headteacher's good natured and informative regular reports to governors contribute to their ability to take a useful role in school improvement.
- 51 The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are identified at a very early stage and their progress is carefully monitored. All staff are made aware of the needs of individual pupils and work well as a team. The management of provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good. The staff make sure that education is focused effectively on the needs of young children. They make good use of national guidance for provision for these pupils and there are effective procedures in place to measure children's progress. The staff work very closely as a team so that this area really is a 'Foundation Unit', laying the cornerstone for the children's future education.
- 52 The school maintains good staffing levels at present. Very effective use is made of the specialist skills of several staff for mathematics, music and art and design. There are adequate levels of support staff who are very effectively deployed. The induction of new staff is very good, as is the professional development of all teachers. The headteacher is quick to identify and support teachers' particular strengths and provide real opportunities for managerial development. However, she is careful not to overburden staff and the governors match staff responsibilities to pay as effectively as overall finances allow. This has been effective in developing the role of the deputy headteacher. The procedures for professional developments are very good. Teachers set challenging targets for improving their pupils' performance and developing their own skills. They are given good support through careful monitoring by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and regular reviews on their progress towards meeting the targets. The system sits comfortably alongside the ethos of sharing and striving towards high achievement.

- 53 The school has very thorough and detailed systems for planning how to spend its money wisely. This involves regular discussions between all staff and the governing body so that there is a common understanding of the school's priorities. There are clear procedures for controlling expenditure and for getting the best value from purchases, as the recent audit report confirmed. The school has had good support from the local Education Action Zone project, which helped them to focus on the best way to raise boys' achievement. Recent additions to the information and communication technology systems have improved overall communications within the school. Overall the school is managed very efficiently
- 54 The very good quality of leadership and management makes a significant contribution to the school's success and potential for the future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve further the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- Ensure that the teaching of spelling places sufficient emphasis on encouraging pupils to check and correct their own words (Paragraphs: 5, 66, 67)
- Ensure that strategies for teaching division and subtraction allow the pupils to develop effective skills alongside those for addition and multiplication (Paragraphs: 6, 71, 74)

The school should also consider the following, lesser issues for inclusion in its school improvement planning:

- The management of the behaviour of a few pupils in the infants (Paragraphs: 14, 67)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 50 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 30 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 5 | 14 | 22 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 10 | 28 | 44 | 16 | 2 | 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) | 25 | 284 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 | 42 |

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 | 2 | 43 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 8 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 10 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2002 | 17 | 18 | 35 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 15 | 17 |
| | Girls | 18 | 16 | 15 |
| | Total | 33 | 31 | 32 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 94 (98) | 89 (95) | 91 (93) |
| | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 17 | 17 |
| | Girls | 18 | 15 | 18 |
| | Total | 33 | 32 | 35 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 95 (93) | 91 (95) | 100 (93) |
| | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89) | 89 (89) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2002 | 25 | 17 | 42 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 17 | 16 | 21 |
| | Girls | 14 | 12 | 15 |
| | Total | 31 | 28 | 36 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 74 (80) | 67 (80) | 86 (97) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 73 (71) | 86 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 16 | 16 | 20 |
| | Girls | 16 | 15 | 17 |
| | Total | 32 | 31 | 37 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 76 (80) | 74 (77) | 88 (91) |
| | National | 73 (72) | 74 (74) | 82 (82) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| White – British | 280 | 0 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 12.4 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 26 |
| Average class size | 30 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 146.5 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 26 |
| Total number of education support staff | 1 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 32.5 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 13 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 5.5 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 5.5 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0.4 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | 2001/2 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 614,812 |
| Total expenditure | 586,331 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,043 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 27,254 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 27,682 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 334 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 67 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 69 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 68 | 28 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 55 | 40 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 35 | 56 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 72 | 24 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 59 | 32 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 65 | 26 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 72 | 27 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 48 | 40 | 10 | 2 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 46 | 41 | 9 | 1 | 3 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 64 | 34 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 20 | 51 | 16 | 1 | 12 |

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

55 The new foundation unit has been open for one year following the building of a new purpose built nursery classroom. This is linked to the reception classroom and both share a large and challenging outdoor play area. The classes are largely taught separately although all planning is through weekly meetings. Once a week the two classes work as one class for much of the day; 'the Foundation Day'. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the nursery and reception classes. As a result the children make good or better progress in all areas of learning. The majority of pupils meet the goals expected for their age and a significant minority exceed them by the time they start Year 1. The curriculum for the children in the foundation stage unit is extremely well planned so that they make consistent good progress. Work is matched well to the needs of children of all ages and abilities. A strong priority is given to children's personal and social development and the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Very accurate and regular assessments are made of children's achievement and these are used to support pupils well. Relationships in the unit are very good and support staff are well informed and effective. Parents and other volunteers contribute to the children's good progress. The provision, quality of teaching and learning is a good improvement from the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

56 Standards are higher than those expected nationally by the time children leave the reception class. They make very good progress through the nursery and reception. The quality of teaching is very good. The two classrooms are well planned to provide a wide range of bright and stimulating activities to encourage children to participate independently. For example, there are familiar role-play corners such as the home area and more challenging ones such as the opticians. All areas are purposefully planned so that children make decisions about their work and play and take pride in their achievements. Teachers join in with children's games, for example, in directing the 'traffic' in the playground or participating in role-play. This gives the children confidence and the opportunity to explore and extend their relationships with others. By time they start Year 1, most children are happy to mix with children and adults, talk about their work and pleasures and play in different groups and settings. They are independent and secure. Teachers and support staff are very effective in giving both praise and encouragement.

