

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SACRED HEART RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hartlepool

LEA area: Hartlepool

Unique reference number: 111691

Headteacher: Miss J Bowman

Lead inspector: Steve Bywater

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 257387

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:	436 (full time equivalent)
School address:	Hart Lane Hartlepool
Postcode:	TS26 8NL
Telephone number:	01429 272684
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Elizabeth Hume
Date of previous inspection:	21 <sup>st</sup> September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This large Roman Catholic Primary School serves two parishes and is situated just outside the centre of Hartlepool. There are 398 pupils on the full-time roll and a further 78 children attend part-time in the nursery. Attainment on entry to the school includes the full range of attainment from well above to well below average but is best described as average for this year. For the previous two years it was below average. Pupils attending the school live in a mixed socio-economic community in a variety of private and rented accommodation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (11 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority groups and no pupils speak English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection, there were 80 pupils with special educational needs - a proportion of pupils below that found in most schools. The majority of these pupils have learning difficulties; a number have emotional and behavioural needs and a small number have physical and other needs. There are four pupils with statements of special educational need; this is below the usual figure in this size of school. The school is recognised as a Beacon School and holds Active Mark and Basic Skills Quality Mark awards.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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09652	Colin Herbert	Lay inspector	
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33098	Carole Maughan	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, personal, social, health education and citizenship, special educational needs
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This very good school provides good value for money.** Good and often very good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and standards are well above average by the time pupils are 11 years. A rich and interesting curriculum motivates pupils well. Children have very good attitudes to school and behave very well. Relationships are excellent. This is a very caring school which has extremely good relationships with parents and the community. Leadership and management are very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- High quality teaching throughout the school and especially in the reception class and Year 6
- In Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science when compared with all schools nationally and those in similar circumstances
- A well-planned curriculum promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. As a consequence, pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well. Their relationships are excellent
- Parents are justifiably very satisfied with the education, care and support that their children receive
- The headteacher provides high quality leadership and management and she is supported very effectively by a talented and dedicated team of teachers and a very effective governing body

The school has developed well since the last inspection. High standards have been maintained and the quality of teaching is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection.

### 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	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	B	A	A	C

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

**Throughout the school pupils achieve well. By the beginning of Year 1, most pupils attain the expected levels in all areas of learning and a significant number exceed them. By the end of Year 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average but, by the end of Year 6, standards are well above the national average.**

The table shows that, in the 2003 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science was well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well above average in mathematics, above average in English and average in science. Children enter the school with the full range of abilities from well above to well below average, but best described as average this year. Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage. Children continue to make good progress in Year 1 and Year 2 and, by the age of seven, pupils are working above national expectations in all aspects of English and mathematics. Pupils make good and often very good progress in the juniors and, as a result, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above national expectations. Standards in information and

communication technology (ICT) are above expectations at the end of Year 2 and well above them at the end of Year 6.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. There is a delightful 'family' ethos where pupils are valued. Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They display a clear sense of belonging to their school, with very good behaviour and attitudes. Unpleasant incidents are rare. The school promotes **excellent relationships**. **The attendance rate is well above the national average**.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. Pupils achieve well because teaching is effective and the school has a rich and well-balanced curriculum.**

**The quality of teaching throughout the school is good.** There is high quality teaching in the Foundation Stage and especially in the reception class. All teachers have very good relationships with pupils. Pupils respond by being attentive and very interested in their work. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good, and teachers challenge pupils' creative ideas and thoughts. Teachers interlink subjects well and use ICT well as a tool for teaching. Very good assessment enables teachers to track pupils' attainment and set challenging work as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very effectively and helped very well by high quality support staff and precise individual education plans.

### **Curriculum, care, guidance and support and partnerships with parents and the community**

The school provides **a good range of opportunities to develop learning both academically and socially** through well-organised activities. There is a **very high level of care**. Links with parents and the community are productive and there are very good links with local schools.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good. Leadership is very good.** The exceptionally committed headteacher is a driving force within the school. Her clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations ensure that the school develops and improves. **Management of the school is very good.** Teams and procedures are well established. However, some specific responsibilities and accountability are not clearly defined. **The work of the governing body is very good.** The governing body is fully involved in planning and in implementing policies. Governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas to develop.

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

Parents value their school and express very positive comments about all aspects of school life. They feel at ease about approaching the school over any concerns. Pupils think very highly of the school and speak enthusiastically about their teachers and their experiences.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do to improve is to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of senior teachers are more accurately defined and formally recorded.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Children enter the school with **average** levels of attainment. Pupils **achieve very well** in the reception class and in Years 3 to 6 They **achieve well** in Years 1 and 2 Pupils with special educational needs **achieve very well** as they progress through the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the age of 11, standards are well above the national average in many subjects
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school in English, mathematics and science
- Children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> make better than expected progress in all areas of learning
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well as they go through school

#### Commentary

1. Most children enter the reception class with average levels of attainment, although the full range of ability from well above to well below average is represented. Very good teaching helps children make very good progress in all areas of learning. As a result, most children achieve the Early Learning Goals and many exceed.
2. When compared with all schools nationally and schools with a similar number of free school meals, pupils' results in the national tests for 2003 showed that overall standards by the end of Year 2 were average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. This represented good achievement when compared with the low levels of attainment on entry to the school. When compared with pupils in schools with a similar number of pupils on free school meals, pupils' performance was above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Boys and girls achieve similarly. Over the past three years there has been a downward trend in standards. These were expected by the school, based on pupils' attainment on entry. There is likely to be an improvement this year.

#### 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	16.1 (17.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.3 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.9 (17.3)	16.5 (16.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 6 showed that overall standards in English, mathematics and science were well above the national average. In comparison with schools with similar numbers eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in English and science and very high (top 5 per cent of schools) in mathematics. When judged against similar schools' performance in Year 2 in 1999, achievement was above average in

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<sup>1</sup> 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 include knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.



English, average in science and well above average in mathematics. There is no trend of either girls or boys outperforming each other.

