

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST THOMAS MORE RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Eltham

LEA area: Greenwich

Unique reference number: 100176

Headteacher: Mr P Finlay

Lead inspector: Peter Howlett

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> –10<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 257979

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
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	184
School address:	Appleton Road Eltham London
Postcode:	SE9 6NS
Telephone number:	(0208) 856 9153
Fax number:	(0208) 856 6339
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr T Finigan
Date of previous inspection:	18 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is a little smaller than the average-sized primary school, with approximately 200 pupils on roll by the summer term. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, as the school serves the local area, which comprises a mixture of well-kept privately-owned housing and local housing estates. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. Although pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, they are predominately of White UK heritage: 84 per cent are of white background, eight per cent from Black African heritage or Caribbean background and the rest from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language (seven per cent) is higher than that normally found, although currently there are no pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (18 per cent) is average. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need. The attainment of many pupils on entry to the school is broadly in line with that typically found nationally.

The school is part of the South Greenwich Education Action Zone. It received School Achievement Awards for improved results in 2002 and 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23744	Peter Howlett	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Information and communication technology
9519	Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector	
28200	Paul Stevens	Team inspector	English, Art and design, Design and technology, Physical education
3574	Kanwaljit Singh	Team inspector	Science, Geography, History, Music

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
Barley House  
Oakfield Grove  
Clifton  
Bristol  
BS8 2BN

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Thomas More is a good school.** The school provides good quality education and the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and average in information and communication technology (ICT). The school is well led and managed. Financial management is good and ensures that the school provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in most lessons because of the good quality teaching.
- Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and music.
- Pupils achieve well in the national tests in Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils' personal development flourishes because of the positive and supportive ethos underpinned by Christian values and beliefs.
- The school very effectively fosters and promotes pupils' very good behaviour and relationships and good attitudes to learning.
- Standards in aspects of physical education are below expectations by Year 6.
- Provision for children in the Reception class is satisfactory but could be better.
- Attendance procedures are inadequate, resulting in above average absences.
- The headteacher provides the school with good leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other staff.
- The school needs to develop further ways of checking how well it is doing.
- The chair of governors makes a significant contribution to the work of the governing body.

**Improvement since the last inspection is good.** The most significant improvement is that standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT have risen. The quality of the education provided, particularly that of teaching, is better. Good improvements to the buildings mean the school provides a pleasant and safe environment for learning. Financial management of the school has greatly improved and the governance of the school is now on a sure footing. The issues identified in the last report have been dealt with effectively.

### 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	B	A	A
mathematics	B	B	A	B
science	A	B	B	D

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

Most children in Reception are in line to achieve the goals expected for their age by the end of their Reception Year. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional skills and in ICT. However, more able children do not always receive suitably challenging work. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve well in the national tests and results have risen at a faster rate than is seen in most other schools. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 generally achieve well in English, mathematics and science lessons and standards are above expected levels in Years 2 and 6. The quality of pupils' writing is often high although they can be careless with spelling and punctuation. In ICT, standards are average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well in music and standards are above those typically

found nationally. Standards in gymnastics are below expectations by Year 6 and limited outside facilities hamper pupils' progress in physical education. Work seen in other subjects is average.

**Pupils' personal development is good** as a result of the school's very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' behaviour is **very good** and their attitudes to learning are good. Pupils' attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides good quality education. Teaching is good overall.** The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but could be better. Resources to support pupils' learning are good. There has been a good improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Although there was a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, in three-quarters of the lessons seen teaching was at least good. The school monitors pupils' progress well and provides good levels of care so that pupils receive good support and guidance. Effective liaison with parents and good links with the community underpin the good teaching in the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall leadership and management are good.** The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils and gives the school a clear sense of purpose. He and the deputy headteacher make an effective partnership and are supported well by other staff. There is a very positive ethos within the school, reflecting its Christian values. The school shows a good commitment to inclusion. The school is well managed and organised. Teamwork is good, with all staff working well together for the benefit of the pupils. The governing body conducts its business efficiently, provides good levels of support and ensures that statutory responsibilities are fully met. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and owes much to the strong and effective leadership of the chair of governors. The headteacher and chair of governors have worked together to address the significant failings in financial planning that they inherited. Financial management is now good. As a consequence of this good management, a large deficit has been transformed into a significant surplus, whilst the money available to the school is being used well.

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

Most parents view the school positively and appreciate all that it offers their children. Pupils like their school and their teachers, although a minority of them report concerns about the behaviour of other pupils. The school does not fully consult parents and pupils about their views and expectations.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things this effective school should do to improve are:

- Improve standards in physical education.
- Strengthen provision in the Reception class.
- Improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils.
- Further develop ways for governors and staff to check and evaluate how well the school is doing.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Pupils' achievement is good** overall. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress in lessons in relation to their capabilities. Children in Reception make satisfactory progress. Standards in English, mathematics, science and music are **above average**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science and music and standards are above those typically found nationally.
- The quality of pupils' writing is often high, but pupils can be careless with their spelling and punctuation.
- Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are in line with expectations.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers and the few who need additional help are well supported and achieve well.
- Pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve well in the national tests and results have risen at a faster rate than nationally.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in aspects of physical education.
- More able pupils in Reception do not always achieve as well as they should.

#### Commentary

##### *Starting school*

1. When children start school in the Reception class, there is a wide spread of attainment. Generally, however, the skills, knowledge and understanding of children entering school are average. Standards in literacy and numeracy are in line with those typically found nationally.

##### *School's results in national tests*

2. The table below shows that in the Year 2 tests in 2003, standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in these tests have risen faster than those nationally since the last inspection. Overall averages for the past three years are above the national figures in each test. There is little variation in the performance of boys and girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.4 (17.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.6 (16.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.0 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. National test results confirm that standards are also rising in Year 6. The trend in results is above the national trend of improvement in the tests in English, mathematics and science. The table below shows that in 2003, results were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Overall school averages for the past three years are well above the national results in English and above average in mathematics and science. The performance of the school in comparison with similar schools nationally has improved steadily;

in 2003 overall test results were better than similar schools. The comparative performances of boys and girls match the national pattern.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.8(27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.0 (27.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.4 (29.6)	28.6 (28.3)

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

*Inspection findings*

4. Most of the children in the present Reception class have had pre-school experience in a Nursery or other pre-school setting. These early experiences give children a firm foundation for school life and, combined with the school's good entry procedures, enable children to settle quickly into school. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional skills. Their achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is above the expected levels. Children's achievement is satisfactory in all other areas. However, more able children do not always receive work that is of an appropriate level of difficulty, and unsatisfactory outside facilities limit opportunities for children's physical and creative development. The indications are that most of these children will reach the goals expected for their age by the end of their Reception year.
5. In Years 1 to 6, pupils achieve well because teaching is generally good and the learning needs of different groups are usually well catered for. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good provision. They respond very well to the support they are given. They receive good support in lessons and in addition, the extra support provided in small withdrawal groups is effective. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well because of the good teaching and support they receive. Currently, there are no pupils at the early stages of acquiring English and only two pupils who require additional specific support. These pupils have made good progress since their arrival and can fully access the curriculum, although some support is still needed. All other pupils whose mother tongue is not English were fluent in English when they joined the school and they attain standards that are similar to their English-speaking peers. Many of these pupils are very capable and are represented appropriately within higher-attaining groups in each class. Higher-attaining pupils do well in English and mathematics, as is evidenced by the high proportion of pupils that achieve the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests. In science and ICT, work is generally sufficiently challenging for these pupils. No significant differences were noted in the performance of boys and girls.
6. There has been good overall improvement in provision in English, mathematics and science, especially in the quality of teaching and learning, since the last inspection. This improvement is reflected in pupils' performances in national tests and in the good standards of work seen during the inspection which compare favourably with those noted in the last inspection. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above expected levels in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are good and opportunities for pupils to develop and use these skills across the curriculum are satisfactory. The quality of pupils' writing is often high although they can be careless with spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, pupils' data-handling skills are not as strong as in other areas. In science, pupils' knowledge and understanding and their investigational skills are good.
7. The school has been successful in addressing the key issue from the last inspection on improving standards in ICT. There has been a good improvement in provision and in teachers' proficiency in teaching skills so that standards are now in line with those expected in Years 2

and 6. Although satisfactory, teachers could do more to plan opportunities for the development of these skills across the curriculum.

8. Pupils achieve well in music and standards are above those typically found nationally. However, teaching in gymnastics does not develop pupils' skills satisfactorily, so that by Year 6, they are below national expectations. In lessons seen in history, geography, art and design, and design and technology, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average.

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

There is **good provision** for developing pupils' personal qualities overall and provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and have **good** attitudes towards their work. Their behaviour in and out of classrooms is **very good**. Both the attendance and punctuality of pupils are **unsatisfactory**, as are the procedures to promote these.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils develop a clear understanding of what is right and wrong through a climate of Christian and family values.
- The respect for pupils and the value placed on their contribution to the school are particular strengths.
- The staff have high expectations of the pupils' conduct. Pupils behave very well, both in the classrooms and around the school. They are attentive in class and listen well.
- Attendance procedures are inadequate, resulting in too much unauthorised absence.

#### *Attitudes and behaviour*

9. Pupils like school. They behave very well and contribute to making the school the friendly, welcoming and harmonious place it is. These are similar to the findings of the last inspection.
10. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They respond well to their teachers and are keen to find out and do things for themselves. Behaviour, both inside and outside the school building, is very good. Pupils say that the development of the outdoor area has given them the space to sit and play quietly and, with the re-surfaced playground, the choice of more energetic play if that is what they wish to do. They appreciate the degree of independence this gives them and in return, they show respect for school rules. Firmly-established strategies such as corridor monitors and no 'play-fighting' in the playground work well in reducing the risk of friction amongst pupils at break times.
11. Parents are confident that the school deals effectively with incidents of bullying. Pupils agree, but are not so sure that other children always behave as well as they might. Pupils have a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong. However, the few pupils who have behavioural problems are well integrated into school life and respond well to the caring support they receive. Pupils are good at sorting out their differences. They do not find it hard to share or to work out between themselves which is the best way forward. No hint of aggressive behaviour was observed during the inspection.

### **Exclusions**

There were no fixed term or permanent exclusions in the last school year.

#### *Personal development*

12. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has strengthened since the last inspection and is very good overall. Pupils' personal development flourishes because

of the positive and supportive ethos underpinned by Christian values and beliefs. There are clear routines that help children in Reception feel secure and to be independent. They quickly learn to understand and obey the rules and are taught what is right and wrong. The family ethos in the school is immediately apparent to visitors and very successfully nurtures pupils' moral and social development. A sense of spirituality and thoughtfulness is evident throughout the day. Pupils have very good and regular opportunities to pray, reflect and feel positive about themselves. The standard of music and display of artwork in the school make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. There are also good initiatives to give pupils a genuine experience of their own and other cultures through their work in religious education and through the well-chosen visits and visitors in school. These are wide-ranging, extending from the annual tea party for grandparents to visits from the Bishop, the Rabbi and class visits to well- and lesser-known London art galleries, museums and theatres.

### Attendance

13. Attendance is below the national average and this hinders the progress some pupils make. Registers are returned promptly to the office but the daily checks are mainly to verify dinner numbers rather than reasons for absences. Taking the necessary action to reduce unauthorised absence is made more difficult because many of the register markings prove difficult to decipher. The school does not consult with parents in a way that would encourage them into thinking why exactly it is that their children arrive late or are absent from school. The practice of recording lateness only in the attendance registers is unsatisfactory because it does not always involve the parents. Parents are not always asked to provide letters explaining why their children are absent from school. No hard data has been assembled and presented to parents in a way that would alert them to the unsatisfactory attendance rates. The weakness was evident at the time of the last inspection and has not been addressed.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides **good quality education** for its pupils. Good teaching within a broad and balanced curriculum, good levels of support and good links with parents mean that pupils learn well.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. This marks a good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers regularly assess what pupils have learnt.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching was at least good in three out of every four lessons but there were also a small number of unsatisfactory lessons.
- Teaching in English, mathematics science and music is good.
- Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and generally of what they can achieve.
- Teachers use assessment well to plan future work in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching of gymnastics is not good enough.
- In some lessons, there are missed opportunities to fully challenge pupils.

## Commentary

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Three out of every four lessons were at least good, including a quarter of lessons that were very good. These proportions mark a good improvement since the last inspection. However, in a small proportion of lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory. The good teaching is spread across most National Curriculum subjects and across most classes. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science and music and satisfactory in ICT. Insufficient lessons were seen in other subjects to make a judgement but the indications are that teaching and learning are at least satisfactory, with the exception of teaching gymnastics in the Junior age range where pupils' achievement by Year 6 is unsatisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	11 (26%)	20 (48%)	8 (19%)	3 (7%)	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.*

### **Strengths in teaching**

15. All teachers' work well together and there are many strengths in teaching that have a positive impact on pupils' learning and how well they achieve. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils foster a positive ethos for learning, and pupils respond well to teachers' expectations. Almost all teaching builds successfully on the good attitudes to learning that the children develop in school. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and manage pupils well so that they are work productively and are attentive and stay focused on their work. Pupils of all levels of capability respond well to the good teaching, achieving well in three-quarters of the lessons observed.
16. In English, mathematics and science, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across the school with some very good lessons seen. This explains why pupils learn well in most lessons and over time. Teachers prepare and organise lessons well. Teachers set clear learning objectives and pupils are aware of what is expected of them and understand how the present lesson links to previous work. There is a good emphasis on teaching basic skills. There is good focused teaching of reading skills in Years 1 and 2 and a wide variety of ways for pupils to develop and use their writing skills. Number skills, including mental arithmetic skills, are taught well. In science, teachers make good use of resources to develop pupils' investigational skills.
17. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods to engage the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. Their questioning is skilful and challenges pupils to think about their work. Teachers make very good use of learning resources. For example, teachers make very effective use of interactive whiteboards as a teaching aid. Although these have been acquired quite recently, teachers use them with confidence, and in some, classes encourage pupils to use them as well. Learning support staff are generally well briefed by the teachers and make a valuable contribution to the quality of the pupils' learning, particularly for the lower-attaining pupils.
18. Teachers generally meet the individual learning needs of pupils well. The quality of teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. All staff consider the needs of these pupils and ensure that tasks are matched to their abilities. They explain the key subject vocabulary well and present work with a strong visual content and this results in pupils' good achievement. The additional support teacher is very experienced and provides good support. Good teaching helps pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The school adopts an

inclusive approach and supports these pupils mainly in the classroom, often with well-trained teaching assistants who work closely with them. When pupils are withdrawn for short periods, the quality of teaching of basic literacy skills is very good.

### *Shortcomings in teaching*

19. Shortcomings in lessons generally relate to specific lessons rather than to common features across the school. However, a weakness common to the three unsatisfactory lessons and some other lessons was the teachers' low expectations. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, this resulted in a significant proportion of the class not making sufficient progress. Sometimes the pace of learning is a little too slow. Learning support assistants are not always used well during whole-class teaching. Best practice is occasionally seen where the assistants quietly discuss what the teacher is saying to help pupils understand the main points.

### *Assessing pupils' progress*

20. Teachers know their pupils well and take good opportunities to assess the degree of learning each pupil has achieved. They use a range of appropriate strategies during lessons to assess pupils' understanding and grasp of the main teaching points. They do this through questions, through checking pupils' work in progress and assessing their knowledge and understanding at the conclusion of lessons. They generally use this knowledge well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. However, in the Reception class, assessment is not always used effectively to plan work at an appropriate level of difficulty for the more able children. Teachers are conscientious in their marking of pupils' work but do not indicate sufficiently to pupils ways of improving their work. In English and mathematics, pupils have individual learning targets which are useful in focusing pupils' attention on what they need to learn next.
21. Assessment of the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is done from an early stage and meticulous records of pupils' progress are linked to plans to meet learning targets. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress during the academic year are very good in English, good in mathematics and satisfactory in science and ICT. However, further enhancement of these systems for tracking pupils' progress over the longer term would enable the school to track progress of individuals and year groups over their time in the school.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is broad and balanced. A good range of learning opportunities contributes well to pupils' achievement. Children's learning in the Reception class would be more effective if they were offered regular short and intensive periods of literacy and numeracy teaching.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's strategies for inclusion are good and provision for pupils with special educational needs is good in Years 1 to 6.
- Opportunities for the enrichment of curriculum are good.
- The number and quality of teaching and non-teaching staff are good.
- Resources to support pupils' learning are good.
- Limitations in the school's outside facilities hamper pupils' achievement in physical education.
- The school provides a sound curriculum in the Reception but there are shortcomings in how activities are planned.

## **Commentary**

### *Planning of work*

22. The school provides a sound curriculum in the Foundation Stage. Staff plan and provide activities in all the recommended areas of learning. However, there are shortcomings in planning; there is a specific focus on one area of learning each day, with additional activities provided in the other areas of learning. Children's learning would be more effective if they were offered short and intensive periods of literacy and numeracy teaching on a daily basis.
23. The planning of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 enables most pupils to achieve well. There has been a number of good improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection. The school now bases its long-term planning on an overall 'curriculum map' which ensures that it provides a broad and balanced curriculum and meets statutory requirements. Every subject now has an appropriate scheme of work with the intention of providing a continuous programme of learning. Pupils receive their full ICT entitlement, which the school was failing to provide at the time of the last inspection. The amount of weekly teaching time meets recommendations and lessons no longer start late. These improvements, together with those in teaching, have helped to raise pupils' standards of attainment. The strong Christian ethos of the school underpins the good opportunities for pupils' personal development. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. A thorough scheme of work is in place and properly includes education about sex, drugs and alcohol.
24. The school places good emphasis on English and mathematics, and teachers use the national strategies for literacy and numeracy well as a basis for lesson planning. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are employed soundly in other subjects. Teachers sometimes plan good links between subjects. A visit to Dulwich Picture Gallery by Year 2, for example, led not only to art but also to drama and religious education as pupils acted out the story of David and Goliath. Scientific work in Year 3, where pupils investigated chemical reactions, was linked with their geographical studies on volcanoes and to some descriptive writing. However, overall there are insufficient planned opportunities to make connections between subjects.

#### *Extra-curricular activities*

25. Pupils have many opportunities to extend their learning outside the classroom. The school provides a good range of after-school clubs, including a good number for sport, with some additional coaching from members of local teams. There are good opportunities for musicians to develop their singing or instrumental talents. These are well attended. Pupils from all classes go on many educational visits which enrich their learning as well as enhancing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This extends to special events such as a 'Black History Day'.

#### *Inclusion*

26. The school shows a strong commitment to ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve well. The co-ordinator has ensured that pupils are assessed at the earliest opportunity so that the school can address pupils' special educational needs quickly. Where it is necessary, teachers adopt a broad number of well-structured strategies to provide support to individual pupils. The school works closely with parents to help pupils work towards targets for learning. The provision that the school makes for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Pupils' learning needs are assessed and carefully monitored to ensure they receive the appropriate additional support. The school is successful in providing a curriculum that reflects a positive attitude towards other cultures and languages. