

INSPECTION REPORT

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Southend-on-Sea

LEA area: Southend-on-Sea

Unique reference number: 115146

Headteacher: Mrs B Frampton

Lead inspector: Mrs H E Davies

Dates of inspection: 10th - 13th November 2003

Inspection number: 257383

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;	211
School address:	Windermere Road Southend-on-Sea
Postcode:	SS1 2RF
Telephone number:	01702 468052
Fax number:	01702 603061
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Keeble
Date of previous inspection:	08/06/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart Primary and Nursery School is of average size with 227 pupils on roll, 123 boys and 104 girls. Of these, 19 children are part-time in the nursery. The school serves a residential area comprising of privately owned and rented accommodation. In 2001 the school was awarded "Investors in People", in 2002 the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and in 2002 and 2003 a Schools Achievement Award. An Advanced Healthy Schools award was achieved in 2003. The school is part of an Education Action Zone. Three quarters of the pupils are of White British ethnic background, with some pupils from Irish, Black, Asian and Chinese ethnic backgrounds. A higher than average number of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Eighteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs. Thirteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Attainment on entry to the nursery varies from year to year, but is broadly average overall.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21687	Mrs H E Davies	Lead inspector	Foundation stage ¹ Mathematics Art and design
14061	Mr L Shipman	Lay inspector	
18201	Mrs M Danby	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music
29688	Mr M Brammer	Team inspector	English Citizenship Geography History Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7JX

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¹ The foundation stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school. The headteacher gives a very clear lead to all those working and learning in the school. She is well supported by a committed deputy head teacher, hard working senior staff and effective governors. Relationships and behaviour in the school are very good and supported by the very positive Catholic ethos. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. It is very good in the foundation stage with some very good teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2. Most pupils achieve well. The school has effective inclusion procedures ensuring that pupils including those with special educational needs, and English as an additional language learn as well as their friends. The school has developed excellent links with parents and carers whose support enriches the learning of pupils. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. Taking account of the effectiveness of the school judged against the well above average funding Sacred Heart School provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership of the school by the head teacher is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. It is very good in the foundation stage.
- When compared to all schools, pupils generally achieve above average standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Sometimes the learning of some pupils is not as good as it could be.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and their very good behaviour are promoted very well by the school's very good provision for spiritual, moral and social development.
- There are very effective procedures for assessing pupils' progress.
- Pupils are cared for very well and they have very positive views of the school. Pupils enjoy their learning.
- The school has developed excellent links with parents and carers, which enriches pupils learning.
- The school has rightly identified the need to consolidate developments in art and design and extend the curriculum offered to pupils in geography.

The school has made **good progress** since the previous inspection. All key issues have been addressed. Many aspects of the life of the school have also improved. For example, pupils attitudes and behaviour, assessment procedures, standards achieved in English, especially in writing, by pupils by the age of 11, the quality of care provided and parents' views of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

Key: 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.

Achievement is good overall. When pupils enter the nursery attainment varies from year to year but is generally average overall, appropriate to their age. In the foundation stage classes, children

achieve well and have many varied, interesting and exciting opportunities so that most of the children attain the standards expected. In the areas of personal, social and emotional development the majority exceed expectations. Pupils achieve well across Key Stage 1², although achievement is much better in Year 2 than in Year 1. Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 2³, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where standards are above average, with writing being a particular strength. The table above shows that compared to all schools, pupils attained results that were well above average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. However, and not typical of the school, this group did not achieve as well as those in similar schools based on prior attainment. This is because by the end of Year 6 approximately 5 per cent of the group had left and 14 per cent of the pupils had not been in the school in Year 2, there was a significant minority of pupils with special educational needs and some pupils had behavioural problems. These factors impacted negatively on the overall standards achieved. Even so more pupils than average attained the higher Level 5 in each subject and the value added measure in national data is good. Compared to similar schools (prior attainment) in 2002, 11 year olds achieved well above average in each subject and were in the top 5 per cent nationally in English. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language achieve well and reach standards expected of them. Inspection evidence indicates that a significant number of pupils in the present Year 6 are likely to achieve standards that are above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), many pupils are likely to achieve the higher Level 5 in each subject. Standards meet expectations in art and design. The use of ICT in different subjects is good and supports learning well. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good overall and is reflected in the very high standard of pupils' personal qualities.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the foundation stage. In Key Stage 1 and 2 it is good overall, it is very good at the end of both key stages. The best teaching is characterised by very enthusiastic teachers who motivate pupils with interesting lessons and clear shared learning objectives. Where the learning is not as good the organisation and management of pupils are not effective in ensuring that planned work is achieved. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who do not speak English as a home language are very well supported and as a result make the same gains in their learning as other pupils. The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced, and relevant to pupils' interests. Extra-curricular activities support learning very well. Good quality and quantity ICT resources ensure that pupils use and are familiar with the many ways in which technology can make an impact on learning. Accommodation and resources are good overall, with many improvements constantly being made to an old building and an unusual site. A strong Catholic ethos is embedded in the day- to-day life of the school. Pupils are cared for very well, relationships are very good ensuring that pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to school. The views of all those involved in the life of the school, pupils, parents, staff and governors are regularly sought and acted upon very effectively. The school has developed excellent links with parents who enthusiastically support the life of the school and the learning of their children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher is a very effective leader with a clear view of what the school aims to achieve. She promotes very good relationships within the school community. The deputy head teacher and senior management team are hard working and assess the achievements of pupils very well. Management is good overall, very clear policies and procedures cover the day-to-day running of the school, teaching and learning are monitored regularly however, despite these good efforts, the school has not yet succeeded in ensuring consistency in

² The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils are, by the end of Year 2, when pupils are age 7, expected to reach Level 2. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

³ The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils are, by the end of Year 6, when pupils are age 11, expected to reach Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

the quality of teaching and learning and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching remains. Governance of the school is good. Governors have a good knowledge of the school and share their responsibilities well. They provide support to staff and act as critical friends in the best interests of the pupils. They are proud of their strong Catholic ethos and the high esteem that parents show for the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have **excellent** views of the school. This is evident from the support that they give to the school. Many more parents than is usual attended the parents' meeting and shared very positive views about the life and work of the school. Over 50 per cent of parents responded to the parents' questionnaire with no significant concerns raised. Parents are offered many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and they say that they feel comfortable approaching the school and know that concerns will be dealt with fairly. Pupils say how much they enjoy lessons and after school clubs, particularly football on a Friday. They like being with their friends and Year 6 pupils feel that being prefects is an honour. Some pupils would like a larger playground, although they appreciate that the grounds are improving constantly, they say "it is always getting better".

