

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thames Ditton

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125212

Headteacher: Mrs M Johnson

Lead inspector: Mr J G F Parsons

Dates of inspection: 20 – 22 October 2003

Inspection number: 257917

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	231
School address:	Hampton Court Way Thames Ditton Surrey
Postcode:	KT7 0LP
Telephone number:	020 8398 6791
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Donovan
Date of previous inspection:	6 July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

An average size Voluntary Aided school on the outskirts of Kingston-upon-Thames inspected 20 to 22 October 2003 by an inspection team led by John Parsons. Children's standards on entry are slightly above those expected for their age. No pupils speak English as an additional language and there are very few from minority ethnic groups. None is eligible for free school meals and mobility is low. The percentage of pupils with special educational need is below the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22546	Mr J F G Parsons	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education Foundation stage
9092	Mr R Elam	Lay inspector	
20003	Mrs S Metcalfe	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs
23245	Mr J A Farrage	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school which has had very high standards for a long time and has developed very well since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well and in the national tests in recent years results have been well above average and often very high. This is due to the very good teaching, leadership and management, and extremely high aspirations of staff, parents and pupils. **It provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In English and mathematics results in 2003 national tests were well above the national average by the end of Year 6 and very high in science; compared to schools in similar contexts they were well above average in all three subjects.
- Pupils' educational value added from Year 2 to Year 6 is good in English and very good in mathematics and science.
- There was a slight, uncharacteristic dip in standards by the end of Year 2 in 2003 national tests compared to previous years. Over the previous three years standards have been well above average or very high in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In most other subjects pupils' standards are above or well above expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good in all classes. All pupils are very well supported and achieve well.
- The school is very well led and managed and all staff have high expectations and a sense of purpose.
- The governing body is effective and plays an active and valuable role in the school, although regular risk assessment procedures for health and safety required by law have not been implemented.
- The great majority of parents are very supportive of the school and many are heavily involved in its day-to-day life benefiting their children's learning.
- A strong Catholic ethos underpins this harmonious organisation.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very satisfied with what it has to offer.

The minor issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and the very high standards have been maintained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Standards are high by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils achieve well including those who have special educational needs. The goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception are achieved by most of them and are frequently exceeded due to the very good

teaching. Children are very confident and articulate, with very well developed skills. Pupils consistently make good, often very good progress in all subjects including reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6. In the 2003 national tests by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, a very high proportion of pupils achieved the higher levels indicating well above average performance. Overall pupils make very good progress from their prior attainment, the educational value added, from Year 2 to Year 6. Literacy and numeracy skills are particularly well taught following the guidance of the national strategies. Development of these aspects of English and mathematics has had a positive impact on the standards in all subjects and the recent efforts to develop the quality of boys' writing have been successful. Higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented achieve well and are challenged by their work and the high expectations of their teachers. **Personal relationships and pupils' behaviour are very good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very well promoted through the strong Catholic ethos. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. Attendance is well above the national average, and punctuality is very good. The school rightly discourages parents from taking their children on holiday during term time.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Nearly three fifths of the teaching seen was very good and it was very good overall. Both literacy and numeracy are very well taught in all classes raising standards in English, mathematics and other subjects. Very good systems for monitoring progress mean that teachers know pupils well; work is very carefully planned and challenges the full range of abilities. The curriculum is very good. Information and communication technology has been very effectively developed; a very good range of equipment has been introduced and teachers' skills well developed. Very good relationships and teachers' honesty and openness encourages pupils to achieve well. Support staff are very effective. Parents are very well informed and make a very strong and active contribution to their children's learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are strengths of the school. The very strong leadership and exceptional vision and high aspirations of the headteacher supported by an able team of teachers facilitate pupils' very high standards and good achievement. Constant development of the school takes place and the governing body is active, holds the school strongly to account and provides much professional expertise, particularly in finance.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a high regard for the school the great majority agree that their children like school, that they make good progress, and behave well. Almost all parents consider that teaching is good, and the school expects their children to work hard. A few would like more information about the school, are concerned about its management and are worried about approaching the school. Most pupils like school, they feel the teaching is effective; they have to work hard and are well cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- provide more explicit targets for improvement and a summary of what pupils know and can do in the annual reports to parents;
- to provide up-to-date training on child protection procedures to designated staff;
- governors should introduce rigorous whole-school health and safety risk assessment procedures in the near future.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (17.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (16.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.6 (19.2)	16.3 (16.5)

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

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.3 (29.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.6 (29.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.4 (30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

The inspection found high standards in most subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in reception achieve well in all the six aspects of learning and most reach the nationally agreed early learning goals by Year 1, and many exceed them.
- Standards have been consistently well above average for a long time.
- The very effective adoption of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and very strong teaching has improved pupils' standards in English and mathematics and many other subjects.
- The 2003 national tests results :
 - by the end of Year 2 in reading were above average, in writing they were average, and in mathematics they were well above average, when compared to schools nationally;
 - compared to school's in similar contexts, results were average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics;
 - by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science they were well above the national average and when compared to schools in similar contexts.
- Standards in geography by the end of Year 2 and music by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 match those expected for pupils' age, in all other subjects standards are above or well above those expected for pupils' age.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in the national tests by the end of Year 6, often close to half the class or more in English and mathematics, and nearly three quarters in science shows that higher attainers and those who are gifted and talented perform well.
- The great majority of pupils achieved the national average or above in the national tests by the end of Year 6 in 2003, indicating that those with special educational needs achieved well and made good progress.
- Pupils' educational value added from Year 2 to Year 6 is above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science.

The effective use of monitoring procedures to check pupils' progress is very effective and has been so for some time. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of pupils' capabilities and this enables them to set challenging work for all abilities, which in turn has a very strong and positive impact on pupils' achievement and standards.