## 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	28.5 (29.0)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.9 (29.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.0 (30.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 68 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In English, pupils make very good progress to reach standards that are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing and well above those expected by the end of Year 6. Standards in speaking and listening are above national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects, particularly in history.
5. In mathematics, standards are above average in Years 1 and 2 and well above average in Years 3 to 6. The very high targets set for the coming year are likely to be achieved. Staff are highly committed to accelerating the progress of pupils in Year 6 through additional lessons. In Years 1 and 2, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress whilst those in Years 3 to 6 progress very well. Pupils develop a very good knowledge of number and numeracy skills which are applied well across the curriculum.
6. In science, pupils are very effectively challenged by teachers giving them problems and asking them to work together to predict and find solutions. As a result, standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6.
7. Pupils achieve very well in ICT because they receive very good skill teaching in the computer suite, which they are then allowed to put in to practice in a variety of interesting situations. As a result of the very good teaching and learning, pupils by the end of Year 2 show a better than expected understanding. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain at much higher than expected levels. They show very good understanding of the use of ICT both in and outside school. There is good use of ICT to support other subjects.
8. Children with special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates because of additional support. Teachers include all pupils in the lessons and ensure work is suitably challenging.
9. In other subjects there are strengths in the achievement of pupils in history in the infant classes and in music and games in the junior classes. In addition, there is a good deal of high quality art work displayed around the school.

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

Pupils have **very good attitudes** to school and to their learning and they are **very well behaved**. Attendance is **very good** and **well above** the national average. Punctuality is also **very good**. The provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good overall**.

### Strengths

- Relationships are excellent between pupils, and between pupils and all adults

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about school, they enjoy participating in lessons and their behaviour in lessons and around school is very good
- Attendance rates are very high and punctuality is very good
- The provision for spiritual development is excellent and is very good for moral, social and cultural development

#### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll
White – British	419
White – Irish	4
White – any other White background	2
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1
Mixed – White and Asian	4
No ethnic group recorded	46

There have been no exclusions for a number of years.

10. From the moment that they arrive, pupils are enthusiastic about school. In the playground each morning or on coming into school pupils have a smile on their faces. This enthusiasm extends into the classroom.
11. The pupils' behaviour is very good. In the classrooms, the playground or in the dining hall at lunchtime there is consistently very good behaviour. There was no indication whatsoever of any unsociable or racist behaviour during the inspection. Parental responses to the questionnaire were very positive about this aspect of school life.
12. Relationships within the school community are excellent. Sacred Heart School is one large happy family where all pupils respond very well to the guidance that adults give them. The impact of these very high quality relationships is that all pupils are fully included in all school activities. Pupils say that they 'are proud of their school'.
13. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy school and show very positive attitudes to learning. This is because the tasks they are given are very well matched to their ability, and they experience success in their lessons. Because of this and the very good quality support they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants, they gain confidence and are willing learners. The very good relationships that exist in the school enable them to tackle the tasks they are given without fear of failure.
14. The school provides excellent opportunities for its pupils to develop self-knowledge and a spiritual awareness. Not only is the faith of pupils very important to them but the school stimulates them to understand and discuss their place in the world at large. An excellent example of this was when all pupils throughout the school stopped their work and observed a minute silence for reflection at 11am on Remembrance Day. Parents spoke very strongly in support of the spirituality that was evident in school. The provision of moral, social and cultural development is very good. All pupils have a very clear idea of right and wrong and they relate in an excellent way to each other and work very well in group activities. The school teaches them to understand and appreciate their own culture and that of others and this specific aspect of school life has improved since the last inspection.

## Attendance

15. The attendance rate is well above national average. There was no unauthorised absence. The school works very hard to maintain this high level of attendance and parents are very responsible in that the majority do not take their children out of school during term time. Over 150 pupils had an attendance of 100 per cent in the last school year. Punctuality to school is also very good.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 96.1%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.9	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

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 quality of education provided by the school is **good overall**. The school provides a rich learning experience for pupils in the Foundation Stage and a **well-balanced** curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Assessment is **very good**.

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **good**. It is very good in the reception class and Year 6 and **good** in the nursery, infant and other junior classes. As a consequence, the quality of learning is **very good** in the Foundation Stage and **good** throughout the rest of the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning is good
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and the use of very good resources result in very good learning in several subjects
- Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils and high expectations of work and behaviour
- Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are taught well and used to support learning in other subjects
- Teachers use adult support very effectively so that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, are taught well.
- Assessment is very good
- Pupils' learning is good

### Commentary

16. Throughout the school, teachers plan and prepare interesting lessons. Teachers' planning shows what is to be taught and learnt. This is shared with pupils at the start of lessons and helps the teacher and pupils to remain focused on the purpose of the lesson. As a result, pupils cover sufficient ground in the lesson. Teachers give priority to securing for all pupils the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and provide good opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in different subjects.
17. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. A great strength of the teaching is the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. This is the main reason why they manage pupils' behaviour so effectively. Another reason is the high expectation of good behaviour that is ever-present in the school. This emanates from clear expectation of how pupils are to behave, generated by all the staff. For example, in very good music lessons in Years 5 and 6, the

teacher's infectious enthusiasm rubbed off on to the pupils, who responded with great keenness to chant, sing and play the instruments. The demonstrations and explanations were very clear and musically very secure; indicative of very good teaching of basic musical skills in order to develop pupils' skills and understanding. The very good relationships were the basis of the teacher's management of pupils' behaviour. There was a real mutual respect. The behaviour was very good so no time was wasted and pupils completed a lot of work. There was a very good balance between whole class and group work.

18. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and teachers have implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very well. In English lessons, teachers use challenging, well-chosen whole class texts to interest and involve pupils. In well-structured numeracy lessons the teachers ensure that pupils are clearly focused and interactive as they concentrate on finding methods and strategies to solve problems. The mental mathematics sessions are brisk and pupils show high levels of interest, with a keenness to achieve at speed. Final sessions of lessons are very effectively used to reinforce the learning objectives and evaluate pupils' progress. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the other subjects. Teachers continually search for opportunities for pupils to use ICT, for example in researching a variety of subjects using the Internet and CD ROM, and in producing spreadsheets and charts.
19. Teachers use whole class teaching, group and individual work and involve practical, investigative and problem-solving activities to motivate pupils. They use time and resources efficiently.
20. Teachers in all classes use resources very well. In particular, the whiteboards are used imaginatively as a teaching tool in many subjects to enhance pupils' learning and improve their understanding.
21. Teachers use the results of the assessment of pupils very effectively to match work to pupils' varying needs. This is very evident in the work set for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The marking of pupils' work is effective and the feedback to pupils, spoken and written, enables pupils to improve their performance.
22. Pupils' learning is good because of the good quality of teaching. They respond readily to the challenge of the work set, show a willingness to concentrate, and make good progress in most lessons. Pupils adjust well to the demands of working in different situations, select appropriate methods for doing something and organise effectively the resources they need. They have a good knowledge of their own learning and are clear about their own targets for improvement. Pupils are confident and alert to ask questions, and to persevere with their work when answers are not readily available. Where appropriate, pupils readily help one another.
23. There is early identification of special educational need, which enables teachers to address any possible issues. There are good quality individual education plans. Targets are clear and measurable. Teachers know pupils very well and they are aware of their needs. In lessons, pupils with special educational needs get good and often very good support both from teachers and support assistants. The careful planning of programmes of work by teachers and special educational needs support staff ensures that pupils with statements of special educational need achieve very well. When questioning pupils, the staff are careful to give enough 'thinking time' and this sensitivity encourages pupils to offer an answer or explanation.
24. In a Year 3 science lesson, for example, a teaching assistant questioned pupils effectively about how they would test a range of materials for absorbency, and noted their ideas on an enlarged worksheet. This enabled them to move onto the practical task with the rest of the class despite their limited recording skills. In another lesson in Year 5, a teaching assistant shared responsibility with the teacher for assessing pupils' understanding during whole class work on addition of decimals. This resulted in a pupil experiencing difficulties becoming more confident and achieving well by the end of the lesson.