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory in all lessons.
- Consolidate the recent improvements in art and design.
- Continue to develop the curriculum in geography.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The school's results in National Curriculum tests are usually above average compared to all schools at seven and 11 years.

The trend for improvement is above the national trend at the end of Year 6.

Pupils achieve well by the end of the foundation stage and Key Stage 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT are above average.
- Writing is a particular strength of the school.
- The assessment of the pupils' work is very good.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development are better than expected in the foundation stage.
- Achievement in a few lessons is not as good as expected.

Commentary

Foundation stage

1. When children enter the nursery on a part-time basis their levels of attainment are as expected for their age. It is likely that the majority of children will attain all the early learning goals⁴ (expected standards for 5 year olds) by the time they leave the reception class. Most will exceed expectations in personal, social and emotional development and some in mathematical, communication and language development. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when many children had underdeveloped personal skills. This improvement is because of the stimulating and very well organised provision in the foundation stage especially for children's personal development. All staff work together very effectively. They understand the learning needs of young children and ensure that relationships are strong, routines well established and that learning is fun. Children know what is expected of them and respond by doing their best. Extra support is provided for children with special educational needs and for those who do not speak English at home. This ensures that they have the same opportunities as their friends and learn to communicate appropriately before starting the National Curriculum in Year 1.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.9 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.5 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.5 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The table above shows that at the end of last July seven year old pupils achieved standards that were average in reading, and well above average in writing and mathematics compared to all schools. The trend for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly in line

⁴ These are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer mainly to achievement children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

with the national trend. However, achievement in Year 1 is not as good as it is in Year 2 where the teaching is much better. Reading is an identified priority for the school, and with money from the Education Action Zone, reading recovery and reading intervention are making a positive impact on raising standards. The very good teaching in Year 2 is ensuring that pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and reach standards in writing, mathematics and ICT that are above average overall. Standards in art and design are as expected for their age. Good use of an interactive whiteboard is making learning interesting for seven year olds and giving them first hand experience of how technology can aid learning. Effective teaching assistants are making a positive impact on pupils' achievements and the standards they attain. Inspection evidence confirms these above average standards and it is likely that standards in reading will be higher in 2004 as a result of the effective targeted reading recovery programme and reading intervention.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (28.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.7 (26.8)	26.8 (26.8)
Science	29.7 (29.5)	28.6 (28.5)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The table above shows that last July 11 year olds achieved standards that were above average in mathematics and science, and well above average in English compared to all schools. The trend for improvement in English, mathematics and science is above the national trend and value added is judged as good in national data. However, and not typical of this school, this group of pupils did not achieve as well as those in similar schools based on prior attainment. This is because by the end of Year 6 approximately 5 per cent of pupils had left and 14 per cent of the pupils had not been in the school in Year 2, there was a significant minority of pupils with special educational needs and some pupils had behavioural problems. These factors impacted negatively on the overall standards achieved. Even so more pupils than average attained the higher Level 5 in each subject. Writing has been a specific target for pupils, especially boys, and the results confirm the improvements made. Mathematics is a current target and inspection evidence confirms that standards are rising. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. A significant proportion of pupils are likely to achieve the higher Level 5 in all four subjects. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where the motivated and committed teachers know their pupils very well and provide challenging tasks to develop independence and raise achievement. The school is keen to build on the good standards in the core subjects by using them, for example, to support research in history or to develop enquiry skills in geography. The headteacher, supported by senior staff, is committed to curriculum development, which empowers pupils to use, develop and achieve well across many linked areas of the curriculum. For example, during the unstructured days pupils follow themes and develop ideas using their literacy, numeracy, scientific, and technological skills effectively.
4. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, is good. This is the same as their peers. For pupils with special educational needs this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils, attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance is well above average and punctuality is good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well both in lessons and around the school.
- The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- There are no weaknesses in this area.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.3	School data:	0.1
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

- Attendance is well above average. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national median. The importance of attendance is constantly reinforced through newsletters and other information to parents. The headteacher takes a very strong stance to discourage pupils having holidays in term time.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They arrive punctually and quickly settle into the school routine. They are polite, courteous and confident with adults. Clearly they know they are at school to learn and their speaking and listening skills show this. The pupils are happy and cheerful. In lessons, they are enthusiastic to answer questions and collaborate with each other to support their learning. For example, in the nursery a small boy corrected another for not pronouncing his 'T' in 'naughty' properly. By repeating the word, the omission was remedied.

Exclusions

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	156	0	0
White – Irish	8	0	0
White – any other White background	14	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0

No ethnic group recorded	14	0	0
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The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

7. There have been no recent exclusions and all the pupils, irrespective of their background, play and mix happily. No evidence of bullying was observed during the inspection, however the school has an anti-bullying policy should the need arise. Pupils are aware that racist remarks are not tolerated and that all pupils are valued for their individual qualities.
8. Behaviour in and around the school, including lessons, is usually very good. These high standards ensure that the majority of lessons flow without interruption. As a result this impacts very well on pupils overall learning opportunities. Teachers generally use effective methods to ensure that lessons are stimulating. The rapport that exists between pupils and staff clearly demonstrates mutual respect. Those pupils with behaviour or learning difficulties are effectively supported throughout their school life.
9. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. It reflects the school's ethos and Christian values very well. This was illustrated very effectively when pupils in Year 6 led an assembly attended by many parents and grandparents. They explored the meaning of initiation and interpreted the Holy Spirit coming into their lives. A choral setting of The Lord's Prayer was sung tunefully. Pupils are allocated tasks and responsibilities as they progress through the school. They become prefects in Year 6 and wear ties to indicate this. They act with maturity as leaders of the school community. Younger pupils have very good role models to aspire to as they get older. Pupils clearly know right from wrong, and take initiative when opportunities arise. For example, pupils in Year 6 arrive earlier than the rest of the pupils to help to prepare for the school day. The school council has an effective role in promoting the views of all pupils and developing their ideas in the school.
10. The school's provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. Through the curriculum and visits to theatres and museums, the pupils gain a good understanding of their own culture. However, the school acknowledges that the planned opportunities for pupils to develop a better understanding of the multi-cultural society in which they live could be even better.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** across the school.

