

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thamesmead, Erith

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101460

Headteacher: Mrs Y Wylie

Lead inspector: Eileen Chadwick

Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th October 2003

Inspection number: 257695

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: | 4 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 192 |
| School address: | Kale Road Thamesmead Erith Kent |
| Postcode: | DA18 4BA |
| Telephone number: | (0208) 310 7311 |
| Fax number: | (0208) 312 1017 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Rev G Griffiths |
| Date of previous inspection: | 14 th September 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Since 2002 the school has gained a Basic Skills Quality Mark Award; a Schools Achievement Award; an Eco-Schools Silver Award and an Investors in People Award. There are 192 pupils on roll. Nearly all come from the immediate area, which consists mainly of rented housing association flats and houses and includes some significant social and economic deprivation. Three quarters of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and about two thirds are of Black African heritage, these figures are far higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Nearly two thirds speak English as an additional language with one quarter at early stages of learning English. Many languages other than English are spoken although the main language is Yoruba. A very small proportion of pupils are from travelling families although all live on permanent sites.

The level of pupil mobility is above average with twice as many entering than leaving at times other than the normal leaving or entry points. However, the impact of pupil mobility is very high by Year 6 and, in the current Year 6, nearly half began in the juniors. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average, at 17 per cent, and this is far lower than when the school was previously inspected, when it was 32 per cent. The school attributes this to the rise in numbers of Black African pupils and their families' reluctance to claim eligibility for free school meals. A far higher proportion of white pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, four out of every ten, compared with the one out of every ten black pupils. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register, at 26 per cent, is above average although the proportion with statements of special educational need is below average. Most of these pupils have difficulties in speech, communication and literacy or have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A significant proportion enter the school as later entrants with challenging behaviour or poor achievement in literacy and numeracy. Most children have had some pre-school education before entering Reception. Pupils' overall attainment on entry is well below average but this ranges from above average to very low.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 19115 | Eileen Chadwick | Lead inspector | Mathematics Art and design Design and technology The Foundation Stage |
| 8992 | Julian Vischer | Lay inspector | |
| 30244 | Roger Tapley | Team inspector | English Citizenship History Music |
| 17995 | Roger Purdom | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Geography Physical education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school that provides good value for money. Good leadership by the headteacher, effectively supported by other senior managers and governors, ensure that pupils often achieve well through much good teaching. The school is successfully meeting the needs of the diverse community it serves because of a strong quest for equal opportunities for all and effective systems to make this happen. As a result, by Year 6, pupils reach average standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). They are well prepared for their secondary education. However, though generally satisfactory, pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 is not as good as in the rest of the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is very good whilst their achievement in science and ICT is good;
- children are given a good start in Reception and this ensures their good progress;
- the quality of teaching in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 is good and this raises standards;
- good leadership by the headteacher and other senior managers is leading to improving standards and parents' satisfaction with the school;
- the very good provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, leads to a very high degree of racial harmony, pupils behaving well and making the most of their time in school;
- the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 needs to be improved so it is as good as in the rest of the school;
- the challenge for more capable pupils is inconsistent;
- homework is not used well enough as a tool for raising standards; and
- pupils do not always develop their independent enquiry skills systematically enough.

The school's effectiveness has improved well since the previous inspection in September 1998. There have been good improvements in standards in English, mathematics and ICT and in the overall quality of teaching. The school has made good overall progress in addressing its key issues.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 |
| English | B | D | D | C |
| mathematics | D | E | D | C |
| science | B | E | E | D |

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average E - well below average.
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Pupils' overall achievement is good. The school received an improvement award for its improved results for Year 6 pupils in 2002. However, standards dropped significantly in the latest 2003 national tests. This was mainly due to the arrival of many late entrants in the juniors who had low attainment on entry. Inspection shows that standards are much better for the current Year 6 pupils and are average in English, mathematics, ICT, physical education, but below average in science. Pupils' overall achievement is good.

In Year 2 standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils' achievement is good. It is very good in reading, writing and mathematics. Children in Reception achieve well although they are on course to reach below average standards in most of their goals

including language, literacy and mathematics. They are on course to reach their goals in personal, social and physical development. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress in Reception, Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and they behave well. Pupils' attendance is very good and they are punctual. Pupils are very proud of their school and develop a love of learning because of high expectations for them to do well and the interesting work they are given.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall from Reception to Year 6. Most lessons are interesting and pupils' work is often well matched to their previous learning. However, this is not as effective in Years 3 and 4. The quality of teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is very good in Years 1 and 2. It is good in Reception, Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4.

The curriculum provided is good overall in Reception and in Years 1 to 6. The curriculum for English, mathematics, science and ICT is challenging and steadily builds pupils' understanding. It is satisfactory in other subjects such as art and design, history and physical education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are both good. The headteacher provides clear direction for improving pupils' achievement and enabling staff to teach well. Her pastoral leadership is very strong. Senior staff, including the headteacher, set very good examples by their own high quality teaching. Governors are committed, provide much support and are effective in helping to steer the school's direction. All the school staff work together as an effective team for the benefit of the pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are often very pleased with the education the school offers. A small minority of parents are not as pleased with homework, information about what is to be learned and the slower rate of pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4. Pupils are very pleased with the school and all that it offers. They enjoy being in school and say that learning is often fun!

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 so it is consistently as good as in the rest;
- ensure more capable pupils are provided with consistent challenge, including developing their artistic and physical skills;
- ensure homework is used rigorously throughout, especially in literacy and numeracy, as a powerful tool for raising standards; and
- ensure pupils' enquiry skills develop consistently from Reception to Year 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Pupils' overall achievement is **good**. It is **good in Reception, Years 1, 2, 5 and 6** and **satisfactory in Years 3 and 4**. It is a mark of the school's success that, by Year 6, pupils reach average standards in English and mathematics despite their well below average attainment on entry. Pupils achieve very well in English and mathematics by Years 2 and 6. The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy and for those with English as an additional language, in Reception, Years 1 and 2 raises standards. The good provision for both of these groups through Years 3 to 6 ensures pupils leave the school well prepared for their secondary education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 2 standards in national tests have often been well above similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics for the past four years indicating pupils' very good achievement by Year 2.
- This has led to pupils entering Year 3 often well prepared for their junior education.
- Standards in 2003 national tests in mathematics for Year 2 pupils improved significantly after a large drop in 2002.
- Standards in national tests have sometimes been too variable between subjects. For example in 2002 compared with national averages, standards were average in reading and well above average in writing but well below average in mathematics. This indicates better provision in English than in mathematics.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 15.9 (16.9) | 15.8 (15.7) |
| writing | 16.4 (15.3) | 14.4 (14.3) |
| mathematics | 15.1 (17.2) | 16.5 (16.2) |

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

- Compared with the standards reached by Year 6 pupils in 2002 and 2003 national tests the average standards in English and mathematics, observed in Year 6, show significant improvements.
- A major reason is that the current Year 6 entered Year 3 having achieved higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than the 2002 and 2003 cohorts.
- In 2003 pupils who took their Year 2 tests at this school achieved well by Year 6 in English and mathematics tests though their achievement in science was unsatisfactory.
- Standards in national tests in Year 6 have been very variable across English, mathematics and science for the last few years, especially for higher attaining pupils.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 26.4 (25.7) | 27 (27) |
| mathematics | 26.2 (24.5) | 26.7 (26.6) |
| science | 27.0 (25.4) | 28.3 (28.3) |