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	29 (51%)	20 (35%)	8 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	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.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. The school provides a **good** range of worthwhile curricular opportunities that cater **very well** for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils and ensure **very good** progression in their learning. It provides **good** opportunities for enrichment, including through extra-curricular provision. The quality and quantity of the accommodation and resources are **good** and meet the needs of the curriculum **very effectively**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide range and richness of the subjects offered to the pupils in the Foundation Stage and throughout the school
- The interesting range of visits and visitors to the school
- Arrangements to support pupils with special educational needs are very good
- Pupils have very good opportunities to learn in additional lessons at lunch times, and after the school day
- There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in sport and other activities
- Pupils are very well prepared for transition from Foundation Stage to infants and from juniors to secondary school
- Accommodation and resources are good

## Commentary

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good, with some very good features. Staff in the nursery and reception classes create a secure and stimulating environment with a very good range of learning activities. The curriculum is based on national guidance, and children have a mixture of adult-directed and supported work. In some activities, children are given free choice to explore all the learning areas and to take responsibility for their own learning. Adults move around all groups, skilfully asking pertinent questions and helping children to consolidate and develop their learning. Children come together as a whole class or group at regular times during the day, when the teacher leads more focused activities.
26. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in all subjects. All pupils are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum. There is, for example, very good opportunity for gifted and talented pupils to be challenged. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in the school because targets from individual education plans are included in teachers' planning.
27. All aspects of the personal, social, health and citizenship (PSHCE) curriculum are fully covered including drugs, alcohol and sex and relationships education. This is a very positive aspect of the school curriculum. The school sensitively manages all aspects of the programme.
28. Teachers in Year 6 provide additional lessons after school, starting after Christmas for Year 6 pupils, which helps them achieve as well as they do in the national tests. The school provides a good range of sport and other activities, some of them for younger pupils, such as in science

and art, and coaches come from outside school for basketball and netball clubs, which contributes to pupils' success in local competitions. Recorder and choir groups are provided at lunchtimes. Teachers are good at using visitors and visits outside the school to help pupils learn more about their work in an exciting way, such as Arbeia Roman Fort, in history in Year 3. All pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to go on a residential visit, which helps them with their work and to develop their personal and social skills.

29. Staff prepare children very well for the move from Nursery to Reception, joining in assemblies and using the facilities, such as the hall, to ease the transfer. They involve parents and provide booklets for them to help them prepare their children for the move up into the main school. There are good links with the local secondary school, which involve pupils in Year 6 and staff in joint projects, and visits that prepare pupils well for the transition from primary to secondary school.
30. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are very well developed at the school with leading teachers in each subject, and in ICT. Teachers from other schools regularly come to observe the good quality teaching in this Beacon school. Staff have very good opportunities to develop their teaching and knowledge further by training opportunities. They make very good use of these, such as training in how to use the interactive white boards. They also have planned time to meet with teachers from other local schools, including subject co-ordinators, to share their expertise and learn from each other.
31. The buildings and classrooms are well maintained with many displays of pupils' work and artefacts, such as Victorian household objects, which support pupils' learning well. Most classrooms are spacious and equipped with interactive white boards, which teachers use very effectively to provide stimulating lessons with access to a wide range of visual resources. There is now a good range of resources in the outdoor play area for nursery and Foundation Stage children, an improvement since the last inspection. The school is looking to improve the grassed area to provide better sport facilities.

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

The school provides a **very high** level of care for the physical and emotional needs of its pupils and there has been an improvement in this aspect of school life since the last inspection. The school provides **very good** support, advice and guidance to its pupils and it totally involves its pupils in school life by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

### **Strengths**

- The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils
- Very effective procedures are in place for health, safety and child protection
- Very good procedures are in place to support, advise and guide pupils

### **Commentary**

32. Sacred Heart School looks after its pupils very well. All adults provide tender loving care to pupils. This care is underpinned by the excellent relationships in school and the very good knowledge that all staff have of the pupils.
33. The school takes very seriously its responsibility for health, safety and child protection. Appropriate records are maintained for risk assessment, first aid, fire drills and accident recording, and the procedures for child protection are very effective.
34. There is a very good level of provision for the support, advice and guidance of all pupils. This is based on the very good knowledge that all adults have of pupils and the excellent quality of trusting relationships that exist between children and adults within the school community.

Pupils know that the school will listen to their concerns, whether it is through circle time, the school council or at the Breakfast Club. Pupils describe adults in school as very friendly - 'we are well looked after and everyone helps each other'.

35. Parents expressed a unanimous view at their meeting that the school was very caring towards their children and that it was fully inclusive to all pupils.
36. The school identifies children with special educational needs at an early stage. Teachers consult the special educational needs co-ordinator and set targets for the pupils. If the action taken is not successful, an individual education plan is put in place. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning by being given their own learning targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and support assistants regularly review the individual education plans to ensure that pupils are making good progress towards their targets. The school has good contacts with outside learning support services and uses their advice effectively.

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

The school has maintained **very strong links** with its parents and the community. Information to parents is **very good**.