Commentary

1. In the reception classes children regardless of their capability achieve well. Standards on entry are slightly above average with most children having attended local nursery schools. Many come from homes where parents are well educated and in professional or management positions. Parents are very motivated towards education, giving their children strong support. Most children achieve the standards expected for their age and many exceed them; overall attainment is above that expected for their age by the time they start Year 1. This is due to:
 - the good standards on entry;
 - the very good teaching;
 - the very stimulating and caring environment;
 - very well planned lessons;
 - and the effective tracking of children's progress.
2. By the time pupils start Year 1 they are very well adjusted to school, they are confident, articulate and very highly motivated to achieve well. In Years 1 and 2 pupils continue this good achievement due to the very good teaching. Standards in English are above average, and well above average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and better than the results suggest in the 2003 national tests. In English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, standards are well above average and match the national test results in 2003.
3. In Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to achieve well in all subjects. The focus on developing boys' writing, which the school identified as an area for development, has been successful and the inspection did not find any difference between the achievement of boys or girls. Pupils' very good educational value added from Year 2 to Year 6 in the national tests of 2003 confirms their good levels of achievement.
4. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and arrangements made for them are very good. They are very well taught and achieve as well as other pupils, the great majority reaching the standards expected for their age or above by the end of Year 6 in the 2003 national tests in English, mathematics and science. The well established procedures for tracking individual pupil's progress are particularly effective. It means that teachers know what their pupils understand and can do, and what they are capable of achieving. Targets are set and all pupils regardless of background achieve to the best of their ability.
5. A strength of this school is the consistently high standards over a long period of time. Higher attainers and those who are gifted and talented achieve well and their standards are frequently very high in all subjects. In geography by the end of Year 2 and music across the school standards match those expected for pupils' ages. However, the quality of singing is above average and music is improving with the appointment of a new co-ordinator. By the end of Year 6 standards in geography have risen and are above those expected for pupils' age. In all other subjects standards are at least above those expected for pupils' age and frequently well above. The school is in the process of introducing an initiative to develop the arts (art and design and music) and the appointment of a specialist coordinator is part of the school's strategy. In art and design standards are above average and pupils use a wide range of media very effectively, for example making mosaics in the Roman style to support a history topic. Information and communication technology is another subject which has been prioritised for development and has improved very much due to the combination of:

- the teachers' improved subject knowledge through training;
- very good teaching;
- the provision of a good range of notebook computers in the computer suite;
- and suitable software.

6. This means that pupils' standards in information and communication technology are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6. Overall pupils' performance is very good and the high standards and good achievement make this an important strength of the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

These are all very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave very well, have very positive attitudes to work and enjoy being at school.
- The level of attendance is well above that of schools nationally.
- The school's provision for social, moral and cultural development leads to very good relationships and social awareness.

Commentary

7. The table below shows the attendance figures for the school. The attendance rate has been maintained at a high level since the last inspection. This reflects the very strong support for the school by parents and the extent to which pupils like coming to school. Unauthorised absence is above the national figure because the school has properly decided that holidays in term time should not normally be approved.
8. Punctuality is good in the morning with few pupils arriving late and, even then, normally by only a few minutes. The very effective procedures at the beginning of the day result in the pupils settling very quickly ensuring a prompt start to the day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	School data	0.6
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.

9. Pupils' social development is very good. The school values its pupils and encourages them to integrate well both at work and at play. This approach results in very positive relationships between pupils themselves and between pupils and staff. The pupils show maturity in fulfilling their responsibilities around the school. For Year 5 pupils these include supporting the reception children at break times and helping them to settle when they first arrive at school. Year 6 pupils have general tasks around the school. Pupils have a good awareness of the wider world, highlighted in one instance by the end of day prayer from a Year 4 pupil asking God to help the children in the Congo who were killing others. Pupils' very good relationships with their peers and with adults have been maintained since the previous inspection, and contribute to the quality of work in lessons and to the progress they make. They are interested in the ideas of others and listen respectfully to the contributions in class discussions.

10. Pupils' personal development is also very good following very strong development in reception. Very good spiritual development was seen on several occasions during lessons. Year 6 pupils, for example worked with great concentration when discussing the installation of different types of insulation in a house and reflected on the impact such provision has on the environment. Prayers are said at the beginning and end of every session and often these have been made up by pupils themselves. School assemblies enable pupils to develop their sense of belonging to a whole school community and in one assembly each week there is a celebration of the contributions and achievements of others. The school regularly provides opportunities in lessons for the pupils to develop their problem solving skills and to work by themselves and in groups. Pupils have the confidence to show initiative and are developing independence in their learning. They consider that teachers listen to their ideas and that they are trusted to do things on their own.
11. All the pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. Pupils concentrate well, enjoy their work and want to do well. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and settle quickly to the task given. These positive attitudes reflect the quality of teaching with, for example, the good pace and variety of activities maintaining pupils' interest. They have confidence in their own abilities, are eager to answer questions and are prepared to contribute their ideas.
12. Pupils' moral development is very good. The school stands for positive values and there are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct to which the pupils respond. Pupils behave well in the classroom, at play and lunch times. They are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other, courteous and welcoming to visitors. Pupils are now at the stage where they show that they are self-disciplined. Pupils confirm that there is no bullying or aggression. One fixed term exclusion occurred in the last school year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	222	1	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

13. The provision for cultural development is very good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Various subjects provide pupils with a fuller understanding of the world around them. The study of world faiths in religious education helps them to appreciate others' practices and beliefs. Painting and music develop aesthetic awareness with artwork including Western artists as well as Indian and Aboriginal art. Discussions with the pupils show they have a good awareness of people with different cultures around the world. Nevertheless, there is room for the cultural diversity of modern day British society to be reflected more in the work of the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is very good. Teaching is consistently strong with a lot of the teaching being of very high quality. The curriculum is very good, providing an enriched learning environment. The assessments of pupils' achievements are very good and used very effectively to ensure pupils' good achievement and very high standards.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. This is consistent across all the year groups and all teachers. There are many very strong features. All groups of pupils learn equally effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good knowledge of all the subjects they teach.
- Teachers' planning is very good.
- Teachers have very high expectations that pupils want to learn.
- Teachers encourage pupils well to try hard but also enjoy their work.
- Lessons start on time and move at a brisk pace. This helps pupils concentrate and, through interest, they are motivated to learn.
- Teaching assistants and special educational needs assistants are used exceptionally well.
- All pupils are fully included in all lessons, regardless of their prior ability, gender or background.
- Because of the number of high quality evaluations of pupils' work, all teachers are able to track the progress of pupils in all they are asked to do.

Commentary

14. The key to the very high quality of education provided by the school is a combination of factors:
- the teachers' very good knowledge of what they have to teach;
 - their detailed knowledge of what pupils know and can do;
 - and the very effective planning to ensure all pupils make very good progress in their learning to achieve very highly.

Based on their very good subject knowledge teachers explain carefully how work covered earlier is linked to the current lesson, and how what is done today is important for work in the future. Pupils learn very effectively that their curriculum is a continuous progression, building up skills, knowledge and understanding for the future. Teachers ensure this process is interesting. Lessons, in the majority of cases, are very enjoyable, with pupils encouraged to question and be actively involved in their learning.