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

- Standards in 2003 national tests for Year 6 dropped in all three subjects from the standards reached in 2002. In 2002 standards were below national averages in English and mathematics and well below average in science. There were several reasons for this drop:
 - the impact of about one third of Year 6 pupils joining the school late, in the juniors, often with limited English or special educational needs;
 - those pupils who took their tests in Year 2 at St John Fisher entered Year 3 having reached low standards in reading and writing; and
 - science training had not been a focus in the school due to the non-availability of science subject advisers in the local education authority.
- The school is on course to reach its demanding targets for Level 4 and Level 5 for the current Year 6. The school has also employed an independent science consultant to help raise standards in science.
- By the end of **Reception** children are likely to reach their early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. They are on course to reach below average standards in all other areas of learning, including speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy. Despite the generally good progress being made, the limited English or language development of a significant minority limits the overall standards being reached.
- The standards of **Year 2** pupils are average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science, ICT, art and design and physical education. Standards are similar to those reached by pupils in the assessments made by teachers in the 2002 assessments but lower than the 2003 assessments. Pupils' achievement is very good in speaking and listening, reading, writing and science. It is good in ICT and satisfactory in art and design and physical education.
- By **Year 6** standards are average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, ICT and below average in science. Most pupils' achievement is good. Standards are average in history, art and design, and physical education; pupils' achievement is satisfactory in these subjects. Due to earlier underachievement in science pupils' investigative skills still have weaknesses. There is little attainment at higher levels by Year 6 in science.
- The school has to work hard to raise attainment because of the impact of high mobility and an overall low attainment of pupils entering Reception. A substantial proportion of pupils join the school at an educational disadvantage either in Reception or as later entrants because of their special educational needs or limited English. In the Year 6 of 2002/2003, one third of all pupils entered in the junior years. A considerable proportion of these pupils had limited English, poor standards in literacy and numeracy and / or behaviour problems. Mobility had a similar impact for the current Year 6 but the attainment on entry of the late entrants was better than for the previous Year 6.
- Pupils' competence in reading and writing is enhancing their learning in other subjects. The wider curriculum is used well as a vehicle for learning in literacy. Pupils apply numeracy and ICT across the curriculum satisfactorily and ICT is well applied to literacy. Drama is used most effectively as a tool for learning. For example, it is used throughout as a way of bringing literature and history to life.
- Inclusion is good overall. The inspection and the school's records show that ethnic minority pupils, including the African majority in the school, achieve well. No significant differences were observed between the achievement of different racial groups except in Year 5. Here, there is a far higher proportion of white pupils with special educational needs and low

attainment in literacy. The achievement of more capable pupils is satisfactory overall. Higher attaining pupils' achievement is good overall in English and mathematics but inconsistent in science and art and design. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics, good progress in drama but there is little provision for them in all other areas. In Reception, a significant proportion of pupils show advanced physical skills but these pupils are not identified early or provided with systematic enrichment.

- During the inspection no significant differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls. However, in Year 6 national tests girls have consistently outperformed boys in English whilst boys have done far better than girls in mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance

Pupils' attendance and their attitudes, values and personal development are **very good**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.3 | School data | 0.1 |
| 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.

Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the last academic year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is well above the national average.
- The pupils' have very good attitudes to learning which helps them to achieve well.
- The school has excellent expectations for the behaviour of pupils.
- The school's promotion of good relationships is excellent.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

- In 2001/2002, attendance was well above the national average. Unauthorised attendance was broadly in line with the national average. The school has good procedures for promoting attendance, including encouraging parents to ensure pupils' attendance. Pupils' punctuality is good and there are clear procedures for what they must do if they arrive late at school.
- Pupils' interest in school life and the range of activities that are offered are very good. The vast majority behave very well in lessons and around the school. Pupils' behaviour in the playground was observed to be very good and older pupils are encouraged to help younger ones through a 'Playground Squad' scheme. This involves pupils in Years 4 to 6 applying for a job as a member of this squad, being interviewed, given a job description and then carrying out their tasks. They are monitored and encouraged to take the job seriously. This provides support for younger pupils and is also a good example of encouraging responsibility in the older pupils. Those pupils involved speak enthusiastically about their role. During the infrequent occasions when less than good behaviour was observed, it was in lessons where pupils were not stimulated enough nor managed well enough to raise the standard of behaviour. Where

pupils come together, for example, in assemblies, pupils' behaviour is very good. They are willing to take a full and active part in the assembly, whether listening, watching or singing. In speaking with pupils, inspectors found there were no examples of bullying. Pupils also spoke of clear procedures in the school to deal with bullying, should it occur.

12. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They listen attentively and enjoy their learning. They like talking about the work they are doing and can do so with confidence. They work well with each other, respecting each other and the adults who are working with them. The vast majority of pupils want to come to school. One pupil commented that she "loved this school and didn't want to leave". When a small group of pupils was asked for reasons why they wanted to come to school, one pupil replied, "because it's the best school in the area".
13. The school stimulates a desire in pupils to learn. It provides a quiet and orderly atmosphere where all pupils are given every opportunity to achieve. The school is always looking out for ways of enhancing pupils' personal development, for example, through drama. The school wants to help pupils become good citizens. The school has excellent expectations for pupils' conduct and works hard to achieve them. All staff work together as a team to promote this. There is excellent promotion of good relationships. This includes racial harmony where all pupils are encouraged to accept and respect people for who they are. This promotes very high standards between pupils and adults and the school provides an excellent role model for all.
14. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong. Staff are very good role models, both in the classroom and around the school. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities around the school and they respond very well, whatever the task may be. The school council, which is expanding its role gives pupils the opportunity to take an active role in the school development. Assemblies provide very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral education. They are given time to reflect on things they have done that are wrong and, through prayer, to say sorry. Through listening and singing along to a worship CD, they are able to reflect on spiritual values that are very important in the school. Pupils are given daily opportunities to reflect and pray, both as a whole school and also in each classroom. Opportunities for spiritual development are very good.
15. Pupils are encouraged to see their school as a living community, working together for the good of all and supporting each other wherever appropriate. Pupils are encouraged to work together and play together and this gives very good opportunities for their social development. Bereavement issues have been dealt with, helping pupils to grieve. Pupils are also provided with very good opportunities to learn about different cultures. For example, they took part in a very successful 'Black African Week' that brought together many people and encouraged them to think about other peoples' cultures. In dance, pupils are encouraged to use music from different cultures to express themselves. One assembly celebrated the Nigerian culture and pupils were asked to imagine a visit to Nigeria through stories and artefacts that were on display. Promotion of pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils are very well prepared for life in multi-cultural Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** because there is much good teaching and the school provides an interesting and relevant curriculum for its pupils.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **good**. Although it is good overall throughout the school it is more consistently so in Reception and Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is very good in English and mathematics because teachers have strong subject knowledge and are very skilled when matching pupils' work to their previous attainment. This rapidly raises standards.
- The quality of teaching in Year 6 is consistently good. There is much good teaching in Reception and Year 5. As a result pupils learn well in these years.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is very good in Reception, Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6. This raises attainment regardless of pupils' initial starting point.
- The leading mathematics teacher's enrichment teaching for more capable pupils, including the gifted, in Years 4 to 6, is very good and is improving these pupils' achievement.
- Drama is used very effectively as a means of "bringing lessons to life" enabling pupils' understanding, thinking and developing their speaking and listening.
- In Years 3 and 4 pupils' work is not as well matched to their needs and class management is not always as effective as in other years. This slows the pace of pupils' learning.
- Homework is not consistently used well enough as a tool for raising standards.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 1 (3%) | 6 (15%) | 22 (55%) | 10 (25%) | 1 (2%) | 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.

