

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HOLY FAMILY ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Langley

LEA area: Slough

Unique reference number: 110090

Headteacher: Mrs Anne O'Connor

Lead inspector: Mr John Ayerst

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 256481

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	413
School address:	High Street Langley Slough Berkshire
Postcode:	SL3 8NF
Telephone number:	01753 541442
Fax number:	01753 549721
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Kieran McKeown

Date of previous 6<sup>th</sup> July 1998 inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is a Beacon School; it is much bigger than other primary schools, with 413 boys and girls aged 3-11. Most of the pupils come from the surrounding residential area, but a number come from further afield. An average number of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times of first admission and transfer. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (3.1 per cent) is below average. Families from minority ethnic backgrounds are mostly from Asian, Caribbean or African heritage. Ninety six per cent of pupils are from a Catholic background. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is a little higher than average (1.6 per cent). The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (4.2 per cent) is well below the national average and the percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (0.9 per cent) is below average. Pupils with special educational needs are identified as needing help with speech or communication difficulties or with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A number have difficulties connected with autism and others have physical difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry is average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3832	John Ayerst	Lead inspector	Art and design, music, English as an additional language.
9789	Leigh Barclay	Lay inspector	
20767	Jeremy Royle	Team inspector	Mathematics, citizenship, special educational needs.
25432	Elizabeth Budden	Team inspector	English, geography, history, physical education.
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, ICT, the Foundation Stage.

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA  
Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT2 9PU

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school is an effective school** that provides good value for money. Pupils achieve well overall, and very well in English and mathematics. They enter the school with average attainment and leave, at the end of Year 6, with standards in English and mathematics that are well above average. Teaching and learning are good and the leadership of the school is also good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in music and ICT at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good throughout the school and pupils achieve very well in English and mathematics.
- The school has established a very effective ethos that sets high standards for the care and welfare of pupils. Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is excellent. Attendance is very good.
- The school is highly effective in promoting the excellent relationships to be seen among all who work in the school.
- The school has excellent links with its community that have a significant impact on the standards that pupils achieve and on their attitudes to school and their behaviour.
- The leadership and management of the school are good.
- Planning for the provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is not fully in place.
- Assessment in foundation subjects does not always measure the progress of pupils.
- In lesson planning, teachers plan different tasks for the different groups of pupils in the class, but some do not make explicit the different learning aims.

Against a background of changing staff, the school has broadly maintained the above and well above average standards reported in the last inspection in 1998. The key issues from the last inspection have been addressed very effectively. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now very good and children in the Foundation Stage now have access to very good outdoor play facilities.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	C
mathematics	A*	A	A	B
science	B	B	C	E

*Key: A\* - top 5%; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils achieve well** throughout the school. In last year's tests at the end of Year 6 standards were well above the national average in English and mathematics, as they are in most years, and average in science. In comparison with similar schools standards were above average in mathematics, but average in English and well below average in science. In order to improve this the school has increased its focus on science with the appointment of subject leaders and improved its provision. As a result, standards are rising but improvements have not been in place long enough to impact on standards for the current Year 6. In English, the number of Year 6 boys attaining level 4 in writing was lower than usual. The school is aware of this and is successfully addressing the issue so that the present Year 6 pupils are achieving very well. At the end of Year 2 standards in reading are above average and those in writing and mathematics are well above average.

Work seen during the inspection shows well above average standards in English and mathematics, and average standards in science at the end of Year 6. In addition, the work in ICT and music is above average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, and in science and physical education at the end of Year 2. It was not possible to see sufficient work in other subjects to make overall judgements, but in most of the lessons seen pupils were achieving well. Attainment is broadly average when pupils enter the school, but they achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage so that almost all meet and many exceed the expected learning goals for children of that age in all areas except physical development, where they meet the early learning goals. Pupils of all levels of attainment continue to achieve well, or very well, as they move through the school.

**Pupils' personal qualities are very good.** Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **good** overall and very good in English and mathematics in Year 6, which establishes very good achievement at that stage. Teachers work hard and effectively to maintain the excellent relationships in lessons so that pupils are highly motivated to learn. Assessment in English and mathematics is good and teachers monitor pupils' progress well throughout the school, but further work is needed in most other subjects and in the Foundation Stage to relate assessment more closely to progression of skills. The curriculum is of good quality and opportunities for enrichment are very good. Pupils are very well cared for. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's progress and links with the community make an excellent contribution to pupils' development.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good** and leaders set high expectations with a clear vision for the school. Within the Catholic ethos of the school the headteacher brings a strong sense of purpose and clarity of vision. The headteacher and her staff have worked hard and effectively, during a period of staff changes, to maintain the high standards reported at the last inspection. Good systems are established for monitoring provision and pupils' progress in English and mathematics, but arrangements to monitor provision in other subjects are more variable. The governance of the school is good.

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

In general, parents have a very positive view of the school and the education their children receive. Similarly, pupils are overwhelmingly pleased with their school and enjoy attending. A number of parents expressed a wish to have more information about how well their children are doing, but investigation shows that the school keeps parents well informed about the progress of their children through reports, parents' meetings and other more informal contacts.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Improve planning for PSHE and citizenship to ensure that pupils develop the necessary understanding and skills across all aspects of the subject.
- Ensure that assessment in all subjects measures the progress of pupils in the development of their skills in order to identify weaknesses and remedy them.
- Improve lesson planning so that all teachers identify the different learning aims for the different groups of pupils in the class and meet their needs more effectively.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well at all stages and standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are well above average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in English and mathematics as they move through the school.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Standards are not as high in science at the end of Year 6.

#### Commentary

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (17.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.1 (16.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.1 (18.00)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (29.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.2 (29.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.8 (29.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. The table shows that results in the tests for Year 6 at the end of last year were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science when compared with national standards. In comparison with similar schools, the results are average in English, above average in mathematics and well below average in science. In the tests for Year 2 last year, results in reading were above average and those in writing and mathematics were well above average. In general, standards have remained broadly similar at both key stages over the last three years with a slight reduction due to staff changes, except in science where standards have fallen for Year 6 pupils from a high level in 2000.
2. In work seen during the inspection in ICT and music pupils achieve well during their time at school and standards are above average at the end of Year 6. In English and mathematics pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average at this

stage. In last year's tests fewer boys than anticipated achieved level 4 in English, because their writing was of a lower standards than expected in the tests. The school were quickly aware of this and have successfully addressed the problem. In science, standards are improving, but are still generally average at the end of Year 6 because the improvements have not been in place long enough for standards to be affected. The present Year 6 pupils are now achieving well in science to make up previously lost ground. It was not possible to see sufficient work in other subjects to make overall judgements.