#### **Strengths**

- Parents have very positive views about the school
- The parent/teacher association is very effective
- There are very strong links with the community
- The school provides very good information for its parents

#### **Commentary**

37. The school promotes itself very well to its parents. Those who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting or who were spoken to in school had very positive views about all aspects of school life. Parents hold Sacred Heart School in very high esteem.
38. A small number of parents help in school on a regular basis and there is a hard working parent/teacher association (PTA). The events that are organised by the PTA raise considerable sums of money for such things as interactive whiteboards for classrooms, and these have a major impact on pupils' learning. The school values the contribution that all its parents make to school life.
39. The quality of information provided for parents continues to be very good. Newsletters are informative, annual reports on progress are appropriately personalised and parents are made aware of curriculum topics and targets in additional information. Parents expressed very positive comments at their meeting, and in response to the questionnaire, about the information that they receive and the ease at which they can approach the school over any concerns. They also expressed the view that the school has improved since the last inspection. The only issue for improvement was the need for a large outside play area.
40. Community links also remain very strong. The school makes very good use of local facilities and, additionally, it welcomes a number of local and international visitors into school to provide a multi cultural awareness to learning. The link that the school has developed with Themhini School in South Africa has had a very good impact, in that pupils are now aware of others who may not have the same standard of school as themselves.

41. Very good links exist with partner primary schools. The high quality of the link with English Martyrs High School ensures that pupils in Year 6 are able to make the move into the next stage of their education without any concerns.
42. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in their child's progress through termly review meetings. Individual education plans include ideas for how parents and carers can help at home, and these are fully discussed with them. The majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school's requests for help and this has a significant impact on the progress of individuals. The school has developed very positive partnerships with parents of pupils with special educational needs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is very good.**

The governance of the school is **very good**. The quality of leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. This has been maintained since the previous inspection. The quality of leadership of senior staff and other staff with responsibilities is also **very good**. Overall the effectiveness of management is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governing body is fully involved in strategic planning and in formulating and implementing policies
- Governors keep in close touch with all aspects of school life and are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- The headteacher has a very clear vision of the school and leads by example
- There is an exceptionally high level of commitment by the headteacher and staff, and they work together well as a team to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school
- Management of special educational needs is very good
- School improvement planning impacts strongly on standards
- There is a strong commitment to the professional development of staff
- Job descriptions do not clearly identify specific responsibilities and accountability for the deputy headteacher and senior team, resulting in some overlap of tasks or gaps in management training

### **Commentary**

43. The governing body plays a full and active part in school life. It is very well organized and efficient. Committees and governors with specific roles deal very competently with the curriculum, financial and personnel matters and ensure all statutory requirements are met. They are effective in their monitoring role. The very capable chair of governors works in close partnership with the headteacher to ensure that high standards and high quality provision for all pupils is secured. Governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are highly supportive of the work of the school.
44. The exceptionally committed headteacher is a driving force within the school, and staff and pupils respond very positively to her very strong and purposeful leadership and management. Her clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations ensure that all aspects of school life develop and improve. This clear vision is evident in the very comprehensive school improvement plan that sets out a very clear programme of action to deal with relevant priorities. The headteacher leads by example. The staff have confidence in her leadership and feel valued. Teams are well established but specific responsibilities and accountability are not clearly defined, resulting in some overlap of tasks or gaps in management training.
45. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work in close partnership to ensure the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and are well supported by other senior staff. The co-ordination



of subjects is very good overall. There is very good teamwork within the school and a willingness to support each other. There is a great sense of trust amongst staff and they place great value on any advice given, irrespective of age or experience. The very positive relationships and the high level of commitment from all members of the team are strengths of the school and make a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by pupils. The school places high priority on the inclusion of all pupils. For example, the conscientious special educational needs co-ordinators maintain very clear and comprehensive records. They give very good support to teachers and other staff when drawing up specific targets for pupils' individual education plans. The link governor for special educational needs is kept fully up to date with developments and progress against targets through the comprehensive tracking system.

46. The professional development of all staff is given high priority and reflects the needs of the individual and of the school. Performance management has been extended to include teaching assistants, administrative staff and the senior midday supervisor. The impact of this is carefully evaluated. There is a high standard of financial management and this helps the school to achieve its educational priorities and to apply the principles of best value at all times.
47. In some cases, lack of parental support is a barrier to raising achievement. Overall however, the school is very successful in enlisting the help of parents and the majority of pupils benefit from regular help with their work at home. The aids to achievement are very clearly the dedication of the headteacher, staff and governors, the willingness of pupils to improve their own work and the very positive support from the great vast majority of parents.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,075,740	Balance from previous year	111,002
Total expenditure	998,649	Balance carried forward to the next	77,091
Expenditure per pupil	2,390		

48. In relation to the above table, the balance carried forward is higher than would normally be expected. However, there are clear explanations:
- the school had budgeted for two teachers paid at the top of the pay scale but appointed two newly qualified teachers;
  - funding was set aside to buy interactive whiteboards in each classroom as part of the whiteboard programme;
  - funding was allocated to pay for teacher cover but was not used as cover was provided from within the school;
  - funding was allocated for additional teaching assistant support.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

49. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and has improved greatly since the previous inspection. This is because of improvements in the quality of teaching and the relocation of the reception class to allow access to a designated outdoor play area. Children are very well prepared for their move from Nursery to Reception and later to Year 1. Children enter the nursery in the term after their third birthday. All children achieve very well because teaching is consistently very good and teachers provide a very wide range of interesting activities that are very well matched to individual need. Children with special educational needs are very well catered for, with very good support from all adults. Children who are particularly gifted and talented are identified at a very early stage and given work that effectively challenges them. All staff work together very well, giving the children excellent role models. Very good initial assessment and on-going monitoring ensures that work is set at the correct level to meet individual children's needs. There is good accommodation, which stimulates children's learning because of the very good quality displays. All Foundation Stage children have access to a suitable outdoor area. Relationships with parents are very good and this has a very positive effect on encouraging parents to help their children, for example when reading books are taken home. There is very good co-operative leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and this has a positive impact on developing learning and raising standards.