Teaching and learning in the foundation stage are **very good**. They are **very good** at the end of both key stages but not as good when pupils start the National Curriculum. Assessment procedures are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers expect high standards of behaviour.
- Teachers involve teaching assistants very well in pupils' learning.
- Pupils behave very well and are keen to learn.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their lessons.
- Teachers make good use of ICT to support learning.
- In a minority of lessons organisation and management of pupils are not as good as they could be.
- Teachers make very good use of assessment information in planning teaching and meeting individual pupil's needs.

- The senior management team monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly, and are clear about where the strengths are and what needs to be improved.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	12	5	2	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

11. In the foundation stage the quality of teaching is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Staff are clear about how young children learn. They work together as a very effective team meeting the needs of all children very well. For example, supporting children with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language very effectively. The accommodation is organised in such a way that children have easy access to resources and all areas of learning provide stimulating and interesting opportunities to develop children's learning. The outside area, although not large, is used very effectively by both nursery and reception classes. During the inspection the topic of "Bob the Builder" was used very well to link areas of learning for children. Using the on site builders as a resource the topic had relevance and interest to the children. Very good management and organisation of children supported by a strong team spirit ensures a happy and productive start to children's education. Children are prepared well for the National Curriculum particularly in respect of their personal, social and emotional development.
12. At Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils generally make good progress. They make much better progress in Year 2 than in Year 1. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils learning about hundreds, tens and units chose a number, for example 172, and explained that the 1 is 1 hundred = 100, the 7 is 7 tens = 70, the 2 is 2 units = 2 the whole number is therefore 172. The teaching assistant and class teacher used the interactive whiteboard very effectively to illustrate the correct position of the numbers in the hundreds, tens and units columns. The lesson proceeded, at a brisk pace engaging all pupils in activities that matched their needs very well. Constant encouragement, praise and challenge meant that pupils made very good gains in their learning. The teacher had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. In less successful lessons the organisation and management of pupils are not as effective. Pupils sit for too long on the carpet and they are not always provided with appropriate activities to match their needs. The teaching of reading recovery and reading intervention, funded by money from the Education Action Zone, is having a positive impact on raising standards. The programme is very well organised, managed and implemented by staff. The reading recovery teacher keeps accurate records to measure pupils' achievement and to plan the next stages in pupils learning very effectively.
13. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching and learning are good. Some very good teaching was observed particularly in Years 5 and 6. Enthusiastic and committed teachers plan their lessons well and provide pupils with many interesting and stimulating experiences. Pupils' good standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT are being used imaginatively across other areas of the curriculum especially in the unstructured days when interesting topics are studied. For example, in history where pupils in Year 6 spent the day dressed as and acting as Victorian pupils. Teachers make good use of ICT in many lessons, using the interactive whiteboard to illustrate learning objectives and teaching points and to provide information. Teachers effective use of ICT is raising pupils' awareness to the use of technology as an aid to learning. In the computer suite pupils have work that matches their needs well. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson, pupils in Year 6 using two-dimensional shapes solved problems by rotating the shapes to create patterns and pictures. Each group worked with a

different level of challenge ensuring that all pupils made very good gains in their learning. One pupil said, "This isn't work it's fun". Homework is used effectively to support work in the classroom. Pupils and parents know what homework is to be done and are clear about when it should be handed in to the teachers. Marking is accurate, supportive and makes clear to pupils how well they have achieved and what they need to do next. Pupils behave very well and respond with very positive attitudes to the good and very good teaching.

14. Teachers and teaching assistants promote equality of education for pupils effectively. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language are good. Their needs are identified and addressed at an early stage. Individual education plans have clear targets. These are informed by very good assessment procedures. Work seen in lessons shows that the pupils' targets are being addressed. Pupils are supported well by effective teaching assistants and learning support assistants.
15. Assessment is very well developed in the school and is a considerable strength. Teachers make the learning intentions for each lesson clear to pupils at the outset. Their questioning, observations, feedback and marking, focus on the extent to which pupils are achieving the learning intentions, and what they need to do to improve. As a result, pupils are aware of the progress they are making and understand how to improve their work. Teachers use the information they have gathered to plan lessons that take good account of their pupils' needs.
16. In addition to assessments made in lessons, teachers use assessments at the end of units of work in subjects. A range of national and commercial tests also help them to track the progress of each pupil over longer periods of time. The results are carefully analysed and used to identify any pupils who may benefit from being given more challenging work or who need additional help. The school makes very good use of a wide range of initiatives to help targeted pupils, such as reading recovery and a science club for more able pupils. A register of gifted and talented pupils ensures that their progress is monitored and that their needs are addressed well. The quality of teaching and learning is effectively monitored on a regular basis by the senior management team and subject co-ordinators.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good curriculum** that meets statutory requirements. The curriculum is enriched **very well** by extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and learning resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
- Pupils participate very well in the arts.
- There is good equality of access and opportunity for pupils.
- There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum.
- The accommodation and learning resources are good.
- Participation in sports and other activities offered by the school is very good.
- Provision in art and design is improving.
- The geography curriculum could be improved even more.

Commentary

17. At the last inspection the curriculum was broad and balanced, but there was some lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils in English, mathematics, science and ICT. This has been addressed and the results these pupils achieve in national tests show good improvement. A feature of the curriculum is the opportunities for developing the pupils' independence and enjoyment on days when a less structured programme is followed. To improve its curriculum even more the school has prioritised developments in art and design, and the development the geography curriculum.