15. In an English lesson, for instance, the teacher encouraged/ pupils to criticise his work. He admitted he had made an error and that he was relying on them to sort out his mistakes. In their rush to do so, they firmly established the quality of learning so far, being very proud of what they knew and could do. All teachers are fully trained in teaching the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and encourage pupils to use their skills in these areas in science, history, geography and music.
16. Teachers' planning is very good. In all classes teachers' plans include the identification of pupils with special educational needs and potentially high attaining pupils. Teachers' expectations are very high but well focused upon pupils' potential achievement. This very high quality planning is firmly based on the use of evaluation and assessment at the end of each lesson. Final sessions during lessons check what pupils have learned and marking is used very well to draw pupils' attention to what has gone well and to correct misunderstandings before they become embedded. Objectives are shared at the start of lessons; usually they remain as a focal point throughout the session and are checked orally at the end. Pupils know what they have been learning and how well they have done.
17. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teachers are consistent in how they manage pupils, applying the whole school behaviour management policy fairly. As a result all pupils are aware of what is expected of them and rise very well to these expectations. The very few pupils who have emotional or behavioural problems have very

clear targets drawn up to help them achieve and all staff work together to help them achieve their targets. Because teachers have a very positive approach to behaviour, pupils feel valued and are developing the capacity to work well both independently and collaboratively, putting effort into their work and achieving well.

18. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the very high quality support of all the staff within the school. Teachers are involved with drawing up pupils' individual education plans and use the targets well to plan challenging work to match their pupils' specific needs. As a result, pupils with a wide range of needs are supported very effectively either in class or in withdrawal groups and are provided with suitably challenging activities.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	18 (55%)	13 (39%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The school provides a very good curriculum with a broad range of learning opportunities matched to the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils. The curriculum helps pupils build up their skills, knowledge and understanding very well in each subject studied.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements, ensuring full coverage of all subjects and promoting high achievement.
- The curriculum for literacy and numeracy is very good.
- Very good use is made of visits and visitors and a good range of extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum very well.
- The provision for all pupils regardless of background including those with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress.
- The provision for personal and social development is very good.

Commentary

19. The school has a very good curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. There are very good systems in place for reviewing and updating the policies and schemes of work by the subject leaders and senior managers of the school. The well-planned curriculum is very well supported by after-school activities, visitors and visits which enrich the pupils' work. The list of after-school clubs is extensive and includes sporting and creative activities. Many of these clubs are run by external agencies. The older pupils take part in a residential visit to a field study centre where they carry out a wide range of adventurous outdoor activities and environmental studies, together with important opportunities for the development of their social skills. Year 6 pupils take part in a two-day course on water sports to develop their water safety skills and personal independence. The school makes full use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to ensure all pupils achieve well in these important areas. There are sufficient well-qualified teaching and support staff to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. The school's grounds and facilities are exceptionally well cared for and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
20. The provision for personal, social and health education including sex education and drugs awareness is very good. There is a very good policy based on Catholic principles to support

this area of the curriculum. The school has a very positive approach to curriculum development. A recent innovation, currently being piloted in the school, tracks the pupils' progress in science from reception to Year 6. This is aimed at ensuring continuity between the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum and should have a positive effect on the already high standards of attainment and achievement in that subject. The curriculum successfully prepares children for the next stages of their education through the breadth of experience offered and the high standards of basic skills achieved by the vast majority.

21. As a result of well-resourced curriculum provision, including very good deployment of support staff, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve well. The curriculum needs of pupils with special educational needs are well known by all staff, who plan for them carefully. Individual education plans are effective in ensuring that these needs are met and full access is given to the whole curriculum, providing equal opportunity for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides pupils with good often very good support and guidance and makes satisfactory provision overall for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective procedures to assess health and safety risks around the school required by current regulations have not been developed.
- The adults in the school are very caring and supportive of the pupils.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to express opinions about life in the school.
- Pupils' academic progress through the school is very effectively monitored.

Commentary

22. Staff show good awareness of the needs of all pupils and build upon the strong Catholic ethos which provides for the integration of all pupils regardless of background and ability. They provide good role models to encourage development. All but a very few parents are pleased with the level of support their children get in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if they have any problems. In particular, parents agreed that their children are well supported when they first came into the school. Pupils consider that they are supported well by the staff and know to whom they would go if they needed help. They feel that teachers listen carefully to their ideas. The school council meets regularly with representatives from all the Years 3-6 classes. The representatives are elected by their classmates and discuss the agenda with them before the meeting. This introduction to democracy makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of citizenship. The school council has been actively involved in promoting the re-marking of the playground with various games and the provision of equipment. In addition, they have requested replacement of the curtains in the hall and are actively raising the substantial sum of money required to do so. Pupils' self-esteem is reinforced by the very effective way they are treated by staff and the positive approach at all times. A weekly assembly recognises and praises pupils' achievements further developing their self-confidence.
23. The arrangements for child protection are satisfactory with the designated person ensuring that all staff receive guidance on what to look for and what procedures to follow. However, the designated teacher has not received any recent training, although this is planned. There are suitable arrangements for first aid although no records are kept of treatment. The governors are actively involved with staff in touring the school to carry out hazard monitoring regularly, but there are no formal regular risk assessment procedures for health and safety as required by statute. The teachers have a general awareness of health and safety matters.

24. Procedures for checking pupils' progress are very good and enable teachers to pitch work that is challenging but achievable for all pupils and to provide them with targets which take their learning forward very effectively. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is less structured and relies mainly on the knowledge of the teachers and support staff who, nevertheless, have a very good understanding of the abilities and needs of all the pupils. Pupils' personal qualities are discussed in detail with parents and pupils at the meetings in the autumn and spring terms and very effective personal targets set. However, end of year reports do not always make academic and personal targets explicit enough.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are very good and with the community and other schools they are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- Their strong support at home and in school makes a very good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The school provides a very good range of information about school life.
- The annual reports on pupils' progress does not make pupils' targets for development explicit enough.