16. There has been good overall improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. There is a higher proportion of teaching that is good and far less that is unsatisfactory, especially in Years 3 to 6. Most good or better teaching was seen in the lessons of teachers who are longer serving in this school. The programmes for subject training, teaching by example and the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and subject leaders have all had a significant impact on improving teaching. The subject leaders in English and mathematics set very good examples to the rest of the staff by their high expectations, their vision for what pupils can achieve and by their own high quality teaching. The teaching of science and ICT is now good throughout the school. The recent emphasis upon enhancing teachers' subject knowledge has played a strong part in improving pupils' learning in these subjects.
17. In Reception, children are well managed and this makes them feel secure and confident. The teacher and support assistant have high expectations and very good relationships with the children. Planning is good and based on effective assessment of children's prior attainment. Good provision for personal, social and emotional development underpins all the work in Reception. There is a good balance between formally organised small group and class teaching. Purposeful play opportunities are good for communication, language and literacy but not as well developed for mathematics. Nevertheless there is a strong emphasis on children learning through practical work and developing numeracy as well as speech and reading. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given a very good start.
18. In the rest of the school all teachers have high expectations and a strong desire to enable pupils to achieve their best, whatever their starting point. Most teachers have the teaching skills to make this happen. In good or very good lessons these qualities were present:
 - teachers have good subject knowledge and inspire pupils to learn;
 - planning effectively ensures all ability groups can achieve well in all parts of the lesson;
 - pupils are well managed so they spend maximum time on learning;

- pupils are given clear lesson purposes during lesson introductions and there is enough time for pupils to evaluate what they have learned at the end of each lesson;
 - teachers give time deadlines and pupils are clear about what they need to achieve;
 - teachers ensure pupils are enabled to learn in a range of styles, including learning through doing and problem solving, as well as learning through watching and practising;
 - support by classroom assistants is of a high quality and strongly develops pupils' learning; and
 - resources are of a high quality and are frequently used effectively to bring the lesson to life.
19. Teaching and learning in English are often at least good. The teaching of literacy skills is very good in Years 1 and 2. There is much attention to teaching reading, phonics, spelling and writing in an exciting and lively way. This encourages the pupils to want to learn. Phonics teaching is very well matched to pupils' prior attainment. Drama is used very effectively as a way of bringing books to life. In Years 3 to 6 there continues to be a good emphasis on teaching phonics, spelling and grammar in ways that are relevant to pupils. Drama continues to be used very effectively and steadily builds pupils' understanding and love of famous classical literature such as Shakespeare's Macbeth. Throughout, there is a good balance between the teaching and learning of skills and encouraging pupils' creative thinking. However, pupils' home reading books, for higher attainers, are sometimes too easy.
20. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good. They are very good in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2 teachers are very skilled in the assessing of pupils' previous skills and using this information to provide well-matched work throughout the lesson. Teaching assistants, as well as teachers, provide very good support during group work for developing pupils' understanding of number. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is also good. However, teaching and learning are not as successful in Years 3 and 4 because there is sometimes a mismatch to the needs of lower or higher attaining pupils. Pupils are not being given as steady a build up of knowledge and skills in Years 3 and 4 as in the rest of the school.
21. Support staff are skilled in managing pupils and provide effective help, especially in literacy and numeracy, due to good quality training. Their effectiveness is demonstrated in the good achievement of lower attaining pupils in English and mathematics. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed. There is strong attention to ensuring priority is given to enabling pupils to read, write and spell through learning in small groups within class or by withdrawal.
22. A high priority is given to enabling pupils to learn English so they can do well in their subjects. Pupils with English as an additional language or those with poorer pronunciation are given good opportunities for developing their English. This occurs through high quality opportunities for speaking during practical activities in small groups, including drama. Pupils benefit from classroom strategies, such as questioning employed by many teachers, who explain teaching points in a way that encourages all pupils to participate in activities. Occasionally pupils benefit from opportunities to use their home language to facilitate their subject learning and acquisition of English. Later entrants with limited English are provided with very good support. The quality of teaching by the part-time specialist teacher is very good whilst teaching quality in other lessons is very good for Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6.
23. The teachers in Years 3 and 4 only embarked on teaching these year groups in September and, at present, their teaching is mainly satisfactory. In an unsatisfactory history lesson in Year 4 pupils with special educational needs could not read their work sheets and, as a result, did not learn enough. In these years, the management of pupils and the use of assessment for matching their work is not as skilled as in the rest of the school.
24. In the history, art and design and physical education lessons observed, it was apparent that teachers' subject knowledge was mainly satisfactory but not as strong as for English and mathematics. This is the major reason for pupils' satisfactory progress in the foundation

subjects compared with their good progress in the core subjects. Assessment systems are good in English, mathematics, science and ICT and satisfactory in the foundation subjects.

25. Homework is unsatisfactory. It is inconsistent and not used as a tool for rigorously raising standards. There is not enough mathematics homework in Years 2, 3 and 4 and the provision of English homework is poor in Year 4.

The curriculum

Overall curriculum provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality provision for literacy and numeracy.
- The curriculum is often relevant and captures pupils' interest.
- Good equality of access and opportunity for pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language.
- Provision for gifted and talented pupils is limited apart from in English and mathematics.

Commentary

26. The school has been successful in addressing all of the issues raised at its last inspection. There is now a suitable framework for teaching Reception children and good schemes of work for ICT. Time allocations have been revised to ensure there is a focus on the teaching of skills in English, mathematics and ICT through other subjects. There is thorough curriculum guidance for supporting teaching for all subjects. Additionally, there is now a much more innovative and relevant curriculum in place that ensures effective use of time through linking subjects. For example, in a Year 6 history lesson, pupils were developing a wide range of skills covering the subjects of English, mathematics, ICT, art and design and design and technology when studying what life was like as an evacuee during the Second World War. Pupils had designed and made an Anderson shelter and gas masks. They were using the school's video camera to film interviews of children preparing to be evacuated from their homes, using computers to find information about the war and working out how much could be purchased in a week when food was rationed. The skills were being rigorously taught for each subject.
27. Successful implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy strategy is improving achievement despite the significant proportion of pupils who enter the school with poor social and academic skills. The skills pupils acquire in literacy and numeracy ensure that they have full opportunity to access the remainder of the curriculum. Teachers' medium term planning pays careful regard to different groups of pupils and identifies clearly that resources and activities are well matched to their needs.
28. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their difficulties are identified early in their school life and teachers often produce detailed individual plans to support their learning and ensure they take part in all school activities. This is why they make so much good progress.
29. Planning for pupils with English as an additional language is a strength of the school. The school works closely with specialist teachers from the local authority to ensure all language needs are met. There is a rigorous assessment system and very effective tracking systems to ensure all pupils achieve highly throughout the school. Teachers meet regularly with the co-ordinator to plan each weeks work. This is why pupils with English as an additional language achieve so well. The school is alert to other barriers that could impact upon pupils' development. For example, in science, pupils with English as an additional language are now given extra support during the lessons, which has increased their understanding of scientific

vocabulary. As a result pupils achieve similar standards to their peers, which is a considerable achievement.

30. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside its normal school time. This includes a variety of games classes as well as art and design, music and ICT. An important part of school life is training for and taking part in competitions. Pupils recently won the Matthew Clarke football tournament and the St Paul's athletics meeting. The school also took part in the borough swimming gala. Pupils are prepared well for secondary school. They visit the schools and have a good understanding of what is expected of them and look forward to the move.
31. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The new computer suite and the library have added active learning spaces to the school. The administration block has been recently extended. Resources are satisfactory but large climbing apparatus for Reception is currently limited. The school has recently received a grant for improving this. There are also few mathematical games or construction kits to enable the children to learn about moving parts.

Care, guidance and support

The overall provision for care, guidance and support of pupils is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good level of care for pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- There are good induction arrangements for children in Reception and late entrants to the school.
- Pupils feel very well supported through a trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.
- Pupils have very good access to well-informed support advice and guidance.
- Pupils who enter the school as late entrants with poorer personal development are provided with very good support. As a result they settle quickly and achieve well.

Commentary

32. Pupils' personal and educational well-being is a priority of all staff. Staff are very vigilant and aware of potential safety risks. The provision of playground monitoring by a group of pupils, the 'squad', is made up of older more responsible pupils. The squad provide good role models and also help to ensure the overall standard of care and welfare are good. Formal procedures for child protection, health and safety and First Aid are satisfactory.
33. Very good relationships in the school help ensure that pupils are very well supported through one or more trusting relationships with an adult. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good because staff know the pupils well and seek to offer advice as soon as an occasion arises. Advice based on monitoring of academic achievement is good overall. The school operates good induction for pupils and quickly assesses the level of pupils' prior attainment, academically and personally. All are made to feel at ease and involved. Throughout the school pupils are quickly accepted and settle in quickly.
34. The involvement of pupils is satisfactorily undertaken by seeking, valuing and acting on their views. This is carried out in an informal way but facilitated by the very good relationships with adults in the school and the confident way in which pupils express their opinions to adults. A school council has been established but is at a relatively early stage of development. However, because of the very good relationships, pupils' views are heard and acted upon albeit in an informal way. This is reflected in the confident way they express their opinions to adults.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and the community and there are **very good** links with the local Catholic community. Links with other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- Procedures to deal with concerns and complaints are very good.
- Pupils' home/school reading records do not give enough information about pupils' targets for success and their progress.

Commentary

35. The school has good links with parents because of its open approachability. The great majority of parents are delighted with what the school offers their children. Actual structured links through providing information or the seeking of their views formally are only satisfactory with some weaker features.
36. Parents are provided with a reasonable range of information concerning the school. The way it is presented, whilst accurate, is not visually appealing and nor does it always convey the good work going on in the school. Pupils' annual reports are informative and personal development is well reported but they do not indicate the academic level attained. Reports are one of the few sources of written curriculum information for parents. The school holds curriculum evenings and recently the headteacher gave a presentation on the development of literacy in the school. Topic sheets and pupils' home/school reading records are important sources of information about the work covered and pupils' achievement. However, pupils' home/school reading records do not show how pupils are progressing in their reading and mainly show books read. These records do not show pupils' targets for success, for example key phonic skills to be practised or key words to be learned. This means that homework cannot be used as a rigorous tool for successfully raising standards and as an important strategy for working with parents.
37. One of the strongest aspects of the school's approachability is that it listens to parents' complaints and concerns and effectively acts on them. Parents feel they are dealt with very fairly. A questionnaire was issued in 2002 to find out about parents' views. The impact of this survey is unclear and this practice has not yet become embedded in school procedures. Parents are invited in to attend performances and special assemblies frequently. However, only a few help regularly in the school. The Friends' Association supports the school satisfactorily but has yet to involve black parents effectively and take advantage of the rich cultural resource.
38. The school has good links with the community. It participates in the local Thamesmead Jubilee Festival and in various environmental projects led by the Galleons' Housing Association but the key to its relationship with the local community is the very good links with the local Catholic community. The Chair of Governors is the local priest and the school is used once a week for church services. Sometimes additional services are held during the week in term time and many pupils attend. Because of this religious link and because parents are made to feel so welcome, the school is central to the life of the community, a haven of stability and support.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. This applies to the leadership provided by the headteacher, senior staff and subject co-ordinators and the systems for managing the school. The governance of the school is also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear direction for improving the school and has developed good management systems to enable improvements to happen. Her pastoral leadership is very strong.
- She works closely with her senior managers, including her deputy and they function effectively as a team in moving the school forward.
- Subject co-ordinators' roles are developing well and there is strong leadership for English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- The school has effective systems in place for evaluating and improving the impact of its own provision.
- Governors are very supportive and work hard for the school. They effectively hold the school to account for the standards it achieves and closely monitor the school's performance in order to secure improvements.
- There is a very good balance of black, white, male and female teachers and this provides very good role models for pupils.

Commentary

39. The headteacher provides good leadership with a clear focus on ensuring that the school is constantly improving so pupils can achieve their best. Good support from senior managers, including the deputy and all other staff, means there is a shared will and mechanisms to succeed. Staff and governors have a strongly shared vision and commitment to providing equal opportunities for learning, regardless of pupils' family backgrounds or initial starting points. This drives the school forward. The headteacher leads very well by example and an important strength is the way she empowers people. The deputy headteacher has an informed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is playing an important role in putting more robust computer based assessment systems in place for measuring the performance of the school and different groups' performance. The headteacher and her senior managers undertake systematic monitoring of pupils' achievements and of the quality of teaching and learning. As a result they are very clear about what needs to be done to improve standards. This has been especially effective in literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and 2 and its effectiveness is good overall in Years 5 and 6. However, more rigour is now needed in Years 3 and 4 for supporting and monitoring teaching in order to bring it up to a similar standard as the rest of the school.
40. Subject co-ordinators' roles are very well developed for the core subjects with good opportunities for monitoring pupils' work and the quality of teaching. This improves the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in these subjects. The school is now beginning to more strongly develop the roles of the co-ordinators for the foundation subjects, for example in art and design. However, co-ordinators' management roles are not as developed in foundation subjects. This results in pupils' satisfactory rather than good achievement, for example, in physical education.
41. Provision for the Foundation Stage is well managed by the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. The newly trained teacher is receiving good quality support. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is very well managed throughout the school.
42. The governing body has made a significant contribution to the development of the school. They are well informed, exercise thoroughly all their statutory responsibilities and have a suitably wide range of expertise. Their oversight of the school is effective. They are willing to make suggestions and act as a critical friend as necessary. The relationship between the governing body and the management of the school is based on a clear understanding of roles, combined with mutual trust and respect. Governors' committees have clear terms of reference. The chair plays a very important role in promoting the very strong links with the local community through

his work as the parish priest. Governors visit the school regularly and are fully involved in the life of the school. There are high levels of understanding of what is happening.

43. The school's management structure is of a good quality. Clear and effective delegation takes account of the needs of the school and each individual's expertise. Teachers and support staff are reflective, they evaluate their work and are very keen to develop and improve. The performance management system is implemented as an integral part of school improvement planning and is effectively supported by a comprehensive programme of staff training. Suitable mentoring arrangements exist for new staff.