18. Pupils are fully included in the life and work of the school. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those with English as an additional language. This level of provision enables pupils to make the same good progress as their peers. There is a range of programmes to support pupils' reading. The school makes very good use of support provided by the Education Action Zone for the reading recovery scheme and for an innovative movement programme based on the work of the Institute of Neuro-Physiological Psychology. All teachers have their own laptops for lesson planning and other school related work. An extensive mentoring programme provides support for pupils with emotional and behavioural problems and so helps them to access the curriculum.
19. Pupils have very good levels of participation in the arts. This is part of the very good provision for curriculum enrichment. Pupils in Year 6 take part in a Shakespeare workshop with a local company. Pupils also visit the theatre and the cinema to extend their experience. A science theatre group visits the school to deepen the pupils' understanding of particular topics. The pupils take part in a local music festival and have worked with an artist in residence. These opportunities make a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.
20. There are good levels of participation in sport and other activities. Professional cricketers and footballers help to develop the pupils' skills. A local tennis club arranges coaching and a tournament for the pupils. The school has football and netball teams. Basketball is coached and there are firm plans to form a team. The pupils take part in the Borough and District sports.
21. There is a good match of teachers and non-teaching staff to the curriculum. The deputy head teacher does not have responsibility for a class and there is a part time co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs. The many non-teaching staff are well trained and make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning.
22. Overall accommodation is good and has been improved since the previous inspection. The main building is originally Edwardian and despite improvements, there are some difficulties with storage and maintenance. The décor is bright and the foyer provides visitors with immediate insight into the life of the school. The foundation stage is a lively and stimulating learning environment. The outside playground, wildlife garden and memorial to 'Harry' is the fruition of collaboration between staff, the school council and parents. The school has limited grassed areas, but the spacious playground with its modern play resources is a good feature, and is a direct result of pupils, staff and parents working together.
23. Resources are good across the school. They are a particular strength in the foundation stage, ICT and the playground. Pupils treat the resources with respect and consideration. The school buys into the local school's library service, so all aspect of the curriculum are supported well with reference books.

Care, guidance and support

A strength of this school is the **very good** quality of care, welfare and health and safety. The school provides **very good** support, advice and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for child protection, first aid provision and health and safety are very good throughout the school.
- The monitoring and promoting of pupils' self-esteem and sense of security are very good.
- Pupils' are supported very well in both their academic and personal development.
- The views of the pupils are gathered and listened to. As a result they make a significant contribution to the school's development plans.

Commentary

24. Procedures for all aspects of child protection are very good. Policies reflect the locally agreed procedures and there is support from the Diocese. The headteacher is the designated member of staff, who has ensured that all the staff, including non-teaching staff, are suitably trained.
25. The deputy head teacher effectively oversees health and safety policies. Health and safety is enforced in lessons, for example, jewellery is removed prior to games lessons. There are three members of staff for first aid and all records are properly kept. The caretaker and cleaners maintain the building to a very clean and hygienic condition.
26. Very good systems are in place to monitor and support each pupil, both academically and socially. The special educational needs co-ordinator has established very good links with outside agencies. Any form of racism or bullying is viewed seriously and effective measures are in place to deal with the situation should it occur. Pupils said that they are clear about what is acceptable behaviour. Pupils set their own targets for improvement and they have ownership of these targets. Staff monitor carefully the progress in achieving these targets. Once reached, an award sticker is given. Such schemes help the pupils' personal development, their self-esteem and feelings of security within the school community. This is fully recognised and appreciated by all the parents. This aspect has improved since the previous inspection.
27. Pupils' views are gathered in a number of ways. There is an effective school council and prefect system in Year 6. Within those roles, pupils have set up a mediation programme, so concerns can be taken to senior staff if need be. In 2002 a pupil questionnaire was used to gather the views of pupils effectively. As a result of pupils, staff and parents working together, a new area in the playground was built. The headteacher regularly selects, a group of pupils and seeks their opinions. They are then re-interviewed a few months later to evaluate any changes and the success criteria. Pupils collect for charities of their own volition.
28. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language well, and have real concern for their welfare and progress. The school is aware that pupils need to be more involved in the review of their own individual education plans.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **excellent**. Links with the wider community, schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents' questionnaires, parents' meeting and interviews during the inspections, consistently show that the parents' views of the school are excellent.
- Parents' support teaching and learning effectively through homework.
- Established links with the Church, other schools and colleges are good.
- Links with outside agencies or access to translation ensure parents are fully included in their children's education.

Commentary

29. The school's links with parents have improved since the last inspection. The parents' perspective of the school is now excellent. Many more parents than usual attended the meeting and were very positive about the school. A high number of parents, who returned the questionnaire, expressed no concern. The school is over subscribed with more parents wanting places for their children than are available. The parental input into the life of the school makes a very significant contribution to the overall quality of education. For parents new to the

school there is a very good induction process. Many parent's help in the foundation stage and this has a positive impact on children's learning. Parent helpers assist with reading, ICT, outside visits or other activities. As a result, the quality of education is enhanced, especially in standards of literacy.

30. Parents' views are gathered in a number of ways; for example, through questionnaires, the 'Friends of Sacred Heart' or an 'open door policy'. As a result parents can quickly and easily discuss concerns. The school offers further support for parents through Adult Education services or 'Parent and Child learning courses'. Parents of those pupils requiring special educational needs are fully involved in the reviews. The school can assist any parents requiring a translation service, either through the parents or the local authority. As a result parents are fully included and involved in their children's education.
31. Routine information, such as newsletters, is of high quality. The annual report provides parents with a clear picture of their children's progress. There are realistic targets for improvement. The 'Friends' work extremely hard to raise income to support teaching and learning. The latest project was developing a landscape in the school grounds. Homework diaries are used very effectively as a two-way channel of communication. By ensuring that homework is completed properly, parents support teachers in their commitment to pupils' learning.
32. As part of an Education Action Zone, the school has good established links with local primary and secondary schools. Parents and pupils are fully involved to ensure the smooth transition onto the next stage of their education. In addition, regular parochial and deanery meetings ensure the continuity of Catholic principles.
33. Links between colleges, other institutions and local businesses are good. These links provide great benefits that broaden pupils' experiences. For example, a graduate teacher has introduced basketball into the physical education and extra-curricular programmes. This is now very popular and greatly enjoyed by both boys and girls. As a result relationships, fitness and self-esteem are promoted.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance of the school are **good**.

The leadership of the headteacher is **very good** and that of other key staff is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and effectively promotes high standards.
- The foundation stage is very well led and managed.
- The headteacher and other leaders provide very good role models for staff and pupils that effectively promote the school's values.
- Strategic planning is very effective because it is based on good quality information.
- Despite good improvement in the quality of provision overall, some unsatisfactory teaching remains.