3. When children enter the school, assessments indicate that levels of attainment are generally average, but they achieve well during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes in all areas of learning and they enter Year 1 with almost all having achieved or exceeded the Early Learning Goals for children of that age. This is due to good and sometimes very good teaching in some Foundation Stage classes that makes good use of detailed assessment information to meet the needs of each and every child. This good practice is not consistent, however, throughout all the Foundation Stage classes.
4. Pupils generally demonstrate good literacy and numeracy skills, which they use well to support learning across the curriculum. The school's strategies for developing literacy and numeracy are good and effective in English and mathematics lessons as well as in other subjects. Pupils also show good levels of competency in the use of ICT in many subjects.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well, some reaching average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Individual needs are identified at an early stage and the setting procedures for literacy and numeracy ensure that they are working at the appropriate level. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and achieve well. Although the support in school is meeting their immediate needs there is no outside provision organised for pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well. At present there are no pupils who are at an early learning stage for English, but when pupils do arrive with limited English speaking skills the school makes good provision for them.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Behaviour is excellent and attendance is good. The spiritual and cultural development of pupils is good and their social and moral development is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. They are keen and willing to learn.
- Excellent relationships and respect for others are an important part of the school ethos.
- Moral and social development is very good and staff take every opportunity to encourage pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development in response to the very good teaching in this area.

### **Commentary**

6. Pupils show a very high level of interest in the opportunities provided for them. They enjoy school and are keen to work hard and do the best they can. In conversation and in the returns to their questionnaire, pupils stressed how much they enjoy school and learning. Parents appreciate their children's enthusiasm for school. In lessons pupils work very well, listen attentively and enjoy their learning. They work well on their own and in group work. Teachers actively promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem through celebrating their achievements with constant praise and encouragement.
7. Pupils enjoy discussions and share their views confidently, listening attentively to the contribution of others. This was evident in many lessons, but a very good example was in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, where pupils were asked to consider how they would be able to give change if there were only two coins in circulation. Pupils found this problem challenging and were fully involved, discussing animatedly with their partner how they could overcome the problem and then confidently expressing their solutions to the class. Bullying and oppressive behaviour are not evident.
8. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They understand the behaviour code and meet the very high expectations of behaviour. All teachers, support staff and lunch supervisors apply the behaviour code consistently. Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy occasions when pupils mix well and enjoy each other's company. The relationships between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are excellent and there is no evidence of harassment. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils are a strong feature of the school and an important part of the school ethos. Pupils are encouraged to help adults in the day-to-day running of the school and are keen to be helpful. They support each other very well in shared reading through the literacy partners' scheme. Duties such as helping with car parking at school functions and escorting visitors around the school are carried out efficiently by Year 6 pupils. The school council meets on a regular basis and pupils have opportunities to express their views through their class council representatives.
9. Pupils with special educational needs have a very positive attitude to their work and lessons. They respond well in small groups. They are very involved in lessons and appreciate the extra support they are receiving. Extra support for lower attainers and for younger pupils is provided by the 'Buddy' system, by which pupils support each other in their reading.
10. The school's overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual awareness is an integral part of the school and the shared commitment to their religion pervades pupils' school life. Quiet corners are provided across the school where pupils can reflect. Circle time and 'hot seating' are occasions where pupils have opportunities to share problems and personal thoughts. The provision for social and moral development is very good. Pupils are socially mature for their age and their relationships are underpinned by the Catholic ethos of the school. They have a very good awareness of right and wrong. All classes have their own individual behaviour code. These were discussed with pupils, who had the opportunity to contribute to the rules. Pupils are aware of their environment and of growing things. Awareness of different religions and cultures is covered well during an arts week, when pupils have the opportunity to learn about other major world religions, developing an appreciation of other cultures with visits from Asian and African dance groups and visiting musicians. Attractive and colourful displays around the school contribute positively to pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures.

11. The level of attendance is above the national average for primary schools and there is no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive punctually for school. There were no exclusions from school last year.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	5.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good and assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum is good overall. Pupils are very well cared for and the school listens well to their views. Links with parents are very good and links with the community and other schools are excellent.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good in all years. Assessment is not used well enough in all areas to respond to individual needs.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between teachers and their pupils are excellent so that pupils are very well managed and learning is efficient.
- Teachers have good, and sometimes very good, subject knowledge and understanding that helps to support high expectations and challenge in pupils' learning.
- Pupils develop very good learning skills. They work independently and apply themselves very well to the task in hand.
- Pupils are very willing learners who respond very positively to the good teaching provided.
- In most subjects, other than English, mathematics and ICT, further work is needed to relate assessment more closely to the progression of skills.

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	11 (24%)	22 (48%)	9 (20%)	1 (2%)	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

*Four per cent of lessons were ungraded because the observation was too brief.*

12. The good quality of teaching and learning has been sustained since the 1998 inspection, reflecting the great effort made by teachers and management to maintain standards during a period of considerable staff changes. A strong feature of the teaching is the excellent relationships that exist in all classrooms and facilitate teaching and learning.

These excellent relationships help to ensure that all pupils, whatever their backgrounds and abilities, are fully provided for and involved in all activities.

13. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding in most of the areas that they teach. They also understand well the learning processes in the subjects and this enables them to set high but realistic expectations of their pupils, who respond well to the challenge and make good gains in developing skills and furthering their understanding in most lessons. Teachers manage their classes very well so that pupils settle quickly to work and sustain their concentration well. They seldom need prompting to concentrate and they apply themselves very well when they work independently. For example, when they use the internet to find information or to research a topic. The teaching of English and mathematics is often very good for pupils in Year 6.
14. In lessons that are satisfactory, rather than good or better, it is usually where assessments from previous lessons have not been used as well as is usual to prepare the learning targets for the different groups of pupils in the class. In these lessons, different tasks are usually set for the different groups in the class, but the learning intentions are not clear. Consequently, the learning is not so well focused and tasks less appropriate.
15. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and receive good support from teaching assistants. Teaching assistants know the targets in pupils' individual education plans and plan with the class teachers to make the most effective use of their time. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed and are clearly annotated to highlight the next stage of learning. However some of the daily planning does not always identify the learning outcomes of pupils with special educational needs. The setting in literacy and numeracy lessons is meeting the needs of the higher attaining pupils with more challenging activities. Pupils are fully included in the first part of lessons before going into small groups with additional support from teaching assistants.
16. Overall assessment is sound. It is good in English, mathematics and ICT. In these areas assessment is generally used well to plan the next stages of learning. In the Foundation Stage and in other areas of the curriculum, assessment procedures are mixed. Often assessments measure the success or otherwise of the completion of a specific task, but they do not always sufficiently measure and record pupils' progress in skills development.

## **The curriculum**

The breadth and balance of the curriculum are good overall. It is inclusive and opportunities for participation in extra-curricular activities are good, and very good for sport. The accommodation and resources are good overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Most lessons include 'brain gym' exercises that help to keep pupils' minds alert.
- Visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum very well.
- The school is inclusive of all pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well.
- Accommodation and resources to support learning are good overall.
- Some lessons are too long for pupils to sustain their concentration.
- Time is limited for some subjects.