Communication, language and literacy

57 Progress is very good. By the time they start Year 1 a significant group of children are working above the expected levels and the majority are at those levels. In speaking and listening children show increasing confidence in talking to others. They explain their ideas well, for example, when explaining their designs for classroom labels for the blind. By the end of reception, many children talk to the class in clear and well-structured sentences. The less able and those with special educational needs are also eager to talk.

58 The quality of teaching is very good. Children are given many reasons to read and write and this encourages their development. For instance, simple questions and statements always accompany displays of children's work. They are taught letter sounds and blends systematically and in entertaining ways. They are given many opportunities to practise and experiment with letter shapes. For example, using large paintbrushes and water on the playground or drawing in the sand trays. Teachers work closely with the children in the reading and writing corners. By the end of reception a small, but significant group of pupils write imaginative sentences about bugs and insects with very little support. Most children find the words they want from a selection and use those to make sentences and have a

sound knowledge of a range of key words and phrases. Whilst there are some very inventive ideas for encouraging children to write for different reasons, such as diaries, pamphlets and science reports the most able do not often write at any length. There is a very good range of fiction and non-fiction in the classrooms and children listen to stories well and relate closely to the characters.

Mathematical development

- 59 The curriculum is well planned to provide children with increasingly challenging mathematical experiences and this leads to good and sometimes better progress. By the time they start Year 1 the majority of pupils achieve the nationally expected goals and almost a half of the pupils are working at least a term above this. Their knowledge of number is very good. The reception children know what the word estimate means and make accurate and reasonable estimates of the number of biscuits in a pack. They quickly count well beyond thirty and count backwards accurately. The most able count in 10s and in 5s and use this to solve number problems. The teacher makes learning fun and the pace of learning is fast. In the nursery children make good progress in recognising and writing numbers and matching them to a given quantity. The children produce graphs showing favourite pets and other familiar situations. They develop a good knowledge of colour and use this to create extended repeated patterns with beads and models. They make good progress in adding and subtracting and recognising written forms.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 60 The curriculum is very well planned to give children a wide range of experiences both in the classroom and through visits. All activities start from familiar situations and subtly extend the children's knowledge of the world. The majority of children attain expected levels for their age. The children learn because they are interested and teaching is at least good. For example, in both the nursery and reception classes the children find out about tastes and smells in well-constructed science experiments. They draw on familiar scents such as fish and chips and the sea and staff relate this to visits the children have made. The children become familiar with farm and domestic animals through visits to farms and their own class work. They investigate 'bugs' under magnifying glasses and then design and create excellent collage pictures. By the end of reception they know the parts of the human body and those of insects such as antennae. Some opportunities to reinforce this learning in physical education were missed. Children make good use of computers. They have sound skills in using the mouse and enjoy following and controlling the adventures of on-screen characters. The children have very good opportunities to learn more about the world through play with construction toys and 'small world' toys. The planning is closely matched to the National Curriculum for history, geography and religious education. All these activities are well planned to reinforce and consolidate learning as the children progress through the nursery and reception.

Physical development

- 61 There are very good opportunities for outside play and in the hall. Teaching is good overall. Sometimes the pace of lessons in the hall is not challenging enough, particularly to some older pupils. However, the vast majority of pupils attain at least the expected levels for their age. Children run, skip and jump with confidence because of the good provision and teachers' clear instructions. The well-planned outside play area provides ample opportunity for children to develop their ability to pedal, push and tow vehicles with accuracy and care. They are increasingly aware of the need to play safely and appropriately understand the health benefits of exercise. The children follow instructions very well, controlling wheeled vehicles and stopping to let others cross in front. They bounce and catch balls with increasing skill. In the nursery, children show no fear of the large spaces in the hall. They

listen very attentively and move with confidence between obstacles avoiding each other. They concentrate very hard.

Creative development

- 62 The children make very good progress because of the strong emphasis on this throughout the foundation stage. Children sing well and with enthusiasm from a wide range of activity songs, which are often linked to the topics planned for other areas of learning. By the time they start Year 1 the children are very good at selecting fabrics and materials to produce exciting textured collage pictures. They cut and stick neatly and accurately. Their 'bugs' show clear body parts and are brought to life by vibrant colouring and sticking. In the nursery children show delicacy in paintings of hands and things that can be done with hands. They know primary colours and mix paints well. They discuss their ideas well with teachers and support staff because of the carefully focused questions. The classrooms are brought to life by the many examples of the children's rich and vibrant artwork.