Commentary

34. The headteacher is a very effective leader. A shared vision for the school and commitment to raising standards, promoting very good relationships, and ensuring equality of opportunity for, staff and pupils, are very evident. Leadership of the foundation stage is very good. The staff form a very effective team that provides children with a safe, caring and exciting environment in which to learn. This ensures a positive start to the children's education and they achieve well. Subject co-ordinators and other key staff provide good leadership. They monitor standards and the quality of teaching and learning well so have good knowledge of strengths and weaknesses and give helpful feedback and guidance to staff. They promote inclusion well through effectively tracking the performance of individual pupils and cohorts. The analysis of good quality

information underpins the school's development planning and results in a very good strategic plan. Relevant priorities are clearly identified and rigorous detailed planning ensures they are achieved.

35. Staff with leadership responsibilities are very effective role models for staff and pupils. They promote the school's Christian values through their relationships with all members of the school community, their commitment to high aspirations for personal and academic achievement, and their willingness to initiate improvements.
36. Monitoring of school and staff performance are well-established aspects of the school's management. They are viewed positively by staff and have made a significant contribution to the school's effectiveness. Induction processes and continuing professional development opportunities are good. On the whole, staff management and deployment is effective and suitable arrangements have been made, using the services of the able and committed team of teaching assistants, to reduce teachers' workloads. Despite these efforts, the school has not yet succeeded in ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching remains. Financial management is good. Expenditure, including grant funds, is well focused on the school's priorities. Administrative systems are effective and unobtrusive. Office staff are welcoming and effective in supporting the smooth running of the school.
37. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, is very good. The co-ordinator has a very good knowledge of individual pupils. She meets regularly with both class teachers and teaching assistants to review the pupils' progress. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is supportive and meets the co-ordinator regularly.
38. The governing body is well organised and actively involved in the life of the school. Governors have a variety of means for obtaining information about the school and as a result are well informed and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They act as an effective critical friend to the headteacher and other managers. They ensure that statutory duties are met and hold the school to account for the quality of the education it provides and the standards pupils attain. Governors ensure that best value principles are adhered to and carry out visits to check at first hand that the school is reaping the expected value from initiatives and expenditure.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	698,554
Total expenditure	683,215
Expenditure per pupil	2,846

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,102
Balance carried forward to the next	15,339

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. Provision for children in the foundation stage is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has worked hard since then to improve the provision. The school opened a nursery class in 2001 and this has had a positive impact on the achievement of children in the foundation stage. Children start school on a part-time basis in the September of the year they become four and they move into the reception class at the end of that school year. When children enter the nursery class, their attainment varies from year to year but it is generally age appropriate. All children achieve well and very well in their personal, social and emotional development. This is because the foundation stage is very well organised, planning is very effective, all staff understand the needs of young children and they work together as a cohesive unit. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which match the children's needs very well. Children with special educational needs, and those who do not speak English at home, are very well supported and achieve as well as expected. Accommodation is organised effectively, with easy access for children to the resources they need. The outdoor area, although small, is imaginatively designed and provides interesting opportunities for children to develop all areas of learning. Because of the very good provision, the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals (the expected standards for five year olds) in all areas of learning. The majority of children will exceed them in personal, social and emotional development and some children will exceed them in mathematical, communication and language development. Children are prepared well for the National Curriculum that they start in Year 1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide many positive opportunities for development in this area, therefore it is likely that the majority of children will exceed expectations by the end of the reception year.
- All staff are very good role models.
- Very good relationships exist between staff and children
- Children feel safe, happy and secure.

Commentary

40. In the nursery children show curiosity and have positive attitudes to new experiences. They show care for themselves and most are willing to take turns and share with others. Children feel safe and secure in the activities they undertake. In the reception class, children willingly work as part of a group and work together harmoniously. Very good relationships exist between staff and children, for example, when sitting in a circle talking positively about friends, they sat quietly, listened attentively, and took their turn amicably. They are aware of the behaviour expected of them and respond to these high expectations very well. Adults are very good role models, they continually encourage children to feel confident and reinforce high standards. Very good use of praise motivates children to always try to do their best. When going out to play, the children put on their coats themselves and only ask each other or an adult for help if they have difficulty with a button or zip. Children are aware of the fact that others have different needs and views. Children know and understand the effective routines and so settle to work, and play happily and sensibly. Children and adults treat each other with courtesy and respect

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many interesting opportunities are provided to promote children's communication skills so that it is likely that the majority of children will achieve the expected goals and a significant minority will exceed them by the end of the reception year.
- Children with special educational needs, and those who do not speak English at home are very well supported.

Commentary

41. All staff make a concerted effort to develop children's communication skills by use of relevant questioning and by providing good examples of correct responses. Children with special educational needs, and English as an additional language receive very good support enabling them to be fully included in all activities. Lesson plans contain key questions, which help to assess children's understanding. Staff extend children's vocabulary effectively by promoting many activities which actively engage children's interests. In the nursery, children enjoyed the story of "The Three Little Pigs". They were keen to predict what might happen next and eager to join in with familiar parts of the text. The topic of "Bob the Builder" is used very effectively by both classes and provides many opportunities to develop communication skills, for example, in "Bobs Office". Through role-play children represent sounds and form recognisable letters. They play in the office using a variety of writing tools and papers. Many children use language for an increasing range of purposes and begin to recognise familiar words accurately.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many interesting opportunities are provided to promote children's mathematical development so that it is likely that the majority of children will achieve the expected goals and a significant minority will exceed them by the end of the reception year.
- Mathematical activities are planned well and children are clear about what they are learning.

Commentary

42. In a very good lesson in the reception class children made good gains in their learning as many interesting activities were provided for them. One group of children recognised and talked about simple patterns. Another group worked with two-dimensional shapes such as circles, triangles, squares and rectangles accurately. Higher attaining children worked with three-dimensional shapes such as cubes, cones, sphere and pyramids. Many other activities such as sorting shapes, counting number lines, building with duplo, lego and stickle bricks reinforced and consolidated their learning. At the end of the lesson children put all their equipment away correctly fitting blocks into boxes and mats into shelves correctly. In the plenary session the teacher used very good questioning skills to check children's understanding of the tasks and praised children for their hard work.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many interesting opportunities are provided to promote children’s knowledge and understanding of the world so that it is likely that the majority of children will achieve the expected goals by the end of the reception year.
- The outdoor area is used very well to develop this area of learning.