## Commentary

17. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Clear schemes of work support all subjects except personal, social and health education, which is currently taught through science, religious education, physical education and some class and assembly times. Some intervention and catch-up programmes are used in mathematics and English, and the school responds flexibly to needs identified in end-of-year and other tests in setting up this provision, helped by the support teachers and teaching assistant provision in place. The curriculum for English, mathematics, science and ICT is comprehensive and well organised. The schemes of work in these subjects are detailed and provide pupils with a good range of challenging learning experiences. The school's curriculum statement is linked with its statement of aims and timetabling reflects the value given to standards in mathematics and English, each of which are taught for at least an hour each day. The time provided for religious education and assembly is appropriate to the school's Catholic ethos.
18. A feature of work at Holy Family is the focus on visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning, which helps pupils to achieve by addressing their individual learning styles. All classes use mental and coordination exercises from 'brain gym' techniques to keep minds alert. Pupils have identified that their motivation to learn is enhanced even more by very active learning such as greater use of drama and art in other subjects. In the full curriculum review that is now planned staff will look at developing more creative links between subjects as the next step in responding to pupils' learning needs.
19. Some lessons, in the 'double slot' that happens between morning break and lunchtime, give pupils too long on the same activities so that they have to work hard to sustain their concentration and avoid becoming restless. Time for some creative subjects and the humanities is limited because they share the same time on an alternating programme.
20. A wide range of clubs at lunchtimes, after school and in holidays is organised by a strong team of parents. These include activities such as ice skating, gym for fun, first aid, pottery, table tennis, computers, horse riding, juggling, tennis summer school, Japanese for fun, football, and many more. The Year 6 residential visit gives a finale to the high profile given to swimming by the school, and pupils look forward for many years to this experience of having qualified instructors in sailing, snorkelling, canoeing and windsurfing at La Fosca. The fully inclusive approach that is fostered for boys and girls in all activities contributes well to their personal development and helps them to work together in all aspects of school life. Team games with outside schools in sport and working together on events like the Crikey Moses musical are examples of this. Links with the church and visits in the locality are strong.
21. Throughout the school the planning and provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. Their needs are identified early in their school life and teachers produce detailed plans to support their needs. The school has a number of teaching assistants who provide skilled support. They help pupils with special educational needs well and work with teachers to ensure that they are fully included in all lessons. Similarly, pupils from ethnic minorities are fully included in all activities of the school. At present all pupils for whom English is an additional language have full access to English and there are no constraints due to limitations of language.

22. Accommodation is generally good, particularly the outside areas which are spacious and well planned. Classrooms and corridors are attractively decorated and well maintained, providing a stimulating learning environment. Overall, the resources provided for learning are good in quality and quantity.
23. In the recent past the school has found some difficulty in replacing experienced teachers who have moved on to promotion, but overall it now has an appropriate number of well-qualified and experienced teachers. There is a good number of support staff, who are effectively deployed. The curriculum is enriched by specialist teachers for music, physical education, art and design, history and ICT.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school makes very good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It is a safe, secure, homely environment, with values which are shared and respected. Pupils' involvement in the development of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a very caring community.
- There are excellent relationships throughout the school – both between teachers and pupils, and between pupils.
- Children are introduced to school life very well.
- The school council enables pupils to be involved well in influencing decisions about their life in the school and these opportunities are to be extended further.
- The school provides good care for pupils with special educational needs.

### **Commentary**

24. The school provides a safe, secure and happy environment that is conducive to learning. Close attention is paid to health and safety issues. The school holds the Healthy School Bronze Award and is working towards the Silver. A healthy and safe life-style is well promoted in lessons and in daily routines. First-aid provision is very good. Child protection procedures are secure and outside agencies are very accessible.
25. Teachers and support staff know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and provide very good support and guidance. It is a mutually supportive relationship because the families also contribute significantly to the school. The outstanding quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils means that the pupils feel that they have adults to whom they can turn if they have a problem. The personal development of pupils is closely monitored and this contributes to each pupil's fulfilment and to the standards attained. All pupils are fully included in all the activities of the school.
26. Induction arrangements are very good and ensure that children settle happily into the Nursery and Reception. These include home visits and opportunities to visit the school. All young pupils have an older 'special friend' in the school who takes care of them throughout the year. Similarly, pupils are very well prepared for transfer to secondary school.

27. Care for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported, both in the classroom and in small groups. To ensure that pupils are included in all activities and have full access to the curriculum, pupils with special educational needs attend the first part of the literacy and numeracy lessons before being withdrawn for extra support from teaching assistants. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed in consultation with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), the class teacher and the teaching assistants. The SENCO also visits local secondary schools for some pupils to ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary. Individual education plans have clear targets and outcomes are clearly annotated with measurable targets.
28. Pupils are given a good opportunity to make their views known through the school council, with two elected members from each year. They represent the opinions of their classmates, who use the suggestion boxes in each classroom. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and have effected changes to the school uniform, for example, to enable girls to wear trousers, and are currently exploring the feasibility of a healthy tuck shop. There are plans to extend the pupils' influence on the direction of the school.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school works very effectively in partnership with parents and has developed excellent links with its community and with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good contribution parents make to their children's learning at school and at home makes a positive contribution to their achievement.
- Parents are well informed about the school and their children's standards and progress.
- The close links with the Roman Catholic community, from which the pupils come, help to enrich the curriculum and heighten pupils' awareness of their own cultural and religious beliefs.
- The excellent links with other schools and colleges ensure that pupils' transition to secondary school is smooth and that teaching is enhanced by sharing good practice.

### **Commentary**

29. Parents are well informed about the school through the prospectus, regular newsletters and frequent other correspondence. Although some parents expressed the view that they are not kept well informed about how their child is getting on, inspectors do not agree. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through consultation evenings and good annual reports. Parents are also welcome to visit the school to discuss any issues.
30. Parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel comfortable about approaching it with concerns. They feel that their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible and they appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities. Parents of Nursery children receive very good advice on how to help their child settle in and how to help with their development. Parents of older children have appreciated the curriculum evenings in the past and are pleased that they are to be resumed.
31. Parents make a very valuable contribution to their children's learning by providing very good help in the classroom and on trips and visits. Parents also contribute to learning in



very specific ways, particularly with the extensive range of after-school activities which they organise – ranging from arts and crafts and sports to foreign languages – most of which are also led by parents and include a crèche. The relationship between home and school is mutually supportive and very productive. Parents have made significant improvements to the school environment. Their weekly coffee morning is well attended when the ICT suite is available for their use and tasks are undertaken, such as counting the tokens offering free equipment for the school. Parents raise substantial funds for the school through the Parent Teacher Association, which is also active in promoting a wide range of social and healthy life-style activities. Virtually all parents support their children with their homework.

32. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their child's progress in reports and regular consultation sessions. Parents have an input into the individual education plans and are consulted about the targets.
33. The excellent links with the community include a very close relationship with the parish. The parish priest and parish worker are regular visitors to the school, preparing the pupils to receive the Catholic sacraments, leading assemblies and participating as governors. Children visit the church regularly, both with their families and from school. Some of the adults from the school also worship regularly at the church.
34. As a Beacon School, Holy Family has developed excellent and extensive networks with other schools and colleges in the area and more widely, enabling teachers to share good practice in a range of subjects. The school is recognised for the training of intending and newly qualified teachers and liaises in this work with several universities. There are also well established sporting and other links with local primary schools that help to extend pupils' curriculum experience. Most of the pupils transfer to the two Catholic secondary schools in the area. The school has strong links with these, which ensures a smooth and successful transition. Pupils are involved in shared projects of work, some of which are completed after transfer. Teachers from the secondary schools come to Holy Family on numerous occasions so that they, and the pupils, know each other well prior to transfer.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. Within the Catholic ethos of the school the headteacher brings a strong sense of purpose and clarity of vision. The leadership of other key staff is good overall, as is the governance of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher, with good support from the deputy headteacher, sets high expectations, with a clear vision for the school and strong sense of common purpose and direction.
- Governors are effective in helping to shape the vision and direction of the school.
- Good systems are established for monitoring provision and pupils' progress in English and mathematics.
- The school plans its development effectively but the difficulty of the recruitment and retention of experienced teachers is a constraint on progress.
- Finances are well analysed and used, so the school makes best use of the money available to it.

## Commentary

35. Following the last inspection the very experienced headteacher and most of the experienced key staff left, mostly to move on to promotion. The present headteacher has worked hard, and mostly successfully, to maintain the high standards of that time and the Beacon School status. The very high housing costs of the area have made it increasingly difficult to recruit experienced teachers, but the governors have been remarkably resourceful in setting up a competition and awards for teacher trainees from the local Catholic college. Through this and other contacts, they have managed to maintain a full staffing. Unfortunately many of the young teachers leave to go home out of the country after a couple of years, so it has been increasingly difficult to develop the skills of the teaching force overall. Even so, in terms of staffing, Holy Family has fared better than many schools in the outer London area.
36. Since her appointment the headteacher has established herself well. With good support from the deputy headteacher and the senior management team she has effectively set challenging targets for the staff and has been successful in motivating staff. She has gained the confidence of parents and secured the commitment of all to school improvement. One result is the excellent behaviour of pupils and their relationships with each other and with adults. All in the school have a strong sense of teamwork and working towards a common goal. This is exemplified by the work of area leaders, each of whom has responsibility for the day-to-day management and monitoring of pupils in two year groups. They are effective in leading the planning and provision for subjects across the classes in their area, as well as the pastoral care of the pupils. Teachers with curriculum leadership roles take their responsibilities seriously and are working, with varying degrees of effectiveness, to create and implement schemes of work and assessment in their subjects. In English and mathematics they monitor work effectively and have clear views about the effectiveness of the provision. In some other subjects, however, monitoring is weaker and co-ordinators have a less clear view of the strengths and weakness of provision and pupils' progress. At present there is no Foundation Stage co-ordinator. The work is being covered by an area leader and, while the arrangement is satisfactory, new teachers are not being supported and supervised closely enough.
37. The school has very good systems to monitor performance in English and mathematics, to review its effectiveness and to take appropriate action. Pupils are regularly assessed through tests and in their lessons. The results are collated and analysed. Targets for pupils and teachers are set and adjusted frequently. In this way, for example, standards in boys' writing at Year 6 were identified as an area for improvement and effective action was taken to improve them. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is well established. It is frequent and rigorous and makes a significant contribution to the school's plans for development.
38. The management of the special needs provision within the school is good. The special educational needs coordinator has a clear understanding of the procedures to meet requirements and provides good support for class teachers. Teachers and assistants work well as a team to ensure that the specific targets on the individual education plans are met. All staff take great care to include all pupils in every activity and, if necessary, to overcome any possible handicap to achieve this.
39. The school improvement plan is an effective tool for development, with a clear, measurable agenda for improving achievement, teaching and learning. It sets out clear

strategies for the development of the school. The present plans seek to make the best use of the funds available to support the priorities for school improvement and are closely linked to the planned provision of training for teachers and support staff. Very good systems for performance management are in place and learning support assistants are included. Good use is made of specific grants; for example, to provide sufficient teaching assistants in classes. The principles of best value are applied well and contribute to the improved cost effectiveness of the school. The senior managers use information from the local education authority to compare the school's performance with that of other similar schools.

40. Governors are committed and very supportive of the school and carry out their statutory duties very well. They are committed to the school's principles of inclusion and raising achievement. Most governors visit the school regularly and the Chair of Governors works voluntarily in the school, so that the governors are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body is rooted firmly in the Parish, which gives close and regular contact with parents and pupils. At present the governors are working to resolve the problems created by increasing staff costs. They are currently using their reserves to manage the effects of the increase, but have contingency plans to resolve the over-spending should it become necessary in the longer term.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income*	1,063,495	Balance from previous year	110,409
Total expenditure	1,038,635	Balance carried forward to the next	135,269
Expenditure per pupil	2,411		

- *Income is inflated by a £28000 capital fund, which has to be repaid to the local education authority within the next few years*

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **Areas of Learning in the Foundation Stage**

41. There is good provision overall for children in the Foundation Stage. When children first start in the Nursery their attainment levels are broadly in line with expectations for their age. As at the last inspection, children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress so that almost all meet the expected learning goals by the end of the Reception class. A significant number of children achieve beyond this, especially in personal development, language and number skills, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, and their standards are above average when they leave Reception. It is evident from the children's progress that teaching quality over time has been good. Many Reception children achieve their expected targets by the end of spring term because they are given a very good start in the Nursery. However, during the inspection, some of teaching in the Reception class, by temporary teachers, was not based on good planning and effective use of assessment. Currently there is a vacancy for the post of co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage classes and the structures to support new, inexperienced teachers in the use of assessment and planning are not strong enough. This has resulted in a lack of challenge in some literacy and number lessons, which impedes children's progress because teachers do not build on what children already know and can do. Systems for assessing and recording children's progress and achievements are good in the Nursery class, but currently the practice is not fully shared throughout the whole of the Foundation Stage. Teaching space and resources are generous, and generally used well to improve learning and achievement. Most of the pupils who come to the school with English as an additional language have more than sufficient English to gain full access to the curriculum, and those who need additional help are well supported and quickly acquire English speaking skills. At the present time there are no children at an early stage of learning English.

### **PERSONAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Many children exceed the standards expected by the end of Reception.
- Children develop good attitudes to work and relationships with others.
- Teachers and adults are skilled at helping to develop children's confidence and self-esteem.