ENGLISH

- 63 Standards of reading and writing for seven-year-olds are consistently above the national average. For those at the age of eleven, standards in English dipped in the last year when the proportion of pupils with special educational needs rose to about a third of the entry. The current Year 6 has taken in more pupils with special educational needs than were in the school when they took the tests at age seven but attainment overall is at least in line with national expectations.
- 64 Speaking and listening are above average in the school. Even young pupils can describe what used to happen on pirate ships and they use imaginative ideas to suggest why sailors might get into difficulties: "They might hit icebergs and the crew would have to jump overboard." A minority of the boys are not good listeners and more firmness is needed to ensure that they concentrate in the discussion and writing sessions. In older classes pupils develop better powers of concentration and work hard. They listen to what others say and think before answering. Excellent teaching draws out sensitive answers from pupils who are planning to write about people from different countries. When discussing attitudes to others in war time their responses are very pertinent: "Grown ups sometimes deliberately misjudge others because of their religion." Others join in with: "Politicians should not decide who can be my friend." Careful preparation such as this leads to excellent writing from the more able pupils and above average writing from everyone else in Year 5. Some pupils in Year 6 are less prepared to express their ideas orally despite good teaching and this has inhibited their progress in writing.
- 65 Reading standards are above those expected in all classes. The pupils are well taught and have good opportunities to read silently during each day and aloud as part of their lessons. All pupils show enthusiasm for reading and even those who find it difficult can sound out words systematically. Young pupils recognise different ways of spelling words with the sound "-ai,-ay, and a_e" in them. Those in the young junior classes soon pick up on the ways that words can have the same spelling but different meanings. Teachers do not always reinforce this in marking pupils' work however. Most pupils are fluent and talk about their reading with genuine interest. They explain technical terms that give poems and stories added zest such as "onomatopoeia brings out the meaning of nonsense words in 'Jabberwocky'". There are good links between the school and parents to ensure that the reading record is regularly maintained, and reading progress of pupils is systematically checked. The library is currently used as a classroom and although there is a good supply of books around the school there is no central area for pupils to browse and discuss their reading.

- 66 There is good quality writing throughout the school although the weaker spelling in Year 6, especially by the lower attaining pupils, adversely affects the overall standards. Teachers correct pupils' spellings for them in their books rather than setting them the task of proof reading for themselves. However the overall standard of writing is good and some of the more able pupils write with flair and at great length even in the infant classes. Presentation and handwriting are very good and teachers set an excellent example through the lively and exciting displays of work in every room and corridor. This creates a good working climate for the pupils and they respond by working industriously. In Year 2 one pupil gave a delightful account of Cinderella at the ball: "I danced with a lovely girl. She was a beauty with hair like gold and with roses as a necklace." Pupils use speech marks well to enliven their narrative. They learn the importance of using paragraphs from an early age. Junior pupils continue to develop their ideas and learn to write for different purposes. They are taught to reflect on important issues such as the dangers of smoking and the advantages and disadvantages of testing drugs on animals. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs have suitable work for the lessons, phrasing questions to involve them in the introduction and providing writing guidelines with a clear structure that help them to develop their ideas. In the additional lessons for pupils working below levels expected for their age the teacher is very careful to help them to prepare their writing and she then goes over it with the whole class to point out common errors and what works well. Despite this some pupils still find difficulty in writing correctly unaided.
- 67 The quality of teaching is good. There are several examples of very good teaching and, on occasions, there are excellent features. No lessons were unsatisfactory. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' writing and they prepare them well, using a range of good strategies such as role-play to help them "think on their feet". Pupils are good at devising their own questions to explore issues and characters' feelings. They use this skill in writing in history and geography when they imagine what it is like to live in different places at different times. Marking is good and teachers give good advice to pupils such as ways to raise their levels of attainment. They supplement this by encouraging pupils to achieve targets in writing that they can understand. Two aspects of teaching that could be improved are: ensuring that boys concentrate more during some lessons in the infant classes; and giving pupils more responsibility for correcting their own spelling errors.
- 68 The quality of leadership and management are very good because:
- Careful assessment of pupils' needs are translated into targets to help them learn
 - The monitoring of teaching and learning encourages the sharing of good practice
 - There is a clear direction for developing writing and literacy skills across subjects
 - There has been good improvement in English, especially teaching, since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

- 69 Standards in mathematics are currently in line with what is expected nationally. This is satisfactory progress since the last inspection, although standards have fluctuated over the last few years sometimes being above what would be expected of pupils of ages 7 and 11 nationally, and at other times below that. The variations partly reflect the prior attainment in mathematics but also changes of leadership and management and development in training. With the expertise of the new subject leader and the action plan for improvement standards are well placed to improve more consistently. Boys' achievement is a strength.
- 70 By the end of Year 2 more able and average pupils are beginning to understand numbers up to 1000, and can split up numbers into tens and units and are beginning to understand hundreds tens and units. They do calculations in addition and subtraction with numbers up to 100 and are beginning to work out problems using multiplication, and less often, division. They use this knowledge when working with money and measures. More able and average pupils usually do the same work. Lower attaining pupils also often do the same work as

higher attainers, but with smaller numbers, and often with the support of teaching assistants. All pupils name simple 2-D shapes and 3-D solids, and group them according to the number of sides and corners, and can construct simple graphs and tables and answer questions about them.