Commentary

43. In the nursery children show curiosity, observe and manipulate objects such as building tools. They talk about what they see and what is happening. Two children talked enthusiastically, when using a driving wheel on a toy, about what was happening to the car as they “drove” it along the track. Children use simple tools and techniques appropriately, for example, when papering the “Tea Hut”. Children using ICT know how to use a mouse to click and drag icons. Reception children discussed what would happen to sand when water was added to it. They compared wet and dry sand and used tools to spread and mould the sand correctly. In the “archaeological dig” they found different artefacts and talked about their shape and the materials with which they were made. Children use the outdoor area regularly to engage in interesting and meaningful activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical and creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Interesting opportunities are provided to promote children’s physical and creative development so that it is likely that the majority of children will achieve the expected goals by the end of the reception year.

Commentary

44. Evidence from observations, teachers planning, provision in the classrooms and the overall quality of teaching and learning indicates that children are likely to achieve the expected levels in both areas. The outdoor area, although small, provides children with the chance to move freely and with confidence. They have activities, which enable them to construct and make imaginative items such as “Bobs Tea Hut” from a variety of paper and card. Using outdoor toys children showed control using wheeled toys and they develop hand to eye co-ordination in pasting, sticking and making. Children show a developing understanding of healthy eating and personal hygiene. The outdoor area also provides children with the opportunity to make large-scale paintings using rollers and paint trays and a variety of brushes. “Bob’s Office” and “Tea Hut “ encourages imaginative role-play. Displays in the classrooms show a wide variety of paintings and collage using different techniques and media. Children enjoyed joining in with five and six year olds in singing an action song accurately and enthusiastically in an assembly.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good results pupils attain in national tests. Writing being a particular strength.
- Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are very good and this contributes to their good learning.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils’ cultural development.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Monitoring of the pupils’ subject performance is very good.

- There are no significant weaknesses.

Commentary

45. Pupils attain well in national tests. In 2002, at the age of 11 compared to all schools pupils' attained results that were well above average. Compared to similar schools, those with a similar number of pupils receiving free school meals, pupils' results were in the top 5 per cent nationally. Results in 2003 were also well above average. In 2003 pupils achieved as well as those in similar schools, based on prior attainment, where standards were average overall, and many pupils achieved the higher Level 5.
46. In the 2002 tests, pupils aged seven attained standards that were average in reading and above average in writing. Analysis of the test results for 2001-2003 shows that a significantly larger proportion of pupils now attain at the higher than expected levels. The challenge for higher attaining pupils is confirmed by inspection evidence. Overall, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well.
47. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. This is seen in whole-class discussions when pupils listen carefully to their teacher and to their peers. This contributes well to their learning. Most pupils speak confidently and express themselves well. They are supported well by teachers who encourage pupils to ask questions and to work with 'talking partners'.
48. Pupils have good attitudes to reading and this helps the standards they achieve because they want to read. They talk enthusiastically about reading and many use a public library outside school. In literacy lessons pupils practise the skills that help them to recognise or to build up unfamiliar words. Able pupils in Year 6 acquire higher order reading skills like skimming and scanning for information. They understand how to access information both in books and on the Internet. Pupils talk easily about the fiction and poetry they read and discuss favourite authors like Dick King-Smith and J K Rowling. The school is making determined efforts to help the minority of pupils whose reading is below the expected level. A number of programmes are in place including the thorough reading recovery initiative and the reading intervention programme, both supported by funds from the Education Action Zone.
49. The good standards that boys and girls attain in writing are the result of the school's sustained press for improvement. The quality of the school's work is shown by the inclusion of examples of the pupils' work in a number of publications. Some of the best work has a real feel for the use of language. One pupil in Year 5 writes of her father as being dressed in his 'best for thinking jeans'. Another describes a sunflower as having a 'sun-kissed complexion'.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. In good and very good lessons the teachers enable good learning through good subject knowledge and very good class management. The pupils' books are marked well with many comments to help them improve their work. When teaching is unsatisfactory then pupils are unclear about the task they have been set and so make slow progress.
51. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development. Analysis of the pupils' work shows that a wide range of modern and classical literature is studied. The pupils' experience is widened by visits to the theatre and the cinema.
52. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning regularly. As a result clear priorities are identified. Feedback to teachers is viewed positively and has made a significant impact on raising standards. The pupils' subject performance is monitored very well. There are very good assessment procedures in place to track pupils' progress.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. This is seen in particular in history, when pupils in Year 3 recount the story of Theseus and the Minotaur and when pupils in Year 6 research and write about conditions in schools in Victorian England.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good quality teaching and learning.
- Good use is made of ICT to support learning.
- Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons.
- Using and applying pupils knowledge and skills is an identified area for improvement.

Commentary

54. Compared to all schools in 2002, at the age of 11 pupils attained results that were average. In 2003 compared to all schools, and those with a similar number of free school meals, standards were above average. However, and not typical of this school, in 2003 pupils did not achieve as well as those in similar schools based on prior attainment where standards were well below average. This is because by the end of Year 6 approximately 5 per cent of pupils had left and 14 per cent of the pupils had not been in the school in Year 2, there was a significant minority of pupils with special educational needs and some pupils had behavioural problems. These factors impacted negatively on the overall standards achieved. Standards in mathematics have been slightly lower than those in English and science. The school has prioritised raising standards in mathematics and evidence indicates that results will be higher in 2004.
55. Mathematics is a priority in the school development plan with particular attention being paid to raising pupils' achievement in Year 5. More emphasis is being given to using and applying mathematics in problem solving. This is beginning to make a positive impact on standards and results are likely to improve. Inspection evidence confirms that the current Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve above average standards with a third of pupils set to achieve the higher Level 5. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils aged seven achieved above average standards in 2002 and well above in 2003 compared to all schools. Inspection evidence confirms these above average standards and it is likely that the current Year 2 will achieve above average standards, with many achieving the higher Level 3. A key issue at the previous inspection was lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. This has been addressed well. In most lessons pupils are given work that meets their needs well and challenges them to do better. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are supported very well and achieve the targets set for them.
56. The quality of teaching and learning are good across the school. Some very good teaching was observed in Year 2 and Year 6. In these classes pupils are encouraged to think of themselves as mathematicians and rise to the challenges set for them. Very good organisation and management of classes means that pupils are clear about what they need to learn. Very effective assessments ensure that work is matched very well to individual needs. Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to their work.
57. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Through monitoring the co-ordinator is clear about the quality of teaching and learning in the subject and provides advice and support