Commentary

25. As at the time of the last inspection, parents are pleased with what the school provides. They consider that the staff are approachable and that they receive a wide range of information. The arrangements for providing information are good. The school sends home regular news and other letters about general matters and outlining what is to be taught in each class. Teachers are readily available; they are at the school gate at the end of the day and from the informal conversations seen to take place during the inspection, it is apparent that parents are comfortable talking to the staff. The annual reports on pupil progress in the summer term generally have an appropriate summary of what the children know and can do for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. However, they lack explicit targets for improving achievement and give little information about the pupils' knowledge and understanding of subjects.
26. Parents' involvement with the school makes a very good contribution to its work and to the achievement of the pupils. Pupils confirm that their parents actively encourage and help them at home. A significant number of parents and other relatives regularly help in school each week. On the Monday morning of the inspection more than thirty parents came into the reception to Year 2 classes to help with literacy and mathematical games. Others help during the week throughout the school hearing pupils read. Nearly all parents come to the consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms and there are high turnouts at the year group talks at the start of the school year. The St Paul's Parent Association (SPPA) is very supportive arranging both fundraising and social events. Parents are actively involved in helping to formulate school policies by responding to questionnaires sent out each year before the school improvement programme is prepared.
27. The school has satisfactory links with other schools. The visits by school staff to many of the nurseries from which most pupils come help to ensure a smooth transition into the reception classes. Links with local primary schools provide opportunities to discuss standards of work and standards of teaching. The involvement of the wider community is satisfactory and benefits the pupils' personal, social and academic development. A variety of visitors such as artists during an arts week, music groups and a speaker from the local water company and a variety of visits to the local area and further afield enrich the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to meet other pupils in inter-school sports matches.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is very good overall. Management systems are very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a very effective leader. She provides an excellent clarity of vision, sense of purpose and holds extremely high expectations and aspirations for future development.
- The support of the headteacher by other able staff with management responsibility is very good.
- The strategic planning to improve the school further through the school development plan is very good.
- The headteacher has created a very effective team of teaching and support staff to guide future developments. In this she has been well supported by the governing body and the great majority of parents.
- The headteacher, her very able deputy and senior staff have a very good overview of the curriculum.
- All the school is very highly committed to integrating all pupils through its strong Catholic ethos, and its concern for the needs of all pupils.
- The performance of staff is monitored very effectively and staff new to the school have a very carefully designed and monitored induction system, with mentors, and have very good opportunities to develop their skills effectively through training.
- The governors are effective and actively involved with the school, with a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses both challenging and supporting the senior managers as necessary.
- The very good approaches to managing the school's finances help achieve the educational priorities; best value principles are well established.
- The governing body has not implemented a rigorous health and safety risk assessment as required by legislation.

Commentary

28. The quality of leadership and management of the headteacher is very good. She receives very effective support from the very capable deputy headteacher and strong team of teachers. Together they provide a very strong team committed to achieving very high standards in all areas of school life. The great majority of parents consider that the school is very well led and managed.
29. The headteacher has an extremely clear vision for the future of the school and all the staff and governing body share a high commitment to the school's future. The strong, very well constructed curriculum ensures the development of pupils' personal abilities and fosters respect for others within a Catholic setting. The headteacher inspires, motivates and influences staff, pupils, parents and governors to work for the school community. By sharing common goals, and aspiring to excellence, they work together not only to enable all pupils to achieve the best they are capable of, but also to develop pupils into very caring and useful members of society.
30. The monitoring of the work of the school by the senior staff and co-ordinators is thorough and rigorous and contributes very well to the school's success. Co-ordinators thoroughly look at the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects or aspects and draw up action plans. Priority areas become the focus of the school development plan and finance is planned to match pupils' needs. To date there has been a high focus on developing literacy skills with boys' writing in particular being successfully developed. However, the school has identified a need to review and develop its provision in the arts with the aim of eventually appointing a specialist member of staff to lead future developments. The monitoring of the performance

of all staff – teaching and support staff – has resulted in the provision of staff training, both for the whole staff and individuals, with targets set and reviewed at a later date. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and very good progress made.

31. Governors make a good contribution to the work of the school. They know the school well and work hard to ensure they understand what is happening. They have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and both challenge and support the school's managers; this is good practice. Although they help shape the direction of the school well, they have not implemented a rigorous health and safety risk assessment. This is required is a statutory duty. However, other requirements have been implemented in full.
32. Financial management of the school is very good with the principles of best value well established to ensure the good management and use of resources. The school is at the end of an extensive building programme to enable a move to two-form entry to be made to cater for the local demand for school places. This has been very well managed. The presence of four accountants on the governing body has ensured that all expenditure has been used effectively to continue to develop pupils' very high standards and good achievement.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	487,196
Total expenditure	491,145
Expenditure per pupil	2,109

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39,316
Balance carried forward to the next	35,367

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

33. The arrangements for children in the two reception classes are very good. The department is very well led and managed and the close links established between reception classes and Year 1 ensures that continuous development takes place. Good improvement has taken place since the previous inspection with the effective introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Based on the six nationally agreed areas of learning, the school has developed an effective process for monitoring children's progress. This ensures that the work set challenges pupils of all abilities. When they move to Year 1 a detailed analysis of their progress is passed on to the next teacher. During lessons, teachers and their assistants actively monitor pupils' progress.
34. Children, regardless of their backgrounds, are fully integrated into all lessons and the effective monitoring ensures that staff quickly find out what children know, understand and can do. Children with special educational needs are quickly identified and very well supported. The full Foundation Stage curriculum is implemented. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good in all six areas of learning and, as well as the teachers, highly trained assistants play an important part in developing children's skills. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are imaginative, stimulating, and very well planned; time and resources are used very effectively.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The classroom is very well organised, encourages children to play together and collaborate in activities. There is a good range of resources, such as toys and construction equipment both inside and outside the classroom in the designated play area.
- Children quickly adjust to school life and their gradual introduction to full-time education, determined mutually by the teacher and parents, is effective.
- Children are mature, articulate and collaborate well.
- They have good attitudes to their work, try hard and concentrate for long periods of time.
- They are confident and happy to speak out during discussions and relate well to all adults and to each other.

Commentary

35. The teachers and assistants work well together as a team to provide a harmonious working environment in which all pupils are comfortable but stimulated and challenged to achieve well. Children mature quickly and achieve well in this environment. Many children are likely to exceed the expectations for their age in this aspect when they reach Year 1. In particular they show great concentration and motivation to work hard for long periods of time enjoying the activities they take part in. Both teachers manage pupils very well and classrooms are bright and inviting.
36. The very good teaching and learning that takes place quickly develops children's understanding of the correct way to behave without dampening pupils' enthusiasm and spirit. Because of the very good teaching children respond very well in class during question and answer sessions. This was evident when a group of parents worked intensively with them on pre-reading games. Despite a large number of adults in a class, children were

confident and responsive. Children also work well independently, for example when sticking and pasting spots on to a ladybird as part of mathematical development, they did this without supervision concentrating hard for a long period of time, without losing interest, often counting out loud to reinforce what they were doing.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **very good and a particular strength**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Literacy is very well taught and much time is spent sounding out letters and words developing reading skills; children very effectively link sounds to letters.
- Parents are very much involved and work very effectively with groups of children playing with letter and word games many of which have been teacher made.
- Lessons are well planned with simple objectives that children understand.
- Children are very articulate and keen to speak often in full sentences with a very good vocabulary.
- They know writing goes from left to right and can write their names; they are interested in books and keen to read.
- Much valuable discussion takes place between the children and the teacher or assistant and with each other.