- 71 By the end of Year 6 more able and average pupils use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to two places of decimals, to solve problems. They solve problems involving fractions, decimals, percentages, ratio and proportion. Lower attainers work with simple fractions and on less complex problems. All pupils calculate the perimeters and areas of rectangles and more complex shapes. They build on their knowledge of properties of shapes and solids. They measure angles to the nearest degree, and use the appropriate vocabulary related to this. They draw and interpret a range of graphs and charts. This knowledge is well applied in science lessons, where pupils use graphs to help them to interpret results and draw conclusions. The younger junior pupils, and less able older juniors use informal written methods for calculation, leading to the teaching of efficient standard written methods. Some younger junior pupils are taught written methods for calculation before mental methods are secure, giving rise to errors.
- 72 Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and they achieve well. Teaching assistants help lower attaining pupils to sustain concentration during lessons and help them with their mathematics. This support is given in an unobtrusive way so that it does not interrupt the teacher and other pupils. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is also good. The school has set ambitious targets in mathematics for 2003. Higher attaining pupils could be given more challenging work in lessons. There is a mathematics "master class" after school for talented and able pupils.
- 73 Teaching and learning in mathematics lessons is good overall in infant and junior classes. Pupils' attitudes to their mathematics work, and their behaviour in mathematics lessons is very good both in the infants and in the juniors. The standard of presentation of mathematics work is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors.
- 74 Teachers use guidance provided by the school to plan lessons. This incorporates the National Numeracy Strategy's framework for teaching mathematics. Lesson planning has recently begun to take more account of the different levels of ability of pupils in classes, so that all can make progress and achieve. Plans now clearly set out activities at three distinct levels. Opportunities for infant and junior pupils to do investigative work and open-ended problems are more limited. Addition and multiplication is better developed than subtraction and division.
- 75 The school's procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils' mathematical learning are satisfactory. Recently mathematical targets for each pupil, based on key learning objectives in National Numeracy Strategy's framework for teaching mathematics, are attached to pupils' exercise books. They are adapted to make them easy for pupils to understand. Pupils can keep track of their own progress through teachers indicating when they have reached a particular target. The system is quite new, and so practice is somewhat inconsistent, with some teachers implementing a "traffic light" grading system, giving an indication that a target may have been partially achieved, or not achieved. Others mark only when targets are fully achieved, with the date on which they were achieved, often with helpful comments such as "very secure". Teachers' marking of work often gives helpful advice to pupils about how they can improve their work, as well as rewarding them with praise.
- 76 Resources for the teaching of mathematics are good. Classrooms have a good range of posters, number squares and number lines, which support pupils' learning and help them to be independent in their learning. All members of staff have received some training in the National Numeracy Strategy. There is some use of information and communication technology to support teaching, for example in one lesson for junior pupils, the teacher used

a computer and projector to model work in mathematics for pupils. It was an efficient and effective way to do this, and also helped to keep pupils' attention.

- 77 The leadership and management of the subject ensure clear direction for the development of mathematics. There is a new subject leader, who took up his post in January 2003. He very quickly undertook an audit of the subject, with energy and enthusiasm, and identified several areas for improvement and is making good progress towards achieving them.
- 78 The subject leader has already ensured that work has begun on the first three of these items, although it is too early to say how this has impacted on learning.