where necessary. Very effective assessment procedures ensure that individual and whole school targets are accurate. The co-ordinator has accurately identified areas for improvement in the subject and is effective in planning and implementing the necessary action, for example, improving the quality of the plenary session. She monitors planning and collects work samples. As part of the senior management team she sets a very good model to other staff in the school. Many teachers and teaching assistants are proficient at using the interactive whiteboards. This makes a positive impact on pupils' learning. Good use is made of ICT in the subject

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects. For example, in science they use graphs to record results. In art and design they experiment with shapes. In design and technology they estimate and check measurements accurately. Working with specific programs in ICT pupils are set challenges that engage their interest well and extend their learning effectively.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ability levels achieve well because rigorous assessment helps their teachers to plan effective lessons.
- Teachers promote the use of scientific vocabulary well and this helps to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of science.
- Links with learning in other lessons is consolidating numeracy and literacy skills and enhancing learning in science.

Commentary

59. The school achieves above average results in science. Effective teaching, based on good knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, enables all pupils to achieve well in all elements of the curriculum. In the 2003 national tests and tasks the school's results were well above average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6, as a higher percentage of pupils than in most schools performed at or beyond the standards expected for their ages. Compared to similar schools, those with a similar number of free school meals, standards were well above average for pupils at the end of Year 6. However, when measured against prior attainment, for reasons already outlined in mathematics, the results of this group of pupils were affected by a number of factors.
60. The school has worked hard to improve the achievement of more able pupils and is succeeding. A third of Year 2 pupils and more than half the pupils in Year 6 reached the higher Level 3 and Level 5 respectively. Inspection evidence shows that high standards are being maintained. Boys and girls, pupils of different ability levels, those having special educational needs, and those who do not speak English as their first language, make good progress and achieve well.
61. The quality of teaching and learning are good because lessons are planned well, teachers make good use of a variety of teaching methods and resources, and provide activities that challenge pupils and capture their interest. The consistent teaching of scientific vocabulary and enquiry methods provide a sound foundation for pupils' learning. Teachers link questions, observations and marking to learning intentions very well. This gives them well-focused information that helps them to plan lessons that take account of and extend all pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. It is also used to set individual targets. Very good relationships and the positive approach of teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to behave well, try hard and seek help when they need it. Teachers explain the learning

intentions for each lesson and give clear instructions so pupils know what is expected of them and settle quickly, working productively throughout lessons. Literacy and numeracy skills are used to good effect, for example, in writing instructions and recording and presenting findings. Some effective use of ICT was seen for research, recording and for presenting scientific ideas. However, its use is not yet embedded in the science curriculum and opportunities to use it, for example, to monitor changes in temperature or light, are missed.

62. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a common approach to teaching the subject because the staff have responded well to the guidance and support offered by the co-ordinator. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning, and very effective use of assessments, give the co-ordinator a good overview of strengths and areas for development in science. She has used the information well to amend the curricular plan, provide guidance to staff and identify areas for improvement that are incorporated into the school development plan. Good progress is being made in putting current development priorities into practice.
63. Science provision and standards have improved since the last inspection. More pupils now attain the standards expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 with very good improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving higher standards, especially at the end of Year 6. These improvements are the result of very effective assessment procedures, the effective tracking of pupils' progress and setting of targets, greater emphasis on scientific enquiry and the effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The strong emphasis on using ICT for a purpose helps all pupils to achieve well and is broadening their experience across an increasing range of subjects.
- Very effective use of assessment enables teachers to provide appropriate challenge and support to pupils at different levels of capability.
- There has been very good improvement in provision since the last inspection, except in aspects related to control and monitoring, where improvement is satisfactory.

Commentary

64. All pupils achieve well because their work is very well matched to their capabilities and they are challenged to improve further. Having tasks with a real purpose motivates them to try hard and do well. This is especially so in the older classes where they have opportunities to use ICT to support their learning in a wide range of subjects. As a result, more pupils than in most schools attain or exceed the standards expected at the ages of seven and 11 years.
65. Pupils develop good basic ICT skills and routines, which gives them confidence when exploring new software, finding files and programs on the school network and navigating the Internet. The strong emphasis on using ICT as a tool to support their work, leads pupils to consider fitness for purpose at an earlier stage than is normally the case.
66. Pupils in Year 6 are adept at finding information and presenting it in a variety of ways, at developing and improving ideas, incorporating text, images and sounds, and organising their output to meet the needs of their audience. Although they have a satisfactory understanding of using ICT to control and monitor events, pupils have more limited opportunities to develop their capability in these aspects of the subject than in other areas.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Some very good teaching was seen in Year 6. Lessons are well planned and generally take very good account of pupils' capabilities

because they build on rigorous assessments. Teachers provide interesting tasks that engage pupils, offer very good encouragement and high levels of challenge, and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. As a result, the quality of pupils' learning is usually good. Pupils are interested they behave well and work productively throughout lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide good role-models as they make increasing use of laptops and the interactive whiteboards in each class to support pupils learning in a range of subjects. In the very good teaching seen, the lesson was very well structured so that pupils learned a new technique, were given prompt cards to help them apply it, first in a controlled situation, and then in work they were developing independently. Pupils appreciated being able to work on their own and at their own pace, without having to stop to seek help.