Commentary

37. Most children are on track to achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of reception and many seem likely to exceed expectations by the time they start Year 1. Particularly noticeable, and a strength, is that children initiate conversations regularly, often talking to the teacher and each other unprompted. Teachers and assistants constantly encourage conversation by talking and questioning them. Teaching and learning are very good, the teachers' subject knowledge is very comprehensive and they try to make lessons interesting and exciting. In one lesson, for example linking the programming of a robotic device with the story of the Three Little Pigs, each child wore the wolf's ears when it was his or her turn. The intention was to make the device follow a particular course to the pigs' houses. They discussed in detail both with each other and the teacher what they should do.
38. Children achieve well in this aspect and make good progress during lessons. They handle pencils dextrously when writing and start with joined handwriting immediately, many writing with clear legible letters. When they are sounding out the 'letter of the day' they link this with the days of the week such as 'm' for Monday. The use of parents is most effective and they are well briefed. They play a very important part both in developing literacy skills in school, during the early morning sessions they attend, and by extending this to work at home developing children's learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children count up to and back from ten including using zero, and recognise numbers when they are out of context and not just in a number line.
- They sort and match items using specific criteria and diagrams to illustrate what they find.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to develop children's work on number supporting their skills in counting and making patterns.

- They use and understand vocabulary such as 'more' or 'less', 'greater' or 'smaller', 'heavier' or 'lighter'.
- They use numbers in familiar contexts such as the date.

Commentary

39. Children learn very well through the very well organised resources and very good teaching. They very effectively learn basic number skills and through practical work they learn to weigh and measure. Children achieve well and make good and often very good progress in lessons and most are on course to achieve the standards expected in this aspect by the time they reach Year 1 and many are likely to exceed them. In one lesson, children were counting the number of dots to stick on to a picture using a number line to help. One boy said the numbers out loud repeating them constantly to himself until he was absolutely clear about the number he needed, showing great concentration and perseverance as well as independence.
40. Teachers show very good subject knowledge and use a variety of methods to develop children's learning including using the computer and the programmable toy. During conversations about the toy one child was heard to say that 'If you put a bigger number in it will go further'. They show a good knowledge of shapes and recognise that the Star of David is made up of a series of triangles.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are confident using computers and understand how to give basic instructions to a programmable device.
- They are aware of their surroundings and of the changing seasons.
- They are given first hand experience of exploring the local area.
- They investigate objects and materials effectively by using their senses.
- They construct quite complex structures using a variety of materials.
- There is a dedicated outside area which extends the classroom outside and gives good opportunities for pupils to become aware of their environment.

Commentary

41. Very good teaching and learning in this aspect means that children have a very effective understanding of their immediate environment. Many are on course to achieve or exceed the standards expected in this aspect. Lessons encourage children to be inquisitive and to look carefully at their surroundings. For example, in one good lesson children carefully selected paints to reflect autumn and discussed in detail the differences with other times of the year. They often ask questions of why things happen and when using the programmable toy they ask how they can make it move, how far it will go and what they need to do to change its direction.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **at least satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of mobile play equipment including tricycles and movable toys, but there is no large apparatus for climbing and balancing on the small outside area.
- Children are well coordinated and active when playing, showing good spatial awareness.
- They handle small tools and objects with great control and dexterity.

Commentary

The outside area is too small for children to be very active, however they are timetabled to use the main hall and the balancing and climbing apparatus available there. No physical education lessons were seen, but children move safely and with confidence when playing and enjoy vigorous activity. Their control of tools is very good and when they use pencils, brushes and scissors they do so dextrously and with care.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's art work is of very good quality.
- Planned activities encourage children to experiment with new ideas and techniques.
- Art work is valued and well displayed.
- There is evidence of art forms from other cultures.

Commentary

42. Organisation of the classroom encourages creativity and there is a wide range of activities available to stimulate children to express themselves. When using paint, for example they mix it carefully use suitable colours and their self-portraits have great detail often showing legs, arms, hair, and mouths. Most children achieve the standards expected for their age and many are on course to exceed them by the end of the year. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and children have the opportunity to use a variety of media. In one good lesson, for example, children floated paints on to water to give a marble effect to the paper. In a very good lesson studying Judaism children were fascinated and examined closely the artefacts of the religion showing good observational skills. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Pupils are taught the skills they need to create pictures, as well as being given access to a wide range of resources to make things in structured play areas.

SUBJECTS IN YEARS 1 TO 6

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The results gained by pupils in national tests by the end of Year 6 are well above average and these standards have been sustained over a long time.
- There was a slight uncharacteristic dip in standards by the end of Year 2 in 2003 national tests in reading and writing that is not reflected in pupils' current work, which is above average.
- All pupils make very good progress and achieve well.

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The quality of pupils' learning is very good. Lessons are very well planned and encourage pupils to work hard and with enjoyment.
- Checking of pupils' progress is very good. The information gained is used very well to inform teachers' planning.
- The school has very successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy, developing areas such as boys' writing more effectively as a result of the analysis of assessment data and pupils' work.
- Homework is used very effectively.
- Staff training has been well planned and delivered and this has given very good support to the very high quality of teaching.
- Resources are very good and include a good range of both fiction and non-fiction books.
- The leadership and management of English are very good.
- The school uses strategies such as the early literacy and further literacy support very well to extend pupils' knowledge and skills.