SCIENCE

- 79 Standards in science for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven are above national expectations. Results in the 2002 national assessment tests for pupils aged eleven were above the national average. This is a trend which has been maintained over the past four years. Evidence collected during the current inspection confirms that this standard is being continued and represents good improvement since the previous inspection. This is a result of:
- a more coherent and well planned curriculum which, by linking subjects together well, makes learning meaningful
 - effective planning
 - the emphasis placed on and the systematic development of pupils acquisition of scientific enquiry skills through the application of their knowledge and understanding
 - interesting activities that interest pupils and promote learning
 - improved standards of teaching.
- 80 Progress and achievement for all pupils in experimental and investigative science is good. This is better than at the time of the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory in the infants and unsatisfactory in the juniors. The scrutiny of work shows that the school has developed an effective whole-school approach to the development of pupils' scientific skills of enquiry. For example, pupils aged seven carry out investigations and are able to draw conclusions from their findings. By this age they are already making predictions and asking questions such as, "What will happen if..?" By the age of 11 pupils undertake, design and complete their own investigations to solve problems. They have a very good understanding of fair testing and demonstrate their good working knowledge of variables by predicting what will happen to their results should one factor be changed while others remain the same. At least half attain standards above that expected of pupils for this age. Throughout the school pupils show a good understanding of scientific vocabulary and use a range of different ways to record their work including illustrations, graphs, tables and matrices and clearly written accounts of their procedures, processes and conclusions. This development is both systematic and purposeful. For example, a Year 5 pupil when recounting his investigation on parachutes confidently stated, "The biggest parachute, the one with the largest canopy, came down slowest because the air resistance was the greatest." Their proficiency in describing their observations using correct vocabulary is because teachers are consistent in their expectations and application of the school's scheme of work.
- 81 In both the infants and the juniors pupils develop a good understanding of life and life processes and living things. For example, Year 1 pupils learn about plants by caring for their own garden within the school grounds from which they gain an enormous amount of pleasure and Year 4 pupils discover about animal habitats and minibeasts by collecting evidence from the school's environmental science area, using an electronic microscope, identifying the creatures and then researching information about them in the school's library.
- 82 By the end of Year 6 pupils have a very secure understanding of the principles of classification of animals and use branching diagrams well. Infant pupils can sort materials

by their properties and use appropriate descriptive vocabulary such as bendy, rigid, squashy, hard etc. This knowledge is applied effectively in observations of materials around the school.

- 83 Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they make good progress in the area of physical processes. Infant pupils are familiar with pushes and pulls and simple circuits. By the age of eleven pupils are testing forces using Newtons and testing and drawing circuits using the correct symbols in their neatly presented circuit diagrams.
- 84 Pupils enjoy their work in science. They work enthusiastically on their practical tasks showing involvement, concentration, perseverance and a joy of learning. This was particularly evident in a Year 4 class investigating minibeasts and their habitats. Pupils listen well to their peers when they are talking about their work and this ensures that their learning is further developed. Homework is used extremely well to consolidate and extend learning as, for example, when Year 6 pupils are called upon to interrogate information in the form of graphs and their observations used to great effect and purpose at the start of the following lesson.
- 85 Teachers offer pupils good opportunities to develop their basic skills in literacy and numeracy through their science investigations. For example, in their work on heart rates pupils observed and measured the changes as exercise increased, drew accurate line graphs, and interrogated them to gain meaning and recorded their conclusions with considerable clarity in their written work. In a small number of classes good use is made of information technology where, for example, teachers use a data projector to deliver their lessons effectively and pupils use data bases to collect, store, sort and classify information ready for interrogation. Pupils recognise the effectiveness and the efficiency of information technology when sorting and interrogating data.
- 86 Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' management of classes is very good. Their use of resources is effective in giving pupils practical experiences and they make good use of time so that all pupils make gains in their learning. Brisk recall of earlier lessons leads to pupils being quickly involved in the lesson. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure, expectations are high and questioning is challenging. As a result pupils work logically through each stage of their experiments. They show depth in their understanding. Assessment and record keeping are applied consistently well throughout the school and are significant factors in the raising of standards.
- 87 The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Nationally recommended schemes of work have been skilfully adapted to meet the needs of the school and its pupils. Teachers translate these into detailed and effective lesson plans which ensure lessons are well directed at specific learning points and that new learning is securely based on what pupils already know and can do.

ART AND DESIGN

- 88 Judgements about standards have been made mainly from looking at pupils' work from all year groups and all levels of ability, and talking to pupils and to the subject leader for art. Standards are currently excellent for both infant and junior pupils. At the time of the last inspection, standards were similar to those expected nationally for pupils of the same age. Excellent progress has been made since then.
- 89 Art has a very high profile in this school, with a wealth of beautiful artwork in classrooms and around school. Pupils' paintings are valued and celebrated by being framed and hung on the walls in corridors, some in beautiful frames made by pupils and some in commercially produced ones. The school recently achieved an award in recognition of its high quality provision for the arts including art and design, and design and technology.