#### **Commentary**

42. Teaching and learning are very good in this area of the curriculum. Children achieve very well, they are given a very good start in their social skills and this has a positive impact on their attitudes and behaviour as they progress through the school. Children in the Nursery are confident about leaving parents and carers, and selecting their own activities at the start of the day.
43. Children develop very good relationships with each other and happily share resources in a friendly and creative environment. They feel very comfortable and at home in their

surroundings because all are made to feel welcome. Children know the daily routines and listen carefully to their teachers and follow instruction. In the Reception Class, children sustain concentration very well during the more structured activities. They take turns fairly and respect others' feelings by being polite and co-operative. All manage their own clothes before and after physical activities. Teachers have a very high expectation of the children's behaviour and deal very sensitively with specific needs. Adults provide excellent role models for children in the way they work together and this helps children to form trusting relationships with them, and gives them the security of knowing they can 'try again.'

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good overall and children achieve well.
- The level of challenge is not always consistent with the children's achievements.

### **Commentary**

44. By the end of Reception, standards in this area are above average. Children are encouraged to explain things and share ideas and are provided with stimulating activities to encourage creative talk. For example, in the 'shop' in the Reception class there was some astute 'buying and selling', helping children to develop mathematical language. In Reception, the 'jungle' role play also provided a good starting point for discussion about animals and hot countries. Children develop a strong interest in stories and books. Good teaching of the letter sounds provides children with early reading skills, so they quickly learn that text has meaning as well as pictures. They listen attentively to stories and enjoy talking about them. A good example was in the Nursery where children were captivated by 'Handa's Surprise'. This provided a very good extension to children's knowledge and understanding of 'hot countries'.
45. In Reception classes, stories such as 'Rainbow Fish' are very popular and also provide a focus for personal development, such as the importance of friendships. Books are plentiful in the Foundation Stage, and easily accessible to children, enabling them to browse quietly if they choose. Children make good progress in writing. They are encouraged to write about a range of topics and strong links are made between early reading and writing skills. Children have good letter formation and before the end of Reception, most are beginning to write recognisable words and simple sentences independently. The pace of learning over time has resulted in good achievement. During the inspection, however, there was evidence of children in some classes not being sufficiently challenged because they were engaged in tasks that were too simple for them, because the Reception teacher was not fully aware of the children's levels of ability.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall and children achieve well.
- Resources are good. These are used well to help children learn.
- Not enough account is taken of children's prior achievement when planning activities for some lessons.

### **Commentary**

46. Standards are above average by the end of Reception year. Most children achieve the expected goals before that and have begun working at the first National Curriculum levels. For example, all count reliably to 20 and are beginning to count in sequences such as twos. Some higher attaining children recognise sequences of 10 and can read numbers up to 100. They learn the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes and use mathematical language such as 'more,' 'less,' or 'longer' and 'shorter' when making comparisons. Skills and understanding are reinforced well through role-play as well as sand and water activities. Teachers are good at questioning children to probe their understanding about number, shape and pattern. Resources are used well to provide interesting activities for children. Teachers add further interest by linking mathematical and creative work, for example in the Nursery, children use coloured sticky shapes to make shape pictures. Children in Reception are introduced to elements of the national numeracy strategy. Oral and mental sessions on the carpet provide opportunities for children to improve their mental agility by counting and singing number rhymes.
47. During the inspection, the group activities in some lessons in the Reception class did not match the children's high capabilities. For example, some were given the task of matching simple shapes they already knew, when the resources available could have engaged them in much more challenging investigations. In another lesson, children who had mentally solved a calculation that they found fairly simple, were then asked to do six similar written examples, followed by colouring in objects on the paper, despite the available resources which could have extended their thinking much further. This is partly a result of support structures not having sufficient time before the inspection to deal with the specific needs of practitioners who are new to both the school and the Foundation Stage.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide good opportunities to encourage children's curiosity and help them to experience the world around them.
- Children achieve well and develop good skills, particularly in ICT.
- Interesting first hand experiences enrich children's learning.

### **Commentary**

48. All children are set to attain and some exceed the early learning goals by the end of Reception. Many have done so by the end of the spring term. Standards overall in this area are above average. Teaching and learning are good and teachers create a rich and stimulating environment in which children learn and achieve well. Good links are made with other areas of learning. This is particularly successful in the Nursery. For example,

children's language development was improved when they examined some more unusual fruits such as mango and passion fruit before cutting them up and tasting them. Later, their creative skills were developed when they made animal masks. These stimulated some very creative play. Children in the Nursery and Reception visit the very well equipped ICT suite weekly. They work with increasing confidence and in the classroom, independently work their way through simple programs such as 'Dressing Teddy', which involves controlling the mouse to 'click and drag' images across the screen. Good use is made of the school grounds, where there is a pond to stimulate scientific investigations and the 'Dell' where Nursery children go on their first 'Bear hunt'! Children learn to care for animals by looking after the rabbit and guinea pig and plant sunflower seeds in pots which they later transfer to the garden plot. Outings to Legoland, a farm and an animal park help broaden children's horizons, whilst providing them with exciting first hand experiences on which to build their learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources for outdoor activities are very good.
- Nursery teachers use opportunities very well.
- Planning is less effective in the Reception class.

### **Commentary**

49. Teaching is sound and children achieve satisfactorily in physical development. Almost all are set to reach their expected target by the end of Reception. During physical education lessons in the hall they demonstrate expected control of their body movements and are aware of others working around them, They run, skip and change direction without inhibition and sustain activity for a reasonable time. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to practise control of small tools and implements. Children use small and large construction pieces and 'small world toys' effectively. They use pencils and brushes correctly and handle a range of implements for cutting and shaping dough. The adventure playground adjacent to the Nursery area is a very good resource for climbing, balancing and swinging and there is a generous allocation of large and wheeled toys. Better use is made of the outdoor equipment by Nursery staff, where activities 'spill out' of the classroom. For example, a very good mathematics session was seen where children learned to recognise and match sets of numbers by play with large sized dominoes. Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills through physical activities are not planned so effectively in Reception classes. Children sometimes go out to consolidate what they have learned inside, but overall planning for physical development is not as well integrated into other areas of learning.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities for children to explore their creativity.

- Resources are good and promote high standards.
- There are good opportunities for role play.

## **Commentary**

50. Teaching and learning are good and teachers plan challenging activities, which give children the chance to use a good range of materials. They explore colour, texture and shape, for example when painting sunflowers in the style of Van Gough, or using painted pasta shells to create African style necklaces. In one lesson, children worked with paint, chalk and pencils to create their sunflower pictures. A parent helper was very effective in encouraging children to observe closely, so that their pictures were well proportioned and carefully drawn. Children have opportunities to sing and perform on musical instruments, and sometimes respond to music by learning simple country dance steps. There are good opportunities for role play in both Nursery and Reception classes, and adults help to sustain play by talking to children and providing them with ideas. Props such as bush hats and binoculars in the 'jungle' corner provide a good source of stimulation and ideas for children. Children achieve well in this area and standards of attainment are above average when they leave the Reception class.



## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision for English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average in all aspects of the subject at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching is good and sometimes very good and pupils are very keen to learn.
- Pupils are very confident in speaking and listening and use these skills well in their reading and writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading and attain high standards by the end of Year 6.
- A wide range of writing opportunities is offered to pupils that enables them to write for a range of different purpose and audiences and to use their literacy skills in other subjects.
- Good subject leadership gives a successful impetus to improvement and supports staff well.