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

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

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

- Children achieve very well because of the very good quality of teaching
  - Children settle in to very well organised routines very quickly
  - Many children exceed the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage
  - Staff provide excellent role models for the children
50. There is a wide range of attainment in social skills amongst the children who enter the nursery. They very soon settle in to the nursery routines because there are very clear systems in place. They go immediately to interesting activities covering all the areas of learning. There is very good quality teaching in both nursery and reception and this leads to very good learning and achievement. Teachers greet children warmly and this develops their self-esteem and shows them they are valued. Teachers and support staff expect very high standards of behaviour and children respond very well to this. The excellent role models provided by the staff and written targets reinforce the importance of good manners. Children are expected to say 'please' and 'thank you'.
51. Children in both Nursery and Reception are encouraged to take turns and co-operate with each other in all activities. This is particularly good in role-play and in the outdoor physical activities. Adults ensure that children feel secure and confident. This has a very positive effect on the very good achievement over their time in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Reception all children have attained the expected goals, with many exceeding them. Children are very well mannered. They listen to each other, take turns and work very well without direct adult supervision.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weakness

- Children achieve very well in both nursery and reception
  - Many children exceed the expected goals at the end of the Foundation Stage
  - There is consistently very good quality teaching throughout the Foundation Stage
  - Children with special educational needs receive very good support
  - Parents are encouraged to help in the development of reading skills
52. The present nursery intake has average language skills but, over the previous three years, standards on entry have been below average, particularly in mark making and early writing skills. Children in both nursery and reception make very good progress and achieve very well because teaching is consistently very good. Children with special educational needs achieve at the same rate as everyone else because they are given additional support and work is set to meet their individual needs. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. The reception class teacher makes very good use of the interactive white board to develop letter formation. Children in both classes are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers set very good examples when they read stories with expression. Children develop their language skills very effectively in role-play areas. Teachers and support staff develop children's vocabulary very well by asking them to explain what they are doing and why they are doing it. Children achieve very well in the development of reading skills because, from the start of Nursery, they are encouraged to handle books and talk about the illustrations. Children are keen to take books home and parents are encouraged to read with them. This has a positive effect on children's development of reading skills.
53. Almost all children reach the expected goals by the end of Reception, and a significant number exceed them. Children speak clearly; they listen well and respond appropriately to questions. Most recognise initial letter sounds and many read simple words and sentences by the time they enter Year 1. In writing, most children form recognisable letters and write their name and simple words. The higher attaining children write in sentences.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good achievement throughout the Foundation Stage
  - Attainment at the end of Reception is above the expected level
  - The quality of teaching is very good
  - Children with special educational needs, and gifted and talented children are very well catered for
54. There is very good achievement throughout the Foundation Stage. Children enter nursery with attainment that is average at best and, by the time they leave Reception, they have exceeded the expected levels. Children achieve so well because of the very good quality teaching and learning in both Nursery and Reception. Staff use a variety of rhymes and number songs to develop an awareness and understanding of number. Adults use every possible opportunity to develop counting skills, for example when counting the number of spots on a ladybird and counting the steps on the slide in outdoor play. Children with special educational needs are given additional support and work is discussed with them to ensure they understand what they are doing. In Nursery, a child who has been identified as being particularly gifted in mathematics is given additional work, which both challenges and interests her. Very good

practical activities, including the use of sand and water, help to develop children's understanding of capacity. Children's vocabulary is effectively developed when they talk about a container being full or empty. Children learn about positional language such as 'over', 'under' and 'behind' very effectively, because of the use of teddy bears, which are placed in various locations. By the time they leave Reception, children count two-digit numbers, they recognise all single-digit numbers and identify more or less than a given number to 10. A significant number of children carry out simple addition and subtraction using single-digit numbers. Almost all children recognise and name a circle and a square.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All children achieve very well and exceed the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage
  - There is very good quality teaching
  - Children are offered a very wide range of interesting and enjoyable activities
  - There is very good use of information and communication technology to develop learning
  - There is very good cultural development
55. All children achieve very well and exceed the expected goals because of the consistently very good quality teaching. Teachers ensure that children are given a very wide range of activities that both interest and stimulate their learning. Computers are used very effectively to develop skills in many areas of the curriculum, particularly in language and mathematical development. Adults talk to children about what they are doing, they ask them about their families. This gives pupils an understanding of their place within the family and develops an understanding of history by learning from people older than themselves. Scientific skills are developed effectively by the use of equipment such as magnifying glasses. Geographic skills are very effectively developed when children talk about their journey to school. Teachers provide a very wide range of construction kits to allow children to build models and this, coupled with discussion about the models being produced, leads to very good learning. Teachers take advantage of children's birthdays to develop children's skills in mixing ingredients for a birthday cake. There is very good development of vocabulary when the support assistant talks about ingredients and mixing. Children are very effectively taught about other cultures, for example when they learn about the Chinese New Year in Nursery and in work on Thailand in Reception.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well throughout the Foundation Stage
  - Children show better than expected physical co-ordination at the end of the Foundation Stage
  - Very good use is made of the outdoor play area to develop physical skills
  - Teaching and learning in outdoor play sessions is very good
56. No hall sessions were observed but children were observed in outdoor play sessions in the designated play area. Children enter school with average physical skills. By the time they leave Reception, they perform at a better than expected level. They climb and crawl showing very good co-ordination. When kicking footballs they do so with a good degree of accuracy. Children show very good control, and an awareness of other children and adults when using tricycles and scooters. The outdoor play area is used very effectively to develop learning in both Nursery and Reception. There is very good learning because of the very good teaching. Teachers and support staff encourage children to take part in role-play, for example being a

police officer. They join in activities, acting as very good role models for the children. Children are encouraged to take part in a wide range of activities. Children relate very well to the adults and, as a result, they have trust and are willing to take part in all activities. This has a very good impact on developing physical skills.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well throughout the Foundation Stage
- Attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage is above the expected level
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good
- There is a wide range of interesting activities
- Children show very good attitudes to creative development
- Creative development enhances cultural understanding

57. Children achieve very well and exceed the expected levels because of the very good quality teaching and the wide range of activities provided by the teachers and support staff. Adults work alongside the children as they learn how to mix paints. Children produce very good quality collages in yellow using a variety of materials. Teachers very effectively encourage children to sing songs and listen to music. Reception children learned about music from another culture in a very good lesson using recorded music and instruments from Thailand. Children are eager to learn and they show very good attitudes. This allows teachers to concentrate on helping others when necessary. By the end of Reception, children produce good quality recognisable paintings and show very good skills in listening to and performing music.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make very good progress
- Teachers use assessment very well to set reading and writing targets for pupils
- The subject is very well led and managed
- Marking is consistently very good
- Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well
- Pupils know and understand their targets and so they work hard to achieve them

### **Commentary**

58. Pupils enter the school often with standards below average. They make very good progress to reach standards that are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing and well above those expected by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection, as are standards in speaking and listening, which are now above national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is due to the focus on improvement in the subject and the action taken, informed by the very good systems that have been put in place, including:

- tracking of pupils' progress in English throughout their time in school;