- 90 Teachers use very clear guidance provided by the school to plan artwork. This helps them to plan very well for pupils' progression from year to year, logically building on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired. The guidance also shows teachers how to plan for opportunities to teach art in lessons on other subjects. For example, junior pupils' understanding of Hinduism and of symmetry in mathematics is enhanced by the creation of beautiful Rangoli patterns. Both infant and junior pupils study the work of famous artists from different periods in history and different cultures and their appreciation is good. Links with the community are fostered through art by exhibitions, where parents and members of the community are invited to come into school and look at pupils' artwork. They also exhibit in the community itself, in local supermarkets and shopping centres and the library. Pupils recently had an opportunity to work with professional artists who came into school and worked with them to paint a very attractive mural around the kitchen serving-hatch, depicting pupils and workers at lunchtime. The subject leader has collected together a great many samples of pupils' work. These include photographs of wall displays, other exhibitions and three-dimensional work. This work is of excellent quality and enables teachers to compare it to the artwork of their pupils, so that they can assess how well they have achieved.
- 91 Teaching and learning in art are very good, as are pupils' attitudes. They enjoy art lessons and make excellent progress. In a lesson for junior pupils, the teacher, assisted by a volunteer parent helper, very clearly explained and demonstrated the technique of quilling. Pupils then very skilfully sketched designs, and working from these, made exquisite flower pictures using the technique, taking exceptional care with materials and equipment. Support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. Resources for the teaching of art and design are very good. There is an art master-class after school, for pupils who are artistically able and talented.
- 92 Leadership and management of art are very good. The subject leader is passionate about art and design and has worked hard to develop the subject to a very high level, leading by example. She has a very clear idea of how she wants the subject to develop and has supported staff development by providing very good guidance for teaching art and design, together with training on the use of techniques and equipment. The school proliferates with a great variety of very high quality work from all age groups.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 93 Only one lesson in design and technology was seen during the inspection, so judgements about standards have been made principally from interviews with the subject leader and pupils, and from looking at pupils' work. Standards for both juniors and infants are above those expected of pupils of their age nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards for infants were satisfactory and for juniors, unsatisfactory. This is good progress for infants and very good for juniors.
- 94 Teachers plan work for pupils using very clear guidance provided by the school. This enables the pupils to increase their skills, knowledge and understanding in design and technology each year, acquiring the use of many different techniques and working with an increasing range of tools and materials. The guidance includes information on how teachers can enhance pupils' understanding in other subjects through design and technology, and how it can be combined with many other subjects. In an infant classroom pupils had learned about the Great Fire of London in history lessons. Their understanding of the period was deepened by their working together to produce a lively and attractive collage of London ablaze, and some very attractive, carefully made, framed collage portraits in the style of that period of history.
- 95 Teaching and learning and pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good. Pupils enjoy lessons and talk about their work with enthusiasm. In a good infant lesson, pupils worked on making flowerpots from play dough. This was in preparation for doing the same thing using (less easy to manipulate) clay in another lesson, and enabled them to learn the

technique of making a "pinch pot" with fingers more easily. They used simple tools to decorate their pots according to their beautifully drawn, simply labelled plans, which they had done previously. The teacher talked to them about why they might wish to alter their designs, and pupils gave good reasons for doing so. Infant and junior pupils' design and technology exercise books show an increasing sophistication in planning what they will make, becoming more accurate and detailed in terms of drawing, labelling and measurement. The books do not, however, include written evaluations of products. Many examples of work displayed in school combine art and design, and design and technology and are highly decorative, for instance, the beautifully observed copies of Viking designs using sewing and embroidery by older junior pupils. Other work shows pupils' knowledge of structures, such as the very striking pterodactyl made by infant pupils using wicker with tissue paper stretched over it. Links with the local community are good, with pupils' work being exhibited, along with their artwork in supermarkets and shopping centres. Older junior pupils had the opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding of structures, and how they can be made strong, through work done in school with a group of retired engineers. The teaching culminated in groups of pupils working collaboratively to build a model of a bridge conforming to certain standards, with a limited budget and in within a limited time. This also gave them some insight into how things are done commercially.

- 96 Leadership and management of design and technology are very good. The subject leader is the same person who leads and manages art and design. Her leadership gives clear direction for the development of design and technology. Resources for the teaching of this subject are very good, and very well organised.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 97 There were no lessons in history or geography during the inspection and no judgements are possible on the quality of teaching. Careful scrutiny of work and talking with the pupils and their teachers revealed that standards are above average at age seven and 11 in both history and geography. This is an improvement on the last inspection and comes about because the planning of the subjects and the resources available are better than before. The school's consistent focus on developing reading and writing skills across the curriculum have also helped pupils to explore topics coherently and in depth, using research through the internet and in reference books.
- 98 In history infant pupils write sensitively about the lives of famous people in different periods. They understand and give details of the difficulties facing a nurse like Florence Nightingale in hospitals during the Crimean War and they list the achievements of Captain Cook. Younger pupils gain an appreciation of time passing as they look at the toys they own and compare these with their grandparents' possessions. Teachers reinforce this by taking pupils on visits to local places of historical interest where pupils can see different clothes and act out scenes from the past.
- 99 In Year 2 there is some excellent extended writing about the origins of the Great Fire of London. Pupils write from the point of view of Charles II and manage to capture the atmosphere of the period well. Teachers make good links between numeracy and history by asking questions in their marking such as "How long ago was The Great Fire?" When asked many pupils can identify the possible causes of the fire and discuss issues surrounding the period. They suggested that the fire did at least rid the city of many elements that caused the plague earlier.
- 100 Older pupils develop their understanding of more complex historical issues and write at length about life in Victorian times. Teachers' marking poses questions for the pupils to answer and they respond by giving personal opinions about aspects of the topic they are studying. In Year 4 pupils write lively newspaper accounts inspired by a study of Tutenkhamun: "To see inside, a mean, muscly man came and showed them into the tomb". There are vivid accounts of actions in World War II and many pupils worked hard on

research into the exploits of Anne Frank. They obviously enjoy history and use their skills in art to illustrate much of their writing. There is selective use of work sheets but most of the writing is generated by a desire on the part of pupils to share their own ideas about historical events such as the customs of the ancient Egyptians or the making of Viking long ships.