#### **Commentary**

51. Work seen during the inspection showed well above average standards by the end of Year 6 in all aspects of the subject and pupils are achieving very well. In Year 2 reading and speaking and listening are well above average and writing is above average. There is no discernable difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Lower ability pupils make very good progress and most are on track to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs generally make similar progress to their peers, because they are well supported. Those for whom English is an additional language also make similar progress to the rest of the class because they have at least comparable English language skills. Overall, standards and the provision for English are broadly similar to those reported at the last inspection.
52. Teachers across the school value the thoughts and ideas of pupils and this encourages pupils themselves to be reflective and confident, as well as appreciative of each other's contributions. Year 5 pupils spoke clearly and with expression when they led a whole-school assembly; the rest of the school listened closely and with clear enjoyment and understanding. In Year 6, pupils talk productively to partners at many points in lessons to develop their understanding of the criteria for biographical writing. For example, in one lesson seen pupils shared with each other their opinions of the stories written by Michael Morpurgo and the information they had found out about him for homework. One Year 6 pupil's idea, that biography gives a celebration of someone's life when they die, was a moving spiritual moment in the lesson.
53. Pupils in Year 2 read fluently and with understanding. They use phonic skills well to help them to read unknown words. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils' reading responses were very good as they read the parts of the lesson from the interactive whiteboard. They identified 'synonyms', discussed the meaning of the term and then paired together different examples, all at a very good pace. Lower ability pupils in this lesson were well supported by an additional teacher and teaching assistant, so that they achieved standards

expected for their age. Pupils from a guided reading group in Year 6 read to an inspector and discussed their views on reading. They were very enthusiastic about reading and thought their teachers were wrong that boys were not as keen on this activity as girls.

54. Pupils' work shows a very good coverage and range of styles of writing, such as report and letter writing, poetry, instructional texts and writing of biographies and stories. Spelling standards are above average. The writing is lively and engages the interest of the reader; it is well presented and takes good account of conventions such as subheadings. In stories in Years 5 and 6, pupils build suspense and convey the feelings of the characters with great effect –

“Finally I turned. I looked. My mouth flopped open, my eyes widened..... I tried not to panic but I could not help it. Then I heard the faint cry of my baby cousin. I ran as fast as my stumpy legs would take me, my heart pumping with the relief”.

55. A number of factors contribute to pupils' very good achievement. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good with several very good lessons, particularly in Year 6, where teachers use their considerable subject knowledge and expertise to challenge and extend pupils' learning very effectively and establish very good achievement overall.
56. Teachers use marking as a very positive tool to give pupils feedback on their learning and on their next steps. Year 6 pupils are very clear that they read marking comments at the start of the next lesson and that these always give good points on how to improve. This ensures that pupils know their individual and group learning goals even though they are not always a strong feature in teachers' lesson plans across the school. Good use is made of ICT in English. Pupils develop good word processing skills as they move through the school and they use the computers to research, to make notes and to draft and redraft their work.
57. As part of the school's work in developing the way teachers and pupils think about learning, staff plan activities which are very effective in involving pupils' actively in their learning. These strategies are particularly effective in developing pupils' speaking and learning skills. In a Year 2 lesson based on 'Hansel and Gretel', pupils responded with appropriate noises to reflect anger, sadness and fear; they followed the acting of the story in costume with total concentration, then role-played the characters and performed to the class. Pupils listened closely to the teacher's prompts for improving their performance and then noticeably improved their speaking skills in their second try. By the end of the lesson they had a good bank of adjectives to use for their creative writing in the next lesson.
58. The subject co-ordinator gives good leadership in the subject and has a good knowledge of standards achieved. Assessment is good, the results of tests are analysed closely and used to set targets for pupils, as well as to inform the literacy action plan for the year. This plan is very focused on tracking pupils' progress and has clear measurable learning criteria for success. The co-ordinator has led training well and this has had a positive effect on teaching and learning in the subject. Monitoring of English has been effectively carried out by the senior staff, but the subject co-ordinator is becoming increasingly involved.

## **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

59. The school has developed good strategies to promote literacy across the curriculum and pupils' literacy skills are used well to reinforce learning in other subjects. Written work across the curriculum is generally of a good standard. Language skills are well developed and make a useful contribution to pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils use language well to answer questions and to join in discussions. There is a good emphasis in mathematics and science lessons on the use of the correct technical language. In mathematics, pupils use measurement words such as metre and kilos and number words such as denominator and numerator very confidently. In science, pupils in Year 6 use terminology for currents such as voltage, insulate, resistor, conduct. Reading skills are well applied in ICT where pupils read and evaluate themselves against the descriptions of ICT skills they have to learn.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above in Year 6 due to good quality teaching.
- Pupils' mathematical knowledge has benefited from an additional emphasis on problem-solving activities.
- Teaching and learning are overall good and often very good in Year 6.
- The starter activities and the brain gym sessions are used well to reinforce basic mathematical skills.
- Good leadership by the coordinator has highlighted elements that need a greater focus, contributing to standards.
- Planning does not always meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.

## Commentary

60. Pupils start in Year 1 having had a good grounding in mathematical concepts in the Foundation Stage. These skills are built on in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve well, reaching standards that are above the level normally seen at the end of Year 2 with a growing proportion working at the higher Level 3. Pupils add and subtract, using numbers up to and beyond 100 and recognising the importance of place value in their work. They have good understanding of measurement using the appropriate metric measurements with accuracy.
61. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is very good and by the end of Year 6, the standards reached are well above average. The majority of pupils can convert fractions into decimals and calculate the area and perimeter of a range of different shapes. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding to successfully solve a range of problems. Pupils with English as an additional language have full access to the mathematics curriculum and achieve as well as their peers.
62. Throughout the school mental mathematics and brain gym sessions are well organised and contribute positively to pupils' well-established understanding of number patterns and sequences. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6, those working to the higher level 5, are confident to use brackets for more complex calculations. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set. The setting of pupils to enable teachers to provide work that closely matches pupils' needs and the good support given by teachers and teaching assistants help to overcome any learning difficulties.
63. Teaching and learning are good and in Year 6 the teaching and learning are very good. This very good teaching and learning is characterised by high expectations and rigorous challenge, which raise pupils' achievement at that age. In general, lessons are well planned and reflect the recommended guidelines of the national numeracy strategy. On the whole assessment is good and is used well for planning, but there are a few occasions when the planning does not identify clearly the learning objectives for higher attaining pupils or provide relevant, challenging extension tasks. Teachers manage pupils very well, allowing lessons and learning to proceed with pace. All lessons begin briskly with good mental starters and brain gym sessions. These activities quickly focus pupils' attention, contributing positively to pupils' learning. In very good lessons, teachers use ICT effectively to establish and reinforce pupils' understanding. This was very evident in a Year 4 lesson on measurement. Here the teacher used a measurement simulation program to help pupils' understanding of litres and centilitres, and how to convert imperial

measurement into metric. Although the majority of lessons conclude with a plenary session these are often brief with insufficient questioning to ascertain pupils' understanding, or opportunities for pupils to talk about what they have learnt during the sessions. On one occasion when learning was less effective, the lesson was too teacher-directed, with limited opportunities for pupils to work independently.

64. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The scheme of work and arrangements for assessment are good. The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has a clear vision about the future developments for the subject and the need to maintain the high standards already established. A review of pupils' work and progress highlighted that problem-solving was not as well established as other skills. The increased emphasis on this element in the curriculum has improved pupils' confidence and their overall knowledge. The improvement in the quality of provision has been good since the previous inspection and the high standards have been maintained.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. The overall use of mathematics across the curriculum is good. Use was seen in several subjects in other curriculum areas. These included presenting findings of scientific experiments in graph form, recording results on charts in geography and using timelines in history. In ICT lessons wide use of mathematical formulas was observed, with pupils using spreadsheets and data handling programs.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since last year and are now above average at the end of Year 2.
- The school is working to regain previous high standards and pupils throughout the school are now achieving well.
- The quality of teaching is improving and there is more good and very good teaching than hitherto.
- The presentation of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 is not good enough.
- Teachers' marking does not help pupils sufficiently to evaluate and improve their work.

### **Commentary**

66. Standards seen in science are above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6.
67. Standards are improving. The school is working hard to regain the high levels of attainment reported in the 1998 inspection. Since the previous inspection, changes in staffing resulted in science being left without a subject leader for two years, during which time standards and achievement declined. As a consequence, results in 2003 were low when compared with similar schools. There are signs now, however, of some good improvement stemming from the sharper focus brought to science by the new leadership. Standards at the end of Year 2 are set to be above average with a high proportion of

pupils achieving beyond the level expected for their age. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average, following a period of lower attainment, so that pupils in Year 6 are making up lost ground and their current rate of progress is good. Although pupils' good achievement seen during the inspection heralds a new start, the impact of previous years without proper target setting and necessary challenge in teaching has not been fully overcome, so that standards are not as high as those reported at the last inspection.

68. There is a strong focus on investigative science. This motivates pupils because they enjoy the practical 'hands on' approach, and they achieve good knowledge and understanding. This was demonstrated in a Year 6 lesson by pupils who worked out a way to measure the effect of adding more resistors to an electrical circuit.
69. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching was good overall and some very good lessons were also seen. This is an improvement on the teaching reported previously. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, consequently teaching is challenging and accurate. Teachers use appropriate scientific terminology and also expect pupils to use it when they answer questions. For example, pupils in Year 5 used correct terms such as 'half,' 'crescent' and 'gibbous' when talking about the phases of the moon. The pace of teaching is brisk because lesson objectives are clear and teachers are sure of their subject. Skilful intervention to clear up misconceptions and re-focus pupils' learning was a very strong feature of most lessons. ICT is used very effectively by teachers to deliver lessons and by pupils to support their learning. Teachers' use of interactive whiteboards ensures that information is prepared well and all pupils are attentive in lessons. In an ICT lesson, Year 5 pupils extended their learning and achievement by preparing slides for an 'Earth, Moon and Sun' presentation. This was a very effective link between the two subjects. The good learning and achievement is underpinned by excellent relationships and exemplary behaviour in lessons. Teachers praise and reward pupils fairly. Pupils know that their contributions to lessons are highly valued and this promotes an ethos of trust and co-operation in lessons. Teachers take very good account of pupils who have additional needs and ensure they are fully included by giving extra time and opportunity for them to contribute their ideas. The quality of presentation of pupils' work and development of recording skills in the Years 1 and 2 could be further improved. Teachers' marking throughout the school shows some inconsistencies in quality and impact on standards. For example, although pupils have targets in the front of notebooks, these are not referred to in marking, to inform pupils about how well they are doing or to challenge them about what they need to do next.
70. The newly appointed co-ordinators for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 work very well together and are beginning to establish a firm base for improvement. At present leadership and management of science are satisfactory, but are improving rapidly. A revised curriculum plan has brought a more systematic approach to the teaching of skills and training for teachers, combined with some very good subject knowledge and expertise, is having a positive influence on achievement. The co-ordinators' monitoring and evaluation of the new strategies has not yet taken place. Monitoring skills are being developed so that the full impact of the co-ordinators' work can be assessed and necessary action planned for the future.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision for ICT is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and improving in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is very good.
- Resources are very good and have a very positive impact on learning.
- Leadership and management of ICT are very good.

## **Commentary**

71. Standards seen in ICT are above average for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when Year 2 standards were judged to be average and there were gaps in the ICT provision in the older classes. The use of national subject guidelines has enabled the school to improve curriculum planning, which now fully meets requirements. Overall, provision in ICT is enhanced by the quality and range of resources. Almost all classes have an interactive whiteboard which teachers and pupils use well. A very well equipped ICT suite, which has 32 computers, means that pupils work individually and this significantly helps their progress. All computers are networked so teachers can control the pace of the lessons. The provision for ICT, particularly the staffing provision, enables pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN, to make good progress.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is very good because of the high level of teachers' subject knowledge and expertise. Lessons are very well planned and the planning is based on good assessment. Teachers are also supported in lessons by the very highly skilled subject leader and a teaching assistant who is also a technician. Lessons are challenging and very well focused on improving skills, which can be linked in to other subjects. This is made possible by the very good liaison and teamwork between class teachers and the co-ordinator. In one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 2 were taught how to download examples of artists' work from the internet. They then used a computer art program to create their own pictures in the style of Mondrian and Jackson Pollock. Pupils have very good attitudes to ICT. Teachers provide very good role models for pupils in the way they prepare lessons, using the interactive whiteboards as well as computer generated plans. In one lesson, the pace and clarity of teaching, the teacher's personal skills and high expectations resulted in outstanding learning and achievement. The whole of a Year 4 class learned to input data onto a spreadsheet and use different formulae to find the sum of a column of figures. By the end of the lesson, a significant number of pupils had worked out the formula for converting litres to millilitres, linking skills effectively to their work in mathematics.
73. The subject is led and managed very well, but the improvements to the ICT provision have not yet taken full effect. Shortcomings reported previously have been tackled with energy and vigour and have been successfully overcome and there is still potential for further improvement. There are very good links with the local secondary school and with parents, some of whom attend the weekly 'Cyber Café' to learn new skills. Lunchtime and evening sessions for staff and pupils ensure the best use is made of the resources and there is an on-going improvement of ICT skills.

## **ICT across the curriculum**

74. ICT is used well across the curriculum. Classrooms are well resourced with computers and interactive whiteboards. Pupils have good levels of ICT competency and use their

skills to word process in English and other subjects and to gather and arrange data for mathematics. There are good examples of work in other subjects such as art and design, and in history and geography pupils make good use of the internet to research their topics.