- half-termly assessments of pupils' writing to monitor the effective teaching and how well pupils are learning;
  - very good monitoring in the subject by the co-ordinators, so they have a very good understanding of what is working well, where improvements need to be made to raise standards and the necessary action to achieve them;
  - focusing on the weaker areas in writing to improve the overall standard, as a result of analysing where pupils did least well in tests;
  - focusing on boys' writing in particular;
  - setting appropriate targets for pupils so they know how to improve;
  - good training opportunities for teachers and support staff leading to increased professional expertise in the classroom.
59. The teaching is carefully matched to the range of abilities in the classes, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils and, as a result, pupils achieve very well. Teaching assistants are well trained to help pupils with the many skills they need for reading and writing. They successfully encourage those with special educational needs to contribute in the shared parts of the lesson. When working in small groups they check pupils' understanding. They know the targets the pupils are working on and what they can do to help them achieve their targets.
60. To improve boys' writing in Year 6 last year, additional visits and visitors were organised, which particularly appealed to them. This provided a good stimulus for their writing and helped to raise standards, as is evident from their improved national test results in 2003 in English.
61. Teachers encourage pupils to participate in lessons by using a wide range of techniques and resources that interest and excite them. This has helped to raise standards in speaking and listening. As a result, pupils listen attentively and many are keen to contribute and are sufficiently confident to offer suggestions, sometimes at length. Teachers use questioning skilfully to cover the range of abilities in the class. Pupils perform well, as when they chant their own poems based on Alan Ahlberg's 'Heard it in the playground', maintaining a good beat and rhythm throughout. A few pupils in some classes, however, are more passive and contribute little, in spite of teachers' efforts. Where teachers use drama techniques, more pupils become involved.
62. Pupils are enthusiastic readers. As a pupil in Year 2 declared, 'I absolutely love it!' Teachers create many opportunities in lessons for pupils to read together as a class so they read with appropriate expression, or in groups with an adult that helps them to understand what they read. Pupils in Year 6 make good use of the non-fiction and poetry books in the library area near their classrooms, and the fiction books in the classrooms, with the author Jacqueline Wilson being a firm favourite, particularly with girls. 'We're never short of books,' say pupils. As well as reading individually to a teaching assistant in school, home reading record books, with pupils' targets inside, help parents and carers to support their children's reading very effectively at home. Pupils make very good progress as a result.
63. Pupils from Year 1 onwards write extensively and well. Teachers provide pupils with frequent opportunities for writing across a range of genres. By Year 2, for example, pupils understand the difference between writing an account and a list of instructions. Pupils are aware of their targets and strive to achieve them in lessons. They have additional time in the week to complete extended pieces of writing. In Year 6, pupils enjoy reading and writing poetry and feel they have made progress in their ability to use ideas in their poems and to make the plot more exciting in their stories. The work in their books and the teachers' comments confirm this improvement.
64. The school is continuing to target writing for improvement. Additional factors which could contribute to further improvement in the subject are:
- increased opportunities for pupils to talk about their writing in pairs;

- build on the drama techniques already used to increase further pupils' enthusiasm and confidence in speaking as well as their learning.

65. Features of the good teaching are:

- teachers' good knowledge of the subject;
- good organisation and planning ensure activities are matched to pupils' abilities;
- a wide range of resources together with a lively pace, which keeps pupils interested;
- good use of targets in lessons reinforces where pupils are trying to improve;
- good use of the plenary at the end of the lesson reinforces the learning in the lesson;
- very good relationships between staff and pupils where all work hard and pupils want to achieve and please their teacher;
- teachers review their lessons and planning to take into account how well pupils learn;
- good use of homework to reinforce and extend what pupils learn.

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

66. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects, particularly in history. These additional opportunities increase the range of pupils' writing and make a good contribution to their literacy development. For example, pupils in Year 2 write empathetically about 'Jim coming home' from the trenches in World War 1, and pupils in Year 6 prepare critical and pertinent questions, which they then put to the 'mill owner' about children working in the mills in Victorian England.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The high standards achieved by pupils
- The very positive relationships give pupils confidence and they contribute well in lessons
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are very good and this means time is used effectively
- The very good quality of teaching and learning. Lessons are well planned and incorporate a good variety of activities
- Very clear learning targets ensure each pupil achieves as well as they can in relation to their capabilities
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use their mathematical skills across other areas of the curriculum
- Teachers could make better use of computers to support pupils' learning during mathematics lessons

### **Commentary**

67. Since the previous inspection, standards in mathematics have been maintained. Discussions with pupils and work seen during the inspection indicate that standards are above average in Years 1 and 2 and well above average in Years 3 to 6. The very high targets set for the coming year are likely to be achieved due to the high levels of staff commitment and the very good arrangements for accelerating the progress of specific groups of pupils in Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In Years 3 to 6, progress for all groups of pupils is very good. There is no significant difference throughout the school between the standards reached by boys and girls.

68. Throughout the school, pupils develop a very good knowledge of number because numeracy processes are taught well. The mental and oral session at the beginning of the lesson provides a good focus for counting and using number multiples, and teachers skilfully use this session to get the lesson off to a good start. Teachers use a good balance of strategies to engage

pupils. They successfully use small whiteboards and create opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with a partner before responding to questions. Sometimes they play games which require quick thinking and develop pupils' quick recall of number facts. Most teachers are very good at knowing how much time to spend on this part of the lesson and this results in all pupils making good progress. Occasionally, teachers do not spend enough time, and opportunities to practise and further develop pupils' mental skills are lost.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are well planned and, in the majority of lessons, teachers set challenging work for each group of pupils in the class. For example, in a very good lesson seen in Year 2, pupils were asked to write price tags for items in the toy shop and then find the coins to pay for them. The more able pupils had to work with much bigger numbers. This helped to extend their knowledge, whilst the other groups were still able to consolidate their own understanding of decimal notation and what coins to select to make smaller amounts.
70. Teachers use good open-ended questions to test the pupils' previous knowledge and consolidate their learning. Opportunities are given for the pupils to explain their answers and show their understanding. Teachers know their pupils very well and have very good relationships with them. They give lots of encouragement and use humour to good effect. This motivates the pupils and they are willing learners. They show enjoyment for mathematics and work hard in their lessons. The varied activities planned ensure that no time is wasted and pupils settle down quickly to their work once the tasks have been explained. Teaching assistants provide very good support for various groups of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, and this makes a positive contribution to their learning. Overall, all pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
71. Leadership and management of mathematics are very good. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to maintain high standards. Planning and teaching are monitored. Results of tests and other assessments are rigorously analysed to identify the pupils' individual needs and to identify priorities for the further professional development of staff. Individual targets and good marking and feedback are very effective in helping all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to improve their work. Pupils respond positively to the very high expectations in the school. This is reflected in their evaluation of their work and achievements in their books, and through discussions with them. Pupils can confidently explain what they have learned and have a clear understanding of their achievement over time. They are proud of the improvements they make to their work and express their excitement at receiving their marked books to see what their teacher has written.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

72. All aspects of the mathematics curriculum are taught and good opportunities are given for pupils to extend and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other areas of the curriculum. In science, for example, the pupils produce block graphs and they apply their knowledge of symmetry to Islamic patterns in religious education. Planning shows that measuring skills are used effectively in design technology. Good use is made of computers to support pupils' learning in Years 3 to 6, including work on co-ordinates, spreadsheets and graphs. Not enough opportunities are given to the pupils in Years 1 and 2 to use selected computer programs to develop their mathematical skill.



## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because of the consistently very good teaching and rigorous assessment systems
- Pupils by the end of Year 6 attain much higher than expected standards
- There are very good opportunities to develop investigative and enquiry skills
- Information and communication technology is used very effectively to develop scientific knowledge and understanding
- The subject is very well led and managed

### Commentary

73. Pupils achieve very well because of the consistently very good quality teaching. There is no difference in achievement of boys and girls. Children with special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates because of additional support. Teachers include all pupils in the lessons, giving them many opportunities to carry out scientific investigations using their prior knowledge, for example in lessons on separating solids and liquids. Pupils are very effectively challenged by teachers giving them problems and asking them to work together to predict and find solutions. Teachers show very good understanding of the subject, for example when talking about 'filtration' and 'evaporation'. They use ICT very effectively to develop scientific understanding. Pupils in Year 5 use data loggers to record sound in decibels in an investigation to find the best material for earmuffs. Younger pupils use mathematical programs to record their findings on block graphs. By the end of Year 2, pupils carry out investigations, recording what they have found out. They understand the importance of eating healthy foods and use the appropriate vocabulary when writing about protein and carbohydrates. All pupils classify materials by type and other features, including hardness. They understand that electricity powers many different things and most children wire up a simple circuit.
74. Teachers assess very effectively what children know and understand, and set targets for each child. It is clear from discussions with pupils that they understand their targets, and this has a very positive effect on raising standards. The very good quality teaching continues as pupils move through the school and, as a result, pupils attain at much higher than expected levels by the end of Year 6. All pupils show very good understanding of how to carry out a fair test, why investigations should be repeated to validate results and explain how they could improve an investigation. They explain why habitats are important to animals and have a very good understanding of food chains, using the correct scientific terminology for 'producer', 'prey' and 'predator'. There is very good knowledge and understanding of the differences between gases, solids and liquids. Pupils show a much better than expected understanding of the relationship between the sun and the earth and the formation of shadows.
75. There is very good leadership in the subject. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision of how to raise standards even further. She manages the subject very well, and monitors teaching and learning to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. Her actions have had a very positive effect on raising standards.
76. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection, when the lack of challenge in scientific investigations and experimental work was a key issue. This issue has been fully addressed by ensuring all pupils are given many opportunities to carry out very well planned scientific investigations. There has been very good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, and standards have risen since the previous inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology because of the very good quality teaching
- Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are well above those expected
- Resources are very well used and have a very positive impact on standards
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to support other subjects
- The very good leadership and management have had a very positive effect on improving staff confidence

### Commentary

77. Pupils achieve very well because they receive very good skill teaching in the computer suite, which they are then allowed to put into practice in a variety of interesting situations. The teacher letting the pupils become familiar with the processes before giving them opportunities to work on menus brings work on spreadsheets to life. Higher attaining pupils are challenged by having a restricted budget to work with. In work on emails, the teacher makes the work interesting because pupils send an actual email to a partner in the class. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond very well to this. In the ICT suite, all adults go round the groups giving additional support and assessing what the children understand. Teachers make very good use of assessments to plan the future work. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher had produced a very good checklist after evaluating the previous lesson. The resources in the computer suite and in the classrooms are used very effectively to develop learning. The interactive white-boards are used very effectively for teacher and pupils' demonstration. As a result of the very good teaching and learning, by the end of Year 2 pupils show a better than expected understanding of how to log on a computer and use a password. They explain how to edit and change font size and style. They have used a programmable floor robot. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Those with special educational needs achieve at the same rate as other pupils because of additional support. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain at much higher than expected levels. They show very good understanding of the use of ICT, both in and outside school. They use control programs to 'electrically wire' a virtual room. They use design programs, are very confident in using spreadsheets and produce very high quality *PowerPoint* presentations, using a wide range of text, pictorial and sound techniques.
78. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages the subject very well. There is a clear determination to raise standards in the subject. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject and introduction of very good quality assessment procedures have had a positive impact on raising standards. A very comprehensive programme of in-service training has developed staff confidence and this has had a very positive effect on raising standards. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection, resources have been greatly improved and this, linked with the very good rise in the quality of teaching, has had a very positive effect on raising standards.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. There is good use of ICT to support other subjects. It is particularly strong in English, mathematics, science and music. Pupils use word processing programs to write for a variety of purposes. They use different fonts to highlight headlines and introductory sentences. There is good use of mathematical programs to develop an understanding of the four rules of number. Pupils record information on graphs and charts. They develop their scientific skills by using data loggers to record sound and temperature and record findings using graphs. There

are opportunities to compose in music using ICT and, in history and geography, pupils access the Internet and CD-ROMs to find out information on their topics.

## HUMANITIES

80. Only one lesson was seen in geography so it is not possible to form an overall judgement about the provision in that subject. In work samples and talking to pupils, it is evident that they have the opportunity to follow national guidelines in the subject at specific points in the year and enjoy their lessons and the good opportunities provided. Five lessons were seen in history. Religious education is to be inspected separately.

### Geography

81. In geography in Year 2 pupils conduct a holiday survey to find out the favourite destinations in their class. They develop their geographical and other skills by converting this information into a graph on the computer. When learning about the features of seaside resorts ('that means location'), they develop a good understanding of appropriate geographical vocabulary, explaining the difference between 'human' ('it means it's been built') and 'physical' (it's been there a very long time'). In Year 6 pupils also use computers for their research on the Internet on mountain ranges and to locate them on maps which increases their geographical understanding effectively.

### History

82. Provision in history is **good**. Pupils by the end of Year 2 attain standards above national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Due to timetabling arrangements, pupils in Year 6 have not done any history since halfway through Year 5. They have only recently started their first history topic this year, so there is little written evidence. Consequently, no judgement has been made about the standards reached by Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to bring the subject alive
- Very good use of the whiteboard as a visual resource
- Improved effectiveness of subject co-ordinators
- Good opportunities to improve speaking and listening and literacy skills
- Gaps in timetabling make it difficult for pupils to build on what they know

### Commentary

83. Pupils empathise with the lives of people and children in the periods studied through:
- first hand accounts;
  - artefacts;
  - drama techniques such as taking on different roles, dressing up, answering questions in role as a character;
  - visits and visitors.
84. A visit to a local Victorian house helps pupils in Year 1 to develop very effectively an understanding of the past. This is built on in Year 2. Pupils are very clear about how they remember the past because the teachers use such good resources, artefacts and techniques. For example, they enact the homecoming of a soldier in World War 1, singing songs, reading poems and playing music of the period. They know when Remembrance Day started and why, and the reason for the significance of the poppy. In Year 4, pupils, when researching information about Henry VIII, explain effectively the difference between primary and secondary sources of information, with examples, and are keen to learn more from the well prepared

resources. Pupils in Year 6 place the Victorians in time and in relation to the Tudors and Stuarts appropriately. They quickly develop an understanding about the lives of poor Victorian children from the primary sources to which they have access. Pupils achieve well because they are interested and the lessons are stimulating

85. As both subjects have been a recent focus in the school plan for development, the co-ordinators have had good recent opportunities to monitor teaching and learning through observing lessons in their subject and analysing the work in pupils' books. They also collect teachers' planning and their assessments of pupils' progress at the end of each half term. Observing lessons has enabled them to have a more complete picture of standards in their subject, and how pupils develop their understanding over time and how they are achieving. It has been useful for the teachers in providing them with reassurance and any tips for improvement and comments on resources.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. Only one lesson was seen in art and design and no lessons were observed in design and technology. Music lessons were observed in three classes in the juniors but very little was seen in the infant classes. Although four lessons were seen in physical education, three were gymnastic lessons and one was a games lesson. It is not, therefore, possible to make a firm judgement about provision. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work, spoke to pupils about what they had learnt and looked at pupils' work from this year and last year.
87. In **art and design**, there are many impressive displays of varied and interesting artwork around the school and it is clear that standards now are a similar picture to those at the time of the last inspection. This lively approach was certainly evident in the display based on 'Still Life' in Year 5, where pupils had used pencil crayon and wax to produce some super artwork. In Year 6, pupils were given the opportunity to see how various artists responded to the rural and urban environment. For example, they used portraits by Monet, Van Gogh and others to inspire them to produce their own interpretations using paint, clay and fabric. This incorporated some striking paintings with a good use of brush strokes. In Year 4, good attention to the development of painting skills was a feature of pupils who had used the work of Paul Klee to motivate them. Their work showed the good interlinking of subjects as they represented a journey to school by using signs and symbols, shape, colour and texture. Some moving work by pupils in Year 2 depicted silhouettes of soldiers against a 'sunset sky' with poppies in their recognition of 'Remembrance Day'.
88. No lessons were observed in **design and technology** and, therefore, there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards and provision in this subject. There is a recently revised policy and updated scheme of work in place. In addition, further activities have been identified to supplement the national planning guidelines. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussion with pupils showed that pupils are gaining experience of a range of materials and techniques, and developing the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of products. The school improvement plan identifies as a future priority the development and progression of pupils' design skills. Resources are sufficient and adequate for current use, and ICT is used well to support learning.
89. In **music**, pupils were only observed in Years 3, 5 and 6, although the whole school was heard singing at various times. A positive feature is the use that the school makes of the very good subject expertise of teachers to help pupils to move forward. Two confident and competent teachers, one in each key stage, lead the weekly 'singing' sessions and take other classes for music, while their own class has a different lesson with another teacher. All pupils sing and perform tunefully, with awareness of breathing, diction and dynamics and most obviously enjoy singing. This was seen to good effect in a Years 5 and 6 session when pupils performed a Calypso, Haunted House and Jack Frost songs all with super expression. The talented teacher has an infectious enthusiasm that is transferred to pupils in their performance. Lessons are

enhanced by a choir and recorder groups and there is instrumental teaching of clarinet, flute, oboe, violin and keyboard. Concerts and performance also contribute to pupils' overall musical experience. The school ensures that pupils build on their knowledge, skills and understanding in a progressive way. The music of other cultures, for example from Asia and Africa, help to enhance multi-cultural understanding. A positive picture of music has been maintained since the last inspection.

90. In **physical education**, good teaching promotes good achievement in pupils. Teachers' expositions are brief, but clear. They give pupils good opportunities to practise and refine their skills. Pupils listen intently and respond with enthusiasm. Teachers encourage pupils to work cooperatively with partners and in groups, and to plan and execute their own ideas. Pupils enjoy this independence. Year 2 pupils, for example, show a variety of ways of taking their weight on various parts of their body. At the end of the lesson they put their learning together to demonstrate their actions in pairs and they explain their choices.
91. Based on a strong early foundation and with further good progress through the infant and junior classes, the impact of high quality teaching is seen in a wide range of sports. The staff have built up a suitable after-school programme of games practice. The skills developed here feed back well into the school lessons. They also result in an enviable record of success in swimming of which the pupils are justifiably proud. The staff are committed to equality and inclusion. All pupils in the juniors, regardless of any difficulties, take part in lessons. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported particularly well, and are enabled to achieve as well as their peers.
92. In all these subjects the leadership of co-ordinators is strong. They are enthusiastic about their area of responsibility, and some are very knowledgeable. They have a clear overview of whole-school strengths and areas for development, and there is systematic monitoring and evaluation.

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

Provision for PSHCE is **very good**.

93. Discussions and scrutiny of other evidence indicate that the school has developed a clear policy and scheme of work for personal, social and health education and citizenship. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich the programme and the school places high priority on continuous development in this area. Parents are kept fully informed of its content and organisation and of their right to withdraw their children.
94. Teachers plan a very good programme with an appropriate emphasis on relationships, family issues, sex education, and the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse, through class discussions, and through subjects such as science and religious education. Pupils think about the needs of people in the local community and in other parts of the world, as when they raise money for the local hospice or for building materials for Thembeni School in South Africa, with which they are linked.
95. Children are committed to raising money for good causes, such as 'Comic Relief' and UNICEF. They organize stalls for fundraising purposes and take part in environmental projects, such as waste paper recycling and the 'Walk to School' project. There is a very good focus on health education, with regular 'health weeks' to promote healthy eating, fitness and exercise.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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