44. School improvement planning is good and targets the right priorities for improving standards. However, there are no numerical targets on the school improvement plan, showing the overall proportions targeted to reach average and higher standards. This limits the rigour of the school's evaluation procedures for systematically measuring the impact of its actions on raising standards. The school sets ambitious individual targets for each pupil and rigorously monitors individual pupil's progress. The school's administrators provide an efficient and welcoming point of contact for visitors and parents and manage the school's financial procedures well. The site manager plays a very important role in ensuring the maintenance of the school and its site is of a high standard.

45. Financial planning is good with a planned programme of spending linked to the school improvement plan. The school's budget is monitored closely by governors and the school uses the services of a specialist financial consultant. The school makes sure that money is spent wisely by researching and making decisions about goods and services that represent best value. This includes comparing its costs and its results with similar schools. The school has carried forward a larger than normal amount of its annual budget for the past two years. This has been to secure substantial improvements to the accommodation, including a new ICT suite and a new and very well equipped school library. The school has satisfactory plans to reduce this contingency fund in the current academic year.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 515,551 |
| Total expenditure | 512,465 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,562 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 44,065 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 47,151 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children enter Reception full-time in the academic year in which they are five. Children with their fifth birthday from September to the end of February enter full time in September whilst the remainder enter full-time in January. The children's overall attainment on entry is well below average. The management of provision for Reception is good and the teacher and her assistant work together as an effective team for the benefit of the children. The curriculum, the quality of teaching and children's achievement are good overall. There has been good overall improvement since the previous inspection when the planning of the curriculum was weak and pupils' progress was only satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given a warm welcome and constant encouragement. This enables them to quickly and happily settle into school.
- The teacher and her assistant have high expectations for all children to do well, regardless of their starting point.
- Pupils with limited English and those with special educational needs make very good progress.
- School routines are well taught and the learning environment is well organised.
- More opportunities for children to initiate purposeful play are needed.

Commentary

46. The children are on course to reach average standards after achieving well. The quality of teaching is good. The relationships between adults and children are very good and the teacher and her assistant carefully assess the children's personal development, successfully using this information to plan experiences for enabling the children to adjust to school. This is very effective for those who have special educational needs, including emotional and behavioural difficulties, or those who have very limited English on entry. Children are managed well and careful planning ensures children can readily adjust to learning through whole class or more focused group teaching. There are good opportunities for enabling the children to co-operate with others so they share and take turns. Children quickly become confident enough to attend school assemblies and behave well because of the support provided. However, the development of children's ability to learn independently, through purposeful play activities, is only satisfactory and not as well planned.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Drama and role-play are used very well for acting out stories and developing children's speaking skills.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Children enjoy books because of the way adults bring books to life.
- Good quality practical activities underpin the development of speaking, listening, thinking and early reading skills.

- Phonics and the development of early reading skills are given a strong emphasis.
- Good assessment ensures higher attaining pupils are given a reading book early.

Commentary

47. Children are on course to reach below average standards overall. However, this ranges from above to well below average standards. A small minority of ethnic minority children still have limited English or pronunciation at this time. Several white children still use simple grammar and have a limited vocabulary. The quality of teaching is good and there are good links between speaking, listening and early reading. Children's language and thinking are developed in all areas of learning. Assessment is used well to match work and play. Provision for role-play is good and the teacher and assistant enter into role-play sensitively extending the children's speaking and thinking skills according to individual needs.
48. The children learn to love books through the teacher's expressive reading of stories such as that about "The elephant bad baby". The subsequent well-planned drama engages the children to act out the story of the bad baby, interpreting the meaning of phrases that describe the bad baby's actions. Children are taught to identify first letter sounds through practical activities, pictures, chanting and singing. Children know that print carries meaning and can often identify simple words. The writing table activities encourage the children to read simple flash cards, "sorry, thank you, please, hello". The skills for writing and pencil control are satisfactorily introduced though there is no systematic approach to using white boards for linking spoken sounds and the reading and writing of sounds.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are fun, practical and relevant to children's daily life.
- Expectations are high for all children.
- There is very careful planning for the steady build up of skills in each lesson.
- Assessment is being used very well to match children's work to their prior learning.
- There are not enough mathematical games to stimulate children's independent learning through purposeful play.

Commentary

49. Children are on course to reach below average standards by the end of Reception. The quality of teaching is good overall. Most have a sound understanding of number. All children are making good progress but the limited skills of a minority limit the proportions reaching average standards. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are very good during class numeracy lessons when children are provided with a wide range of relevant, practical activities for counting, matching and developing their understanding of number and shape. These occur during whole class and focused group activities. Learning through purposeful play is only satisfactory. The Emerald class shop provides good opportunities for recognising and exchanging coins during play. However, there are few other mathematical games for the children to develop their understanding through play. Overall planning is good. It is very good for class numeracy but only satisfactory for using purposeful play as a vehicle for learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for children to use ICT as a natural tool for learning.
- There are very good opportunities for children's cultural and religious understanding.
- There are not enough construction kits to develop children's understanding of moving parts.

Commentary

50. Children are on course to reach below average standards. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Provision for ICT and religious understanding is very good. Provision for the development of scientific investigative skills and designing and making are satisfactory. Children have sound ICT skills through very regular and very good opportunities for using the computer. The two classroom computers are used extensively for supporting the development of literacy and numeracy. Some good quality work was seen when children designed self portraits using graphics software. The development of role-play for the baptism of the "bad baby", to link with the story read and dramatised for language and literacy, was very good. The development of children's inquisitiveness and investigative skills through practical first hand experience is satisfactory. Children have observed different foods and most are beginning to understand which are good for them although there was no evidence children's enquiry skills have been developed through comparing similarities and differences or raising children's own questions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for physical development and imaginative movement during hall time are good.
- Outdoor play apparatus for climbing and balancing is limited.

Commentary

51. Children are on course to reach average standards by the end of Reception. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Activities are appropriately planned for the development of manual dexterity. Children often use crayons and paintbrushes with proficiency and many have sound pencil control. They manipulate a satisfactory range of construction kits and malleable materials although the range of materials provided for other three-dimensional modelling is more limited. Children are aware of space and can express themselves skilfully and joyfully when interpreting musical sounds during dance. Planning for physical education is good. The outside area is well used although the lack of large apparatus is preventing the children making more than satisfactory progress in this aspect. The school has recently received some funding for improving the outdoor climbing and balancing opportunities

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for imaginative role-play are good.
- There is not a wide enough range of construction kits or dressing up clothes.

Commentary

52. Children are on course to reach below average standards by the end of Reception. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. During role-play with the " bad baby" or in the class shop they use their imagination and with the good support of the teacher and her assistant, create simple story lines. However, the limited English or speaking skills of a minority limits the overall standards reached. Children enjoy singing and sing a range of songs from memory, moving well in time to rhythms. Opportunities for creating pictures and models for art and design are satisfactory. Skills are carefully taught and children are encouraged to express and develop their ideas through a satisfactory range of media. However, they design and build with only a narrow range of construction kits.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Drama is used very effectively to develop the pupils' spoken English and their reading and writing skills.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs achieve very well due to very good provision in reading and writing as well as spoken English.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6 due to the systematic teaching of the smaller steps in reading and writing.
- Assessment is very effective.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- There are not enough opportunities for independent research in junior classes.
- In a few classes the pupils' home reading diaries are unsatisfactory and there is not enough homework in Years 3 and 4.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged in the lower juniors.