Commentary

43. Many changes have occurred since the previous inspection including, the introduction of National Literacy Strategy, much building work, teaching and support staff changes as well as a change of subject manager. The school has been able to maintain the very high standards and very good progress for all pupils despite these challenges. They start school with standards that are slightly above average, achieve well and leave at the end of Year 6 with standards in each area of the English curriculum that are well above average having made very good progress over their time within the school.
44. Pupils speaking and listening skills are of a very high standard. They listen carefully to what others have to say and reply in carefully thought out and well constructed sentences, adapting their speech to the audience. From the youngest to the oldest they are aware of the difference between colloquial and standard English and use either depending on the situation they are in. When talking they happily use common idioms, but when dictating sentences or composing more formal letters and in other types of writing they use conventional English and grammar. They achieve these higher levels of awareness as a result of the very highly skilled teachers and supporting adults who provide very high quality role models for them. Younger pupils in particular have many opportunities to speak to and listen to more than just the school staff. The school has high numbers of parents and even grandparents who offer in-school support to develop pupils' reading and spelling skills. They, like the school staff provide pupils with very high quality linguistic role models.
45. Pupils' reading is of a very high standard. They read a very wide variety of texts ranging from biographies, autobiographies to classics and modern, popular fiction. Their reading skills are well honed by the use of the very good school libraries and community members who come into school to offer support. Homework also plays a key part in developing skills as parents are actively encouraged to support learning. Most pupils are confident and enthusiastic readers who use a range of advanced skills to decode words. They infer and predict meaning from the vocabulary, by using contextual clues, skimming sentences to identify key ideas and scanning for key vocabulary. The youngest like the rhymes in poems while the oldest discuss texts with knowledge and authority. Pupils also enjoy reading related to other subjects such as history, science, geography and art and design.
46. Pupils' writing skills have been a focus area for development, especially the development of confidence and skills for boys. Handwriting skills have been well developed with pupils encouraged to watch each other write, to identify good practice and use this in their own writing. Pupils write for a range of reasons; they write letters about environmental issues as well as to their friends. They change biographies into autobiographies using texts from the

life of popular icons such as Alan Shearer. They make notes when watching television and video programmes and present them in clear sentences for display. Classrooms are language rich environments with examples of pupils' work carefully mounted and displayed.

47. The very high quality of teaching found at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Teachers have had full training in planning for pupils of all ability within their classes and use the school's range of high quality evaluations and assessments to monitor pupils' learning and apply the knowledge to their class work. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons, concentrate hard and try their best. Teachers are very skilled at enabling pupils to take control of their own learning and pupils respond with maturity to these very high expectations. In a Year 5 lesson, for instance, the teacher made a mistake. Pupils were encouraged to start again and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, ensuring that they had developed the knowledge and skills planned for when asked to make a clear set of instructions. This meant that those who were uncertain were well supported by others in the class who shared their learning and all achieved the lesson objectives.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The very good standards in literacy have a major impact on standards in all subjects. Pupils' well developed communication skills enable them to understand instructions; and through questioning very well, and researching, they develop their skills often to a high standard.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the 2003 national tests results were well above the national average both by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6.
- Compared to schools in a similar context standards were above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Standards have been above or well above average across the school for a long time.
- The achievement of all pupils is good regardless of background and those with special educational needs achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Very good improvement since the previous inspection indicates that the subject has been very well managed since then.
- Individual tracking of pupils' progress is most effective and means that teachers know their pupils well and set challenging work for them.
- Information and communication technology is used very effectively in this subject and mathematics is used well in science and some other subjects.

Commentary

49. Pupils achieve well in this subject and standards are consistently high over a significant period of time across the school. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils' educational value added between Year 2 and Year 6 was very good in the national tests of 2003. By the time pupils with special educational needs reach Year 6 many have achieved the standard expected for their age, for example in the 2003 national tests all pupils achieved at least the national average indicating good progress. Those who are higher attainers or gifted and talented achieve well and are working to their capabilities in this subject. This is because of the very good teaching and very effective monitoring procedures, tracking pupils' progress.

50. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and use the recommended three parts to the lesson well. Lesson objectives are clearly stated and teachers use question and answer sessions very effectively to take pupils' learning forward. Lessons are often imaginative using original ideas, for example, in a very good lesson in Year 1 pupils in pairs were given a 'feely bag' with shapes in them that they could not see. They developed their mathematical vocabulary very effectively while attempting to describe the shapes to others. The very good procedures for checking pupils' standards mean that the work set challenges all abilities and the final session is used very well to check how much pupils have learned, assess their progress, and to draw the threads of the lesson together.
51. Mathematics is developed very well through the use of information and communication technology skills both in the classroom and in the computer suite. Planning shows pupils effectively use these skills in data handling in Year 4; to develop a good understanding of equivalent fractions in Year 5, and two dimensional shape and symmetry in Year 2. The schemes of work are constantly reviewed and are due for review at the end of the year.
52. The subject is managed very effectively by a member of the senior management team who is also coordinator for reception, Years 1 and 2. Although new to the mathematics post this year, she has a good understanding of the pupils' high standards and what the school needs to do to sustain them. In her current senior position she is able to monitor teaching and learning, as was her predecessor and this has been an important factor in developing consistently high quality teaching and learning and very good standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Mathematics is used very well in subjects such as science and geography and in information and communication technology; where graphs and charts are used to illustrate findings. Very good use of mathematical language contributes very effectively to pupils' literacy skills.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils at all levels achieve well.
- There is a very good emphasis on experimental and investigative science and pupils develop good skills in this area.
- Leadership and management in science are very good.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively in this subject although the coordinator is aware of the need to develop this further, particularly in the use of sensors and for data logging.

Commentary

54. Attainment is well above average and pupils achieve well throughout the school. In the most recent 2003 national tests all of Year 6 pupils reached at least the national standard, and nearly three quarters achieved the higher Level 5 results indicating high attainment. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and confirms the effectiveness of the school's focus on investigative and experimental science.
55. Pupils are given very good opportunities to investigate and experiment and this helps them build a secure understanding of different areas of science. In one very good lesson on

sound, Year 1 children worked effectively with a range of resources. From their observations and experiments they were able to talk in very good detail and with high levels of accuracy about how sounds were made and how they could be classified. Pupils worked in mixed ability groups and those at all levels of attainment made significant contributions to the investigation and all made very good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of sound. Pupils collaborate well, confidently applying their literacy and numeracy skills when discussing, measuring and recording in science lessons.

56. The quality of teaching is very good and is characterised by high expectations, good subject knowledge, very good pupil management and very good use of assessment information. This also makes a significant contribution to pupils' very good achievement and very high standards. The subject coordinator is very effective and has made a thorough assessment of the provision in this subject. She is leading an initiative to build on the Foundation Stage curriculum for reception age pupils and extend the concepts learnt there into the National Curriculum being studied by older pupils. This should have a good impact on provision and may improve standards even further. The use of information and communication technology to support science is effective but further work is required, especially with the older pupils when they need to use sensors to measure temperature or to log data in an investigation.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected for pupils' age by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6; pupils achieve well.
- Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall and teachers' subject knowledge is much improved since the previous inspection.
- Day-to-day assessment supports learning well but further development of assessment systems is necessary, particularly at the end of units of work.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and show confidence when working with computers.