- 101 In geography infant pupils draw clear maps and use two point reference squares to locate places within them. In lessons they are encouraged to share their holiday experiences through photographs and in class discussions. When asked, young pupils can name the different countries in the United Kingdom and with help they mostly understand where London is in relation to their own town. In their writing they relate to stories about living on a Scottish Island: "I like painting the view here where nothing can disturb me." They are starting to identify objects associated with a shoreline and different geographical locations.
- 102 In junior classes maps are drawn to scale and in their study of an Indian village pupils can tease out many differences in the lifestyle from their own town. Their writing on travel and tourism is of a high order, beautifully set out and containing good factual detail. Pupils are expected to be able to draw their own conclusions from research and not merely copy out ideas indiscriminately. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support in both subjects through visual prompts and practical activities such as matching games. The digital camera is well used to provide lasting images of the local geography that they are studying.
- 103 The leadership and management of history and geography are good. The planning for the subjects is well co-ordinated and the school makes good use of visits to local museums and visitors with experiences to share. Pupils re-enact historical scenes in assemblies and there has been a real emphasis on helping pupils to understand relevant vocabulary.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 104 Standards of pupils' attainment in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations by the ages of 7 and 11. This is good progress since the time of the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. There is evidence of good standards being attained in Year 5. The principal reasons for the improvement are:
- the development of a well structured programme of work that pupils follow as they move through the school
 - the good links made with other subjects
 - increased teacher knowledge and confidence.
- 105 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress.
- 106 By the end of Year 2 most pupils use information and communication technology to organise information and present their findings in a limited but interesting way in a range of subjects. For example, using a simple database they can collect, store, add and retrieve information such as when recording the growth of seedlings and present their findings in block and bar graphs. Pupils' skills, knowledge, and understanding of control technology are improving well through the use of 'Pixie' tabletop robots which they can program to negotiate obstacles, draw simple geometric shapes and follow routes on their own designs of treasure islands and intergalactic space travel. The more able and average pupils see the value of writing the instructions down in advance. Pupils make effective use of the computer to write for different purposes and combine pictures and text.
- 107 By the end of Year 6 pupils use a wide range of skills in information and communication technology to support their learning across a range of subjects. Year 3 pupils use maths programs to consolidate and extend their skills in quick methods of mental calculation, they are competent users of the digital camera and are becoming increasingly proficient users of

email. In Year 4, pupils use LOGO competently to produce a sequence of instructions to create complex shapes such as a hexagon. With this activity they show that they are confident when using control language. In their topic on Ancient Egypt pupils use their knowledge and skills in drawing to produce effective and informative branching diagrams. In Year 5 pupils create their own databases and enjoy accessing, retrieving and interrogating them to support their work. They use their developing skills in word processing effectively to produce poems and narrative in which the text is used in a pictorial way to reflect meaning. For example, one pupil enhanced the fun and interest of the presentation by altering the letter size to imitate the idea of being '**BARGED DOWN!**' By Year 6, a small number of pupils have the skills to combine information from different sources. For example, some have created multimedia presentations using PowerPoint on such topics as 'Materials and Their Properties', 'The Dangers of Smoking', and 'How to Survive National Curriculum Testing!'

- 108 The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, other than in Year 5 where it is good. Where pupils have had the benefit of being taught specific skills they build effectively on their previous attainment. In a Year 5 class, for example, pupils achieve well as they continued to store, access and interrogate information collected during their science topic on minibeasts and habitats. The teacher's very good subject knowledge was used well to ensure that skilful questioning and clear demonstrations enabled all pupils to use the different functions and utilise the power of the computer effectively and efficiently to sort and classify information in a variety of meaningful ways in response to questions inputted by pupils. Teachers use information and communication technology well across the curriculum as a teaching aid. This has a positive impact on learning as pupils are very responsive and show a high level of interest.
- 109 The subject leader has a very good understanding of her management role. She supports colleagues and manages resources for the subject effectively. Although systematic assessment procedures and practices have been developed and implemented they have not as yet had sufficient time to further improve standards of attainment.