Commentary

53. Inspection findings show that overall standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Pupils generally achieve very well by the end of Years 2 and 6, considering their low starting point. Pupils' achievement is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress throughout. This is due to rigorous planning and support given to these pupils, including the significant proportion who enter as late entrants to the school.
54. By Years 2 and 6 pupils' speaking and listening skills are average. By Year 2 pupils speak clearly and confidently and can often provide some detail when explaining. There is much emphasis upon enriching pupils' understanding and speech by acting out stories and through practical work. By Year 6 the pupils have often developed a wide vocabulary. During discussions, they listen attentively and have a sound command of the English language, often expressing themselves clearly, accurately and confidently. They enjoy language and often speak English with pride. Some pupils regularly use standard English. During lessons and assemblies pupils are expected to listen carefully to others' opinions and respond appropriately as a sign of respect.
55. Standards of reading are average by Years 2 and 6. By Year 2 pupils often have a thorough understanding of phonics as a result of the systematic attention to this from the earliest age. The school believes this is a major reason for pupils' very good achievement. Pupils are often competent readers and read a good range of books. The teaching of reading is well organised and managed. Teachers pay close attention to teaching letter sound patterns in an imaginative way. For example, a teacher in a Year 1 class used rhythm well as she encouraged pupils to

clap as they read together, 'look, look at Jill, let's copy her and stand still'. Reading skills are also taught well through handwriting and teachers remind pupils about the principles of sounding out words during these sessions. By Year 6 most of the pupils read fluently and enjoy a wide range of literature. The wide selection of books available to them has helped to extend their interest and enjoyment in books. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Once again, drama brings literature alive and develops pupils' thirst for classical literature.

56. Standards of writing are average by Years 2 and 6. Pupils' handwriting is good throughout the school. By Year 2 pupils can often write simple accounts and stories using sentences, with sound spelling and punctuation. Higher attaining pupils' writing is organised and they can write extended pieces for different purposes with good spelling. By Year 6 pupils write expressively or factually for different purposes. Their spelling is often accurate and their writing is neat. Higher attaining pupils write very imaginatively. By Year 6 pupils have been introduced to a wide range of literature, including the work of famous poets and playwrights such as Shakespeare. Expectations are high for all pupils and all pupils write imaginatively and with feeling. For example a Year 5 pupil with English as an additional language wrote:

'There are waves that crash on the land,
There are waves that slither on the shore,
Waves to set your boat adrift,
Waves to gently bring it back on land,
Enormous waves that thunder on the shore,
Cheerful waves that chase little feet.'

57. The quality of teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2. It is good in Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. This leads to the average standards achieved. There was one lesson of outstanding practice seen in Year 1. Overall, teachers plan systematically so that skills in reading, phonics, spelling and writing can be regularly practised and developed from Year 1 to Year 6. Teachers use imaginative and innovative methods of teaching which excite the pupils and build enthusiasm for the subject. For example, in an assembly led by the headteacher, pupils acted out scenes they had re-written from Macbeth, to show how jealousy and greed lead to evil acts that are harmful to society. Teachers provide demanding tasks, for example they enable pupils to re-write the story of Macbeth in their own words, constantly urging more able pupils to achieve even higher standards. Many pupils have had their work published in children's anthologies and regard themselves as authors.
58. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well by the end of Years 2 and 6. They make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 and generally good progress in Years 3 to 6. Staff ensure these pupils have systematic opportunities to learn the smaller steps in reading and writing that they need during literacy sessions. Pupils of all abilities are challenged well when they need it. As a result, they produce thoughtful and imaginative prose.
59. However, there are a few weaknesses which need to be addressed. Pupils' home/school reading diaries do not provide enough information for parents about the progress the pupils are making, or indicate how parents can best help pupils. Teachers in infant classes plan lessons well to promote independent learning. This is not as well developed in the junior classes. In a Year 6 class a group of pupils needed to use dictionaries and thesauri to help them during the lesson but they did not attempt to get the books from the library. In satisfactory lessons for younger juniors, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and the management of pupils' behaviour is inconsistent.
60. Assessment procedures are very thorough. There are regular checks on pupils' standards and progress. Rigorous analysis of national test results gives teachers a clear idea of individual pupils' strengths. This enables them to rectify their weaknesses. Overall the quality of marking is good as it identifies areas for pupils to improve so as to achieve better standards.

61. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Standards of teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated well and sharing examples of good practice, not least by the very skilled subject co-ordinator, has strengthened expertise amongst the rest of the staff. The use of ICT in English is good. This is enhancing pupils' learning in English. Since the last inspection the school has made very good progress in improving standards in Year 2 national tests in reading and excellent progress in writing. Overall, progress in improving standards in national tests by Year 6 has been good. The overall quality of teaching has also improved well. Overall, the school has made good progress since the last inspection.

Example of outstanding practice

This Year 1 English lesson, in a multi-cultural school, shows how drama, "acting out stories" is a powerful medium for enabling pupils to develop their speaking, listening and a love of stories through actions and words.

The teacher immediately captured the pupils' attention by telling the pupils they were going to do something that was very exciting and they must listen carefully to her telling the story of 'Incy, Wincy Spider'. One pupil said they had read this book. The teacher replied that she was telling them the story because she wanted them to say which they preferred, reading the story or listening to it being told. As she re-told the story she chose different pupils to improvise actions of the girl finding the spider. All pupils were encouraged to say; "Help! Help! There is a repulsive, repugnant and utterly horrid spider". This was repeated often during the telling of the tale. The pupils became totally involved in the story and when the teacher had finished they immediately cheered and clapped. This was just the right time for the teacher to ask the pupils which version of the story they preferred. One pupil said, "I like it better when you tell it because I can imagine it". Another pupil shouted, "let's do it with actions!" The teacher seized this opportunity and took pupils into the hall where they acted out the story again. This time the pupils were given more opportunities to work independently as they created their own versions of the story. When the lesson finished one pupil said, "I am going home tonight to tell my mum the story". It was a remarkable lesson that got the very best out of the pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. The planning of topic work around literacy works well; it extends the time that pupils use their literacy skills and provides them with many opportunities to write at length, particularly in subjects such as history, geography and art and design. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' competence in literacy enables them to learn successfully in other subjects. However, occasionally, literacy tasks in other subjects are not always matched well enough to lower attaining pupils' literacy needs as in a Year 4 history lesson observed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good quality teaching in Years 1 and 2 and good teaching in Years 5 and 6 raise standards and ensure pupils achieve very well by Year 6.
- The quality of teaching in enrichment lessons for more capable pupils in Years 4 to 6 improves achievement for these pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6.
- Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator sets a very good example by the high quality of her own teaching.
- Pupils in class lessons do not achieve as well in Years 3 and 4 as in the rest of the school.
- Mathematics homework is not frequent enough for younger pupils and is not being used as a powerful tool for raising standards.