Commentary

57. There has been a very good improvement since the previous inspection. These have involved upgrading the resources, extending the subject knowledge of teachers and implementing a scheme of work that uses day-to-day assessment to track pupils' progress.
58. Lessons are planned on the basis of pupils' prior learning and accurately build on their levels of capability. As a result, pupils make good progress both in lessons and over time. Learning is reinforced effectively by the careful use of support staff and this is particularly successful for pupils with special educational needs who consequently achieve well. The pace within lessons is generally brisk, with each pupil challenged to work hard and to achieve as much as possible. As pupils progress from year to year teachers ensure that a secure skills base is well established and developed. The curriculum is well designed so that knowledge and understanding deepens as pupils' progress through the school. For example, Year 6 pupils revised work from Year 5 on the use of spreadsheets before beginning their work on using data to make pie graphs to represent how they spend time each day. All the pupils accurately assembled data on a spreadsheet and drew graphs to represent their results. The more able pupils were challenged to develop their own graphs in an open-ended investigation, thus giving them the opportunity to extend their learning further. In this lesson, achievement was particularly high.

59. The very good leadership given by the coordinator is evident, particularly in her vision for the development of the subject as seen in the five-year strategic plan. The annual action plan clearly demonstrates how the priorities are to be addressed, particularly the further development of assessment strategies to be used at the end of units of work and the next stages in using control devices such as sensors with the older pupils. The scheme of work is under constant review to ensure it continues to meet the needs of all pupils. The coordinator is currently building a portfolio of pupils' work to exemplify the standards expected at each stage through the school. This will help teachers and teaching assistants to assess how much progress each pupil is making and to check that they are achieving as much as possible as they work on each aspect of the curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Information and communication technology is used effectively in many subjects across the curriculum. There are examples of its good use in science, history and geography by pupils who are using the Internet for research purposes. Younger pupils use mathematical software to explore the features of two-dimensional shapes. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils use text on screen to amend grammatical aspects in English lessons.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

The provision for both subjects is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in geography and history are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Excellent support for the curriculum is provided through educational visits.
- Pupils with special education needs make good progress and achieve well.

Commentary

61. No teaching was seen in geography. However, analysis of work shows standards match those expected by the end of Year 2 and are above average by the end of Year 6. In history no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 but two were seen in Years 3 to 6. These confirm the evidence available from an analysis of pupils' work across the school where standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 exceed those expected for the ages.
62. Pupils learn geographical skills and the skills of historical enquiry well. The curriculum has been developed to include investigative work and this features strongly throughout the school. Teachers build on pupils' prior knowledge and use teaching strategies to make the most of the pupils' enthusiasm for the subjects. For example, in a very good history lesson in Year 6 the children enthusiastically drew on their knowledge of *Oliver Twist* to give instances of life in Victorian Britain. They could empathise with children from those times and usefully compared their own lifestyle with that of Victorian children. The more able pupils could identify and evaluate a range of evidence from various sources and selected those relevant to answer specific lines of enquiry. In geography, Year 1 pupils effectively used the findings of a traffic survey to express views and suggest ways to improve the local area. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the quality of support in lessons and their achievement is high. Lessons follow national guidance and teachers prepare interesting activities that enable all pupils to apply their newly learned skills. The good provision in both subjects contributes significantly to the good levels of achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

63. The school makes very good use of the excellent range of educational visits that support both geography and history. Older pupils are offered a residential visit to a field study centre where they can take part in a good range of environmental studies. All pupils take part in visits that enhance the quality of the humanities curriculum. Very good use is made of the immediate locality for river studies and visits to the British Museum provide an excellent resource for the study of the ancient Greeks. Visitors are invited into the school where appropriate, for example when younger pupils study toys through the ages. Elderly persons are invited to visit to show and describe the toys that they had when young. Pupils take a pride in their work and the quality of presentation is very good. Their attitudes are very positive and they enjoy their work.
64. Both geography and history have new subject leaders who are enthusiastic and committed. They have not been in post long enough to have much impact but they are currently evaluating the quality of the curriculum in preparation for the planned review of their subjects later in the year. The school has good resources for geography and history, which are used well to support learning.

Religious education

65. This is the subject of a separate inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has the development of the arts as a priority.
- There is a wide range of different media used in art and design lessons including work in three dimensions.
- Art and design from different cultures are displayed.
- There are very good displays of pupils' work around the school showing it is valued.
- Those with special education needs achieve well and reach standards that are similar to their peers.
- There is very good development of pupils' skills of observation from the earliest years.
- Good use of art and design in other subjects.

Commentary

66. As only one lesson was seen, no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching and learning. However, in the one Year 4 lesson seen it was very good. The teacher had very good subject knowledge, had prepared the lesson very well with a good range of resources for printing. The high quality displays indicate that pupils achieve well and that standards of work are above, and sometimes well above, the expectations for pupils' age and progress from the previous inspection has been at least good.
67. The subject coordinator is enthusiastic but has only been in post since September, so has had little time to have an impact on the subject. Ultimately the intention is for the school to appoint a specialist arts coordinator to make the subject even more high profile than it is at present. However, the school is well on the way with the very good range of media being used and techniques and skills being taught.

68. In the very good lesson seen, pupils had completed designs in their sketch books and showed skill and dexterity making printing templates for repeat patterns using polystyrene sheets, sponges and cut out card stencils. In this lesson, the very good intervention of the teacher and her assistants meant that all pupils regardless of ability successfully made suitable devices for printing. Pupils with special educational needs made very good progress during this lesson and achieved well.
69. Pupils are obviously encouraged to observe closely and there are good examples of work on display. There are carefully drawn 'mahendi' designs from India used to decorate female hands; in this instance the decoration was on lifelike clay hands. Much of the art work is used effectively to illustrate other subjects, especially history and there are examples of papier mache Anglo-Saxon helmets, jewellery in the style of the Ancient Egyptians, and elephants cut out of felt with Indian decorations. Fine arts are also studied and pupils learn to work in the style of famous artists such as Matisse and other impressionists in Year 4; still life pictures and modern abstract artists in Year 5 and Lowry in Year 6. The school employs an artist in residence from time to time and there is a very good mosaic depicting children on display on an outside wall. This was inspired by pupils' work and completed by them but with the specialist help of the visiting artist. Such visits encourage both pupils and teachers to be more creative and provides many good ideas for art teaching.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high standards achieved by the pupils.
- There are some well-planned topics but computers are not used enough in the design aspect of this subject.
- The very positive attitudes of the pupils as they work.