MUSIC

- 110 By Year 2 and Year 6 standards in music are above nation expectations. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities make good progress because of the high quality of, often, specialist teaching and the imaginative curriculum. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- 111 By Year 2, the pupils sing well. They have clear diction and sing tunefully. They know a good range of action and activity songs well. They also show sensitivity when singing hymns in assembly. They are highly motivated by the confident and cheerful teaching. The pupils concentrate hard and show this well when singing in two or more parts. Standards of performance and simple composition are also good. For example, the Year 2 pupils developed their own accompaniments to classic children's tunes using hand bells. They follow the conductor's instructions well.
- 112 By Year 6 standards of singing are good. This is the direct result of very effective teaching, particularly by specialist staff. Pupils understand the value of warming up in singing sessions and undertake specific vocal exercises. These are well planned to be fun and fast paced. The pupils show very good concentration as a result and have good breath control and clear diction. They follow the teachers' good example. Because the lessons are taught at a good pace, all abilities are kept motivated and involved. This results in very inclusive sessions where no one feels their achievement is not respected. The pupils have a good musical vocabulary, often quite technical with phrases such as ostinato, largo, harmony etc. They maintain a good posture whilst singing and this helps their breathing. They learn to appreciate music from other cultures. For example, they compare French and English

traditional songs, identifying similar patterns in the tunes. They create their own songs using standard and non-standard musical notation. By Year 4, most of the pupils are very familiar with the instruments of the orchestra and group them into different categories such as woodwind and string. Almost all the pupils can order them by size. Pupils have a good knowledge of major works by classical and modern composers including Prokofiev and The Beatles. They compose simple melodies based on their appreciation of traditional songs. The range of tuned instruments is limited but pupils make good use of the keyboards available. The range of untuned percussion is very good.

- 113 The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The school employs a specialist singing teacher for older pupils, but many of the staff are also competent and capable. This is very evident in the good examples they set in singing and this inspires the pupils who thoroughly enjoy their music lessons. Lessons are planned well so that they move at a good pace and pupils progress at several levels. Those with special educational needs are supported well. The teachers make good use of the skills of pupils who take instrument lessons. For example, they demonstrated the sounds of their instruments to improve appreciation of Peter and the Wolf. Pupils have the opportunity to learn treble or descant recorders both boys and girls participate well. Relationships are good and behaviour is very well managed in lessons.
- 114 The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader is new to the post. There is a new scheme of work currently under review and resources have been assessed. There is a need for more tuned instruments such as keyboards. There are many opportunities for performance both within the school and in the community. A good proportion of pupils has specialist instrumental tuition and the work seen in this was of good quality. There is sound use of information and communication technology. Pupils use a composition program on the computer and the school has recorded and successfully sold its own CD.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 115 Due to timetabling arrangements it was not possible to see all strands of physical education. Only two lessons were seen during the week of the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to make judgements on pupils' overall attainment and the progress they are making.
- 116 Year 2 and Year 5 pupils know why lessons always have a warm-up and closing cooling-down activity. In the infants pupils demonstrate average skills in throwing and catching and make satisfactory progress during their lessons. They throw with accuracy over increasing distances to a partner who in turn shows a developing skill in the art of catching. They watch the ball closely and move forwards, backwards or to the side to ensure that they are in the correct position to hold on to receive it.
- 117 Juniors are provided with opportunities to develop their performances by taking part in well-constructed skills practices designed to challenge and improve their throwing, catching and striking skills. Skills are practised in twos and threes and then applied to small games situations where co-operation, teamwork, tactics and positional play are essential components. Pupils try hard to take into account and apply tactics and basic principles suitable to striking and fielding games. Over time this clearly has a beneficial effect on the standard and quality of their performances as demonstrated by their level of throwing and catching skills. They enjoy the competitiveness of the games situation. This is reflected in the number of girls and boys who take part in the extra-curricular football and netball clubs where they not only share their love of sport but show considerable maturity in the way they apply rules fairly and praise the performance of others. All pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 have swimming lessons. It is clear that they achieve water confidence quickly. The significant majority demonstrates proficiency in a range of strokes over 25 metres, some achieve well over this. The school places great importance on the ability to swim and those pupils who

do not achieve 25 meters by the end of Year 4 are given the opportunity to continue in Year 5.

- 118 Pupils made satisfactory progress in the lessons seen. Good organisation was evident and resources were used well to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' have very positive attitudes, particularly in Year 5, where they show a willingness to participate, observe demonstrations and suggest how a performance can be improved and to listen to their teacher and their peers. They respond well to advice.
- 119 Teaching in the lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to good. The good teaching gave pupils the opportunity to be fully engaged in a range of physical activities throughout the lesson. The timing of the sessions was good and helped pupils to make effective links between the practising of simple skills and application of them to the whole game situation. This, along with the teacher's effective questioning, led pupils to consider different options. These elements improved the level of the pupils' performance.
- 120 The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader has developed a balanced programme of learning which ensures that National Curriculum requirements are met. There are good links with science throughout the school with regard to healthy eating, healthy living and the effect that exercise has on the body. Resources for gymnastics and field sports are good and easily accessible.