Commentary

63. By Year 2 standards are average after pupils have achieved very well. By Year 6 standards are average and pupils' overall achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good due to good teaching in Years 5 and 6. However, there is a slowing of the rate of pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4, where class teaching and learning are only satisfactory. The progress of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. The enrichment sessions in Years 4, 5 and 6 enhance the progress of gifted and talented pupils, although their progress is not as consistent in class lessons. The use of ICT is good within mathematics and enhances pupils' learning of the subject.
64. By Year 2, pupils are developing sound mental skills and try different approaches to find answers when adding and subtracting. They can find answers to sums up to 20 by using methods of doubling and adding and subtracting. Higher attaining pupils can often do this by working out answers in their heads. Lower attaining pupils often still need practical objects for working out answers but are making very good progress in their understanding of number bonds and trying different approaches for finding answers. Pupils have a good awareness of larger numbers.
65. By Year 6, many pupils have a thorough understanding of the four rules of number and can apply these when problem solving, including when using large and decimal numbers. About a quarter of the pupils are already achieving within level 5 and these pupils understand equivalent fractions and how to perform long division. Throughout the school pupils apply their understanding of numeracy to other aspects of mathematics well. Year 6 pupils were observed to be able to successfully interpret the meaning of data on spreadsheets and graphs. In science, Year 5 pupils eagerly searched for patterns when interpreting different sets of pulse rates.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6. The teachers often have good subject knowledge. The subject is very strongly led by the mathematics co-ordinator, who is a leading mathematics teacher for the local education authority. Teaching assistants are very well trained and often provide very good support for lower attaining pupils during group work. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' work is often thoroughly matched to their prior learning. Teachers confidently use a range of teaching methods, including direct teaching and practical problem solving and encourage much thinking. A key to the success in Years 1 and 2 is the way teachers skilfully develop pupils' mental skills by having a thorough grasp of their levels of understanding. Teachers and assistants are quick to provide practical resources if these are still needed but ensure pupils work out answers "in their heads" whenever possible.
67. In Years 5 and 6, teachers continue to provide a high level of challenge for the range of ability, ensuring work is neither too hard nor easy. There is sound balance between direct skill teaching and problem solving. In a very good enrichment lesson for more capable Year 4 pupils, the specialist mathematics teacher enabled the pupils to understand the meaning of ratio through presenting a real life problem "Painting rooms: the proportion of yellow paint to blue paint". There was a very good balance between modelling, pupils' own practising and their problem solving. The teacher ensured pupils were confident when explaining their thinking, including more divergent thought processes. However, the quality of class teaching in Years 3 and 4 is only satisfactory with some weaker elements. In both classes, planning for the range of ability is not as effective as in Years 5 and 6. In a Year 3 lesson higher attaining pupils were not always challenged. In Year 4, whilst higher attaining pupils achieved well, the problem set was hard for lower attaining pupils until the special educational needs co-ordinator and the learning support assistant skilfully adapted their work.
68. Leadership and management are very good overall. The strong leadership of the mathematics co-ordinator, including her teaching by example and monitoring of lessons, is leading to some high quality teaching and learning in many classes. However, there is more work to be done in Years 3 and 4, as these teachers are new to teaching these age ranges. Assessment is usually effectively used to plan well-matched work and to evaluate and improve pupils' progress. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in improving provision

in mathematics with an overall rise in standards by Year 2 and Year 6 compared with the test results reached then. Leadership of the subject and the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 have improved well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. This is good, especially in science and ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is now a good scheme of work.
- The co-ordinator has a clear vision of what needs to be done to improve the subject.
- The teaching overall is good with some very good elements.
- Staff are growing in confidence in delivering the curriculum.
- Recording in books of work needs to be more consistent.
- Investigative work in science needs to have a greater emphasis so that pupils can take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Higher attaining pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn at higher levels.

Commentary

70. By Year 2, standards are in line with the national average. Pupils' achievement is very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils describe the differences between plants and animals and are beginning to identify differences between plants, both in the classroom and around the school grounds. They can talk about the differences they have found, for example, in the range of leaf sizes and stems and shape and whether a plant has flowers.
71. By Year 6 standards are just below the national average. Pupils' achievement is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Work seen in lessons and pupils' books support this assessment. Since the last inspection standards in national tests have fluctuated considerably and the school has identified this as an area in need of rapid improvement. Pupils are beginning to learn the importance of making predictions in investigative work. An example is the effect of exercise on the pulse rate. They recognise the need for a fair test and the importance of accurate observations and recording. Pupils can describe the importance of electricity in the home and why a complete circuit is needed for electricity to be effective. Pupils are beginning to plan and make their own tests. However, there is little attainment at the higher level.
72. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good overall with some elements in Years 5 and 6 that are very good. Staff have had recent training and their subject knowledge is good. The planning of lessons is satisfactory. However, planning for the range of ability needs to be more closely linked to the National Curriculum levels so that accurate assessments can better inform future planning. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils in terms of work and behaviour. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods successfully. Examples are the question and answer sessions at the beginning of lessons to reinforce previous work. Teaching assistants are well used in the classroom. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given every opportunity to learn. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. However, there needs to be more consistent challenge for higher attaining pupils. Homework is not used consistently for supporting pupils' learning. Pupils are gaining skills in working collaboratively. A new marking policy is being trialled in

science but this is not always effectively applied at present. It needs careful monitoring so that pupils can learn how to improve their work.

73. Subject leadership and management are good. This is improving provision in science. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject and is very enthusiastic for all pupils to achieve well. She is well aware of the weaknesses and has a comprehensive strategy mapped out for further development. Science has had a priority focus through the school. This has helped to lift the confidence of the staff in teaching science. Monitoring of the subject is good. At present there is no local education authority adviser for science. This impedes a consistent approach to further staff training though the school is buying in support from other professional people. Good links are developing with a local secondary school in planning a science week at the end of this academic year when science teachers bring some Year 7 pupils in to support the work being done in Key Stage 2. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new ICT suite has greatly improved the curriculum provision across the school.
- Opportunities for learning are good.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- The use of computers in the classrooms to support learning is not systematic.

Commentary

74. By Year 2 standards are average. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils are able to click, drag and label the parts of a human and a bird from labels on the screen. They are able to log on to the computer, go into a Word document and then insert a picture from clipart into a story.
75. By Year 6 standards are average. Pupils' achievement is good, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are able to use the Internet to learn about the need for a better environment, for example to reduce, reuse and recycle waste materials. They are able to use different tools to produce a newspaper, the 'Daily Blah'. They use various programs to create images by combining and manipulating objects. There is a good link to literacy as they use a story 'The Snail' as a stimulus. They can input data and then produce a range of graphs to show their results. They learn how to solve a problem by representing data in a table and then produce a graph. They are learning to set up and use PowerPoint presentations. The control technology aspect of the curriculum is not as developed.
76. The teaching seen was good across the school. One lesson, in a junior class, was very good indeed. The teachers' knowledge and understanding has improved through training and the regular teaching of ICT. Planning of the lessons is satisfactory but teachers need to ensure National Curriculum Levels are shown in lesson plans. They have high expectations of pupils and ensure the work is challenging for all of them. They use different teaching methods which are effective and support learning. The ICT suite is being well used but classroom computers are not as well used. Teachers use time in specific ICT lessons effectively. They expect high standards of behaviour and respect for the equipment. Teaching assistants are well deployed. Pupils are given opportunities to work independently and in small groups. Assessment in the subject is well advanced. Every pupil has been given a structured task and has been assessed against the National Curriculum levels. This is used to inform future planning for enabling teaching and learning to improve further.
77. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Staff are given ample opportunities to develop their own skills and are encouraged to make use of the computers. The co-ordinator

is looking at creative ways of inspiring both staff and pupils. Resources for the subject are good and are constantly being improved. There is very good inclusion of all pupils. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects is satisfactory. Some examples of good work were seen, for example, in literacy, when pupils were asked to produce a postcard to parents from evacuees during the Second World War. A good link was seen between mathematics and ICT. Pupils were interpreting data from a mathematics test and then putting this data into a table from which they produced a graph. In science, there was a link with ICT when pupils put results from an investigation into a graph. However, more work needs to be done in planning activities that can be used in classrooms across the whole curriculum.