Commentary

70. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve standards which exceed those expected for their age. There are a number of well-planned and taught topics which capture the interest and imagination of pupils of all abilities. For example, Year 1 children worked with enthusiasm when they designed and made a model of a house. They gave reasons for their designs, selected from a range of resources and justified their choices. They evaluated their work and suggested improvements. The more able pupils selected tools and techniques and explained their choices. Year 6 pupils demonstrated high levels of competence when working on activities relating to the insulation of homes to save energy resources. They used the design process to plan their work and showed high levels of collaboration with others. The designs were clearly labelled, showed the types of materials to be used and some contained measurements. The emphasis on step-by-step planning ensures the pupils pay due regard to evaluating and revising their work as it progresses. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils make good use of sewing, gluing and other joining skills in order to add excitement and interest to their finished items. Throughout the school, design and technology work creates good links with mathematics as pupils strive for accuracy of measurement, and with literacy when they evaluate the products. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and enjoy working hard. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the good support of teaching assistants and the effectiveness of teachers' planning.
71. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection and the quality of teaching in each was very good. Evidence from previous years and from teachers' planning shows the good quality of provision. The teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well

planned. There is a good range of resources and the scheme of work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The recently appointed coordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and keen to implement the next stages of the subject's development. He is aware that there are opportunities to extend the design aspect of the subject through the use of computers.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good throughout the school and pupils make good progress, especially in singing, though progress in appreciation of others' music is only satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, though in sessions taken by the specialist teacher the quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils respond well overall, with very good response shown to specialist teaching.
- There is good integration of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those capable of achieving high levels.
- Leadership and management are still being developed but are effective in identifying areas for improvement and increasing teaching skills further.
- The accommodation for music is very good and the school has a good range of resources to support pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is good with a good range of opportunities to learn a range of instruments.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are limited to a choir for older pupils.

Commentary

72. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards match expectations for pupils' ages. Standards in singing are good in assemblies and pupils achieve well. They join in enthusiastically as a group, showing a good sense of rhythm and dynamics. They control their voices well, pitching their work accurately to a piano melody and controlling their enthusiasm.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some examples of very good teaching. Teachers plan carefully to include all within the lesson, those who have some singing or instrumental expertise as well as those whose only musical experiences are weekly music lessons. Teachers encourage pupils well, regardless of prior ability. In a good lesson in Year 2, for instance, the teacher had spent part of her lunch break setting out a spare classroom with a range of appropriately chosen precision instruments to link music to the class topic of the autumn weather in geography. The teacher encouraged pupils to consider how the climate affects how animals move, with pupils matching the animal to an instrument. This led eventually to pupils listening to 'The Carnival of the Animals' and identifying not only the animals, but the instruments and movements. Pupils' imaginations were developed well as they identified moods and feelings while listening. Planning for this session reflected the teacher's good musical skills and her good knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn to appreciate music.
74. Pupils have positive attitudes to music and enjoy both learning to appreciate and to perform and record their own and others compositions. The co-ordinator is new, but he has already started to monitor the curriculum, analysing the skills teachers have and providing what training he could to enhance the range of musical experiences and opportunities for pupils.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. They have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of sports. This includes tag rugby and other team sports such as five-a-side football, short tennis, and simple netball, both during lessons and out of school in extra-curricular activities.
- There is a focus on sport, especially competitive team games, both to develop individual pupil's fitness and competitiveness in sports but always with a sportsmanlike ethos.
- In recent years the school has been very successful in the district sports competition achieving higher results overall than expected for school of this size.
- Levels of equipment are very good due to the priority of this subject in the school development plan in recent years.
- All pupils have the opportunity to swim and the school has introduced swimming in Year 1 as well as in Year 3 to ensure confidence in water and water safety.
- Good use has been made of specialist expertise in this subject to raise overall standards.

Commentary

75. Pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 due to the good teaching and use of specialist expertise for two afternoons a week. In particular the development of pupils' skills in team games is above average. They have developed good sometimes very good skills in team games such as tag rugby. All pupils are encouraged to take part fully regardless of ability and there is good, active participation by all pupils.
76. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic, very well qualified, part-time teacher and a member of staff who supports her. This means that there is a good focus on the subject and careful evaluation has led to a number of important recent changes. The realisation that many pupils go swimming with their parents indicated the importance to the school of the safety aspect of swimming and the need to ensure pupils learned to swim as young as possible. This led to Year 1 classes being taught swimming as well as those in Year 3. This gives an indication of the care and thought that goes into the development of the subject. In the past, levels of pupils' fitness were found to be poor. More active involvement in team games and sports as well as in gymnastics lessons has improved this, as well as making them more competitive due to the improved development of skills. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is good and teachers' good subject knowledge, good pace of well planned lessons help pupils to attain their full potential especially when specialist expertise is used. In a very good Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils started the lesson warming up vigorously, stretching and playing a game where they moved or not to signals from the teacher. Pupils became aware of their own bodies and one said 'I feel puffed'. Spatial awareness was very good and pupils moved safely but quickly and quietly around the hall. A very good range of equipment was used for pupils to balance, jump and roll. On the apparatus and mats pupils showed very good balance and starting and finishing skills in their sequence of movements, often finishing with a flourish.
78. In a good games lesson, Year 3 pupils showed that they are developing a knowledge of simple rules of 'tag rugby' and enjoyed this very physical activity and the freedom of using the sports pitch. They worked hard and showed good passing and catching skills. Evaluation of the development of pupils' skills is informal but effective. However, the school is actively seeking more effective ways to record pupils' progress in this subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

79. No specific lessons were seen, so no overall judgement can be made. However, the school is very aware of the importance of these aspects of the curriculum and has appointed the deputy headteacher to coordinate them. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings and reflect on their own circumstances. The school has a strong personal development programme which includes opportunities to educate pupils about the danger of drugs and a sensitive approach to sex education compatible with Catholic doctrine. The strong Catholic ethos and caring community that makes up the school contributes effectively to citizenship. It recognises the importance of the individual and his or her place in the school. There is an active school council, which advises the management and makes suggestions for improvements; for example as a result of their endeavours, a mosaic was made to decorate the outside wall, playground games markings repainted, and flower beds planted. Pupils vote for their candidates for the school council introducing the concept of democracy and older pupils look after younger ones as part of a 'buddy' programme to help younger children integrate and older ones take responsibility.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