68. ICT is well led and managed. Very clear vision for the use of ICT as a tool for learning has helped to drive forward improvements in the subject. Most staff share a common understanding of how the subject is to be taught and have good subject expertise as a result of both external and internal professional development. ICT facilities and resources are much improved due to the effective use of government grants and substantial input from the Education Action Zone to which the school belongs. An efficient part-time technician helps to ensure that resources are reliable and provides effective support for teachers and pupils. Assessment procedures are in place which teachers use very well to track pupils' progress and provide additional help or greater challenge, as appropriate. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates standards and the quality of teaching and learning well by observing lessons, looking at pupils' work and analysing assessment data. Consequently he is well aware of strengths and areas in need of improvement and these feed into the school's development plans. Since the last inspection very good improvement in the quality of provision has led to rising standards, including more pupils now reaching higher levels of attainment.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The school is expanding its use of ICT across the curriculum and this is enriching pupils' experience and extending their understanding. Good examples were seen of ICT being used to develop pupils' learning in literacy, numeracy, science, history, geography and art. Some literacy and numeracy lessons are timetabled to take place in the computer suites. Although the use of ICT in other lessons is expanding, especially with the introduction of whiteboards in each classroom and new laptops for all teachers, it is not fully embedded in the curriculum yet. There is more limited access to ICT for pupils outside the suites.

HUMANITIES

70. Because Sacred Heart Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school, the inspection of religious education and collective worship is carried out under Section 23 of the Schools Inspection Act 1996, Two inspectors were approved by the Diocese and appointed by the governing body separately. Work was sampled in **history** and **geography** only. One lesson was seen in history and two in geography and it is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.
71. In a good history lesson, pupils in Year 5 were absorbed when the teacher dressed up and took the role of a Tudor yeoman's wife. They were keen to question her and she had very good subject knowledge and used their questions to weave in information about housing, hygiene, life expectancy and the place of a woman in the household. The lesson developed the pupils' speaking and listening skills well and made a good contribution to their cultural development. Lesson plans show evidence of imaginative teaching. Pupils in Year 3 were keen to become archaeologists and find fragments of pictures in sand trays during work on Ancient Greece. They could see what the evidence told them about life in Ancient Greece. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed dressing up as Victorian children to act out plays they had written about schools of the period following a visit to a Victorian schoolroom. Discussion with pupils confirms their good subject attitudes and indicate how much they enjoy doing historical research. Houses and

museums are used well to provide enrichment for the curriculum. There is every indication that standards are likely to meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and 6.

72. In geography pupils in Year 5 learnt effectively about contour lines on a map. The teacher gave a very good demonstration by pouring water over an irregular shape in a container. She marked what had been covered after each centimetre of height gain. The pupils worked well together at a similar task and this helped their social development. In Year 3 pupils recalled accurately how they measured temperature, wind speed and rainfall as part of weather observations. They co-operated well when plotting city temperatures to identify cities that are hot or cold at present. Discussion with pupils reveals satisfactory attitudes to the subject. The school is committed to curriculum development and has recently revised the scheme of work to introduce more fieldwork. There is every indication that standards are likely to meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. In the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical areas work was sampled in each subject. No lessons were seen in design and technology or music so it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision in those subjects. One lesson was seen in physical education. Four lessons were seen in art and design, and a sample of pupils work in folders and sketchbooks was observed. A small number of design and technology artefacts and photographs of pupils work were seen, and pupils were heard singing and playing musical instruments in assemblies, a hymn practice and an orchestra practice. Inspectors spoke to a sample of Year 6 pupils about their work and examined teachers' planning and assessment records.
74. **Art and design** has been a focus in the school development plan. Improvements have taken place. The co-ordinator has worked hard to establish an effective scheme of work, which meets the needs of the school and addresses the issue of skills development. Consolidation of these improvements will ensure that standards continue to rise. Sketchbooks have been introduced across the school and some work is collected in folders. The impact of this work is becoming evident in the school, although there is still some "catching up" to be done in relation to skills development. The quality of teaching was good overall. However, in one lesson, the organisation and management of pupils was not as good as it should have been and this had a negative impact on pupils' achievement. The co-ordinator monitors planning and has monitored teaching and learning, giving appropriate feedback to staff. Observation of work in lessons and on display around the school, indicate that it is likely that standards will be as expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
75. In **design and technology**, teachers' planning and assessment records show that all aspects of the subject are taught and that standards of work are likely to be broadly as expected for pupils of their age. The artefacts and photographs showed that pupils are gaining experience with a variety of materials and are developing a good range of technical skills, as seen in the use of a cam to raise and lower part of a moving toy. In all the examples seen it is clear that pupils have worked carefully, with good attention to detail. Pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their work in design and technology and showed good understanding of the different elements in the design, construction and evaluative processes.
76. Whilst no **music** lessons were seen, pupils were observed singing tunefully in assemblies and hymn practice and showed enthusiasm for songs they knew well. Teachers' planning shows that the full curriculum is covered and additional opportunities for musical development are provided through specialist instrument tuition, the orchestra, choir and recorder club, as well as performances in school and at community events. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 confirms that they have opportunities to learn to play a wide range of instruments, and are developing the expected range of skills, knowledge and understanding about music in lessons, including listening, composing and performing skills and knowledge of musical elements.

77. In the one games lesson, observed in **physical education**, pupils in Year 6 developed their ball skills well through a number of different activities. Good teaching led to good learning as the pupils were clear about what was expected of them. They responded well and their good attitudes and behaviour helped their learning because they concentrated on the task. Discussion with pupils indicates that they have good attitudes to the subject. The breadth of the curriculum is confirmed as they talk of gymnastics, dance and swimming lessons they have enjoyed. A programme of coaching by professional cricketers, footballers and by a local tennis club provides very good enrichment to the curriculum and helps the pupils' social development. Netball and football matches and taking part in the Borough and District sports are part of extra-curricular provision and enhance the opportunities available to pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, but planning documents and discussion with pupils indicate that overall provision is **good**. The school has recently gained an Advanced Healthy Schools Award. The scheme of work is linked to subjects like history, geography, science, physical education and religious education. The programme includes provision for drugs education and sex education. It is well supported by visits from outside agencies such as the health visitor and the dental nurse. There is a strong emphasis on road safety, with a cycle proficiency scheme in operation and support for a walking bus. All classes are represented on the school council. Each class has Circle Time⁵ or a class council to discuss issues of current concern every week. This helps the pupils' understanding of citizenship. The effect of the good provision for personal, social and health education can be seen in the pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and good learning.

⁵ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).