## HUMANITIES

*Geography and history were sampled. Religious education is subject to a separate inspection by the local Diocese.*

75. Pupils in a Year 2 **geography** lesson compared jobs on Katie Morag's island with those in Slough and compared the local island store with British supermarkets. Pupils demonstrated that they know geographical words such as 'harbour', and that islanders may hold several jobs, for example if they are a part time fireman. In work seen in pupils' books, they can record good descriptions of India and make comparisons between Indian and English features such as houses.
76. In a Year 3 lesson observed, pupils demonstrated standards that were above average for their age as they discussed, described and analysed physical features in photographs of the locality from current and past times. They gave evidence and explanations to support their views. They were amazed to discover that Langley Pond has been replaced by a modern roundabout. Oral work was stronger than written work as the teacher's questioning helped them to be very specific.
77. Scrutiny of work in **history** showed broadly average standards. Pupils in Year 2 make comparisons of a seaside town 'then and now' and they find and write facts about Florence Nightingale, drawing comparisons about nurses in her time and nowadays. A display on the Ancient Greeks in Year 4 showed good art and literacy links to support their learning in history. Work in Year 4 books showed that teachers develop pupils' skills well in using information and pupils give thinking responses to questions posed. They write descriptions of the gods when studying Ancient Greece. They cover a good range of work about the Anglo Saxons and express opinions about Anglo Saxon customs.



## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Music and physical education were inspected in detail and are reported in full below. Design and technology and art and design were sampled.*

78. The range and quality of **design and technology** work on display suggests that average standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Some interesting projects have taken place, such as the construction of a model village by Year 5 pupils. This was part of an initiative introduced by the Local Authority Business Partnership. Pupils in Year 4 undertook some work reflecting native American culture when they solved the problem of constructing wigwams and large scale totem poles. In the lesson observed, good teaching set challenging tasks for Year 6 pupils as they designed and made kites.
79. The co-ordinator, though new to the post, has identified areas for action and begun to influence practice throughout the school by revising the curriculum and introducing new ideas for topics, whereby skills can be planned and developed more systematically. Time for the subject is linked to the provision for art and design and is lower than is usual.
80. The quality of **art and design** work displayed around the school is above average. The work covers a wide range of style and media, including two and three dimensions. Much of the work is imaginative and demonstrates progression as pupils move through the school. The subject co-ordinator has developed a very good scheme of work that is notable for its references to, and use of, ICT to enrich the art and design curriculum. Time for art and design is low because it alternates with design and technology. The school has a good record of enrichment for art and design through special events, artists visiting the school and visits to galleries and museums.

### Music

The provision for music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve above average standards in music.
- Teaching is good.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their musical experiences.

### Commentary

81. Attainment in music is above average at the end of both Years 2 and 6 in performing, composing and listening. Pupils sing willingly in time and in tune with a good tone. Skills of pitch and rhythm are developed well in lessons. Pupils have good opportunities to respond both in groups and as individuals. They listen to music carefully and can talk about what they have heard. Pupils demonstrate a good level of compositional skills and good understanding of compositional device and musical form.
82. Pupils make good progress in music as they move through the school and achievement is good in all years. Musical skills and understanding are developed at all levels. Some

pupils extend their expertise by taking part in additional musical activities such as the choir, or by learning an instrument.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The music specialist has good subject knowledge and understanding. Consequently, expectations in music lessons are high. Planning is good and aims are clear. The teacher uses a good range of strategies to achieve her aims. Lessons are well managed; control is firm but kindly and pupils are kept consistently to task so that they concentrate well on their work and make worthwhile musical decisions.
84. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The curriculum for music is of good quality with a good range of activities and music from different styles and cultures, but opportunities to work with computers in the subject are limited. Assessment is still under development, but sufficient evaluations are made in each lesson to enable effective planning for the next stage of learning. Extra-curricular activities are strong and pupils make music with instruments and with their voices. The subject is well resourced and accommodated so that learning is well supported, but there is a need for more variety of classroom percussion instruments so that pupils are not just working at the upper end of the treble range. Since the last inspection standards and the quality of provision for music have been maintained.

## **Physical education**

The provision for physical education (PE) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well.
- The teaching of basic skills is effective and pupils with special educational needs are very well included.
- The recently appointed specialist PE teacher, who assumed coordinator responsibility in January 2004, has a strong vision for the development of PE in the school and provision is improving.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities and the use of external coaches in lessons and after school enrich the physical development of all pupils.

### **Commentary**

85. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average, as they were in the last inspection, and pupils achieve well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show considerable discipline and control in using bats and hockey sticks to dribble, stop and pass balls on their own and with partners. Year 1 pupils can balance a ball on a bat, lower it to the ground and speed up the actions.
86. In Year 6 standards are average and achievement is satisfactory in most aspects of the subject. From a Year 5 lesson seen, however, the majority of pupils are achieving well above average standards in swimming and can use more than one stroke to swim a length with ease.
87. In most lessons learning is good and pupils make good progress. However, the newly introduced specialist teaching has not been in place long enough to establish good

achievement overall at the end of Year 6. Even so, the quality of teaching is good overall and the new specialist subject teacher has good subject knowledge, which supports high expectations of the pupils. He teaches all classes and plans lessons well. His demonstrations give pupils a clear understanding of how to practise skills, although pupils in Years 1 and 2 would sometimes benefit from having equipment in their hands during the demonstrations so that, for example, they can work out how to position their hands on the bats.

88. Activities give a good balance between the learning of skills and a variety of games to put these into practice. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the focused support they receive from additional teachers or teaching assistants. Pupils learn how to warm up at the start of the lessons and there are some opportunities for pupils to demonstrate and evaluate, but these could be extended.
89. The subject coordinator has made a good start in leading the subject and has a clear vision to give a broad range of physical activities so that all pupils can find something they enjoy within the subject. Schemes of work are being established and all pupils are benefiting from the good quality and match of resources in lessons. The coordinator has not yet had time to monitor teaching and learning, for example, the quality of teaching and learning in classes taught by external coaches. Assessment systems have been set up but have not yet impacted on raising standards by the end of Year 6. At this stage leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory.
90. The coordinator is maintaining and extending the school's good external links, for example with the Sports Science College, Reading Football Club, London Irish Rugby Football Club and London Broncos. Cluster team events and leagues in football and netball are being well promoted and the coordinator is working with the local secondary school to develop the use of GCSE students to team-teach with him in classes. All of this is bringing expertise into the school and is raising pupils' aspirations and achievement. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and is set to improve.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

*This area of the curriculum was sampled.*

91. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are taught through religious education lessons, which were not inspected, and through science and physical education. However, the school does not yet have a scheme of work or a structure for planning that ensures that all aspects of the subject are properly covered. The management of the school is aware of the deficiency and plans are well advanced to devise and implement a scheme of work as part of the school's plans to gain the 'Healthy School' Silver award.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*