HUMANITIES

79. In humanities work was sampled in history and three lessons were seen from Years 4 to 6. However, none were seen in **geography** due to the inspection timetable. It was, therefore, not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in either of these subjects.
80. In **history** standards are average by Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. For example, by Year 6, pupils show a sound understanding of life in Tudor times. Teachers link this work well to literacy which helps pupils to understand living conditions in the time of Shakespeare. Pupils are beginning to research topics on the Internet but few attain sufficiently high standards to be able, for example, to question sources of evidence or ask why accounts of events differ from others.
81. The quality of teaching seen in Years 4 to 6 was satisfactory overall but ranged from good to unsatisfactory. Role-play provided interesting learning opportunities in a good Year 6 lesson. Consequently, pupils were able to imagine and describe the feelings of people as they sat in an Anderson shelter during the Second World War. In a satisfactory Year 5 lesson pupils were able to identify the types of people who would have been attracted to settling in America in the Tudor period and give the reasons for their choices. However, a weaker aspect of this lesson was that lower attaining pupils were not always well supported for their research tasks. The Year 4 lesson was unsatisfactory because worksheets for lower attaining pupils were too hard which limited their development in reading and understanding.
82. History has a high profile and is used particularly well for enhancing multi-cultural education. To celebrate its multi-cultural links the school organised a very successful 'Black History Week'. This included a visit to Hall Place to look at the Black History Exhibition. An assembly was held to which county councillors were invited and guests were shown displays of work from each class. Subject management is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator observes teaching in each class during the year and reports her findings to the senior management team. This information is then fed into the subject's action plan. On the available evidence, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83. Three lessons were seen in art and design. None were seen in design and technology and only one in music. Therefore, it is not possible to make a judgement about provision in these subjects. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to subject co-ordinators and to pupils and looked at pupils' work from last year in design and technology and art and design. Four lessons were observed in physical education, in Years 2, 4 and 6.
84. The school has raised the profile of **music** within the curriculum. It is being linked closely to other subjects. For example, teachers use clapping rhythms to teach reading patterns in English and Calypso songs have been taught to Year 1 pupils to celebrate black history week.

Staff have received training when attending courses on mathematics across music'. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their musical skills outside the statutory curriculum. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 have received tuition using instruments in the steel band. Recorder clubs are run outside school hours. The school choir practices regularly each week. In the one good lesson pupils sang in tune and with expression.

85. In **design and technology** the results of a focus week last term showed a gradual progression in both designing and making skills, including development of pupils' evaluation skills in Year 1 to Year 6. Pupils had used a wide range of materials including card and textile scraps and by Year 6, pupils had cut and shaped wood with some skill. The work showed a good balance between opportunities for the pupils to develop their creative and practical skills. A good feature of this work was the quality of finish and how well pupils applied their artistic skills.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new scheme of work is enabling teachers to provide a balanced programme.
- Specialist teaching in Year 6 is raising standards.
- Opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to excel are limited because the subject teaching is not usually of a high enough quality.

Commentary

86. Standards are average by Years 2 and 6 and most pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils throughout the school have worked on printing this term. There is satisfactory progression in the development of practical skills as well as pupils' ability to express their ideas. Pupils work with a satisfactory range of media and the combined three-dimensional work in art and design and design and technology undertaken last term, throughout Years 1 to 6, was often of a good standard.
87. By Year 2, pupils use a satisfactory range of materials for expressing ideas and representing the world that they see. When printing, pupils select from a suitable range of objects in order to make repeating patterns, including potatoes, leaves and polystyrene. Pupils learn to evaluate their work satisfactorily.
88. By Year 6, pupils' print designs show skills of a satisfactory level. Pupils are able to use tools to create intricate designs. Their line drawings of faces for expressing emotions such as madness are good and pupils use colour well for visual effect. By this time pupils have a good understanding of other artists' work, including abstract expressionism. Their ability to evaluate the work of other artists and their own work is well developed. Some good three-dimensional work was seen in Year 4 when pupils designed and made boxes and printed designs for them.
89. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Three lessons were observed. These were in Years 2, 5 and 6. Some good teaching was observed in Year 6 when the subject manager taught the class. The teachers' own good subject knowledge was apparent in the way she skilfully instructed and questioned pupils and aroused the pupils' interest in the work of famous artists. She used high quality visual resources, making good use of ICT. Pupils' subsequent high quality drawings showed the impact of this good teaching. In the other lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory as the subject teaching was not as rigorous or inspiring.

90. The subject management is satisfactory with good features. The school has recently benefited from some in-service training. This is being used effectively to ensure there is more rigorous subject provision. The co-ordinator has monitored the quality of teaching in other classes. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection when a limited range of media was used and resources were unsatisfactory.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a comprehensive curriculum covering all aspects of physical education.
- Resources are good.
- Leadership is enthusiastic.
- Class management is not always skilful in Year 4.
- There are limited opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to develop advanced skills.

Commentary

91. By Year 2 standards are average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils know the importance of warming up exercises. They are developing different styles of dancing with the help of a dance teacher who attends a weekly lesson. They learn the differences between the lively hornpipe and street dancing techniques and those of quiet, reflective dancing to Indian music. They learn to use their feet, hands and body satisfactorily.
92. By Year 6 standards are average. Most pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils develop an understanding of warm up exercises and enjoy this part of a lesson, such as in a lesson where this involved a 'play beans' competition. Pupils are gaining skills in different games, like learning to bowl accurately in rounders and, in tennis, learning forehand and backhand volleys.
93. The overall quality of teaching observed in Years 2, 4 and 6 was satisfactory. In Year 6 the quality of teaching seen was good. In this lessons expectations were high and the teacher's good subject knowledge enabled her to teach skills well. Throughout the school teachers are gaining in confidence in teaching the basic skills across the curriculum. A satisfactory range of teaching methods is used and time is often well used. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour and often achieve this but in one lesson in Year 4 the management of the pupils was not so effective. All pupils are included in the lessons and are given the opportunity to succeed. However, there is limited opportunity for gifted and talented pupils to develop advanced skills.
94. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has clear aims for developing the subject and is very confident about reaching those goals. However, she is also the ICT co-ordinator and this limits the time available for co-ordinating physical education. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection when the scheme of work was not sufficiently detailed and pupils' progress over time had been unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

95. No specific lessons were seen in this area. However, pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship are major parts of all the school's work and underpin all that the school does. Examination of provision and its impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour show there is very good provision for pupils' personal and health education. The school nurse provides good

lessons to Year 5 pupils on sex and relationships education. Drug awareness issues are taught in Year 6. Pupils showed great interest in the 'CHART' project combating racial harassment. The school is involved in community projects and in particular - Galleons Housing, Chart and Living Landscapes. The multi-cultural nature of the school is reflected in the highly successful 'Black History Week' held recently. Pupils in Year 6 are proud to wear the 'squad' caps that give them responsibility of caring for younger pupils during play-times.

96. The school council has recently been formed and is beginning to provide opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility. In their discussions pupils showed confidence, maturity and sensitivity to the needs of others. Aspects discussed have been the purchase of a large 'connects' game for pupils to use and a 'friendship stop' in the playground, where any pupil feeling lonely or sad can go for help.

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 | 3 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 2 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 4 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 3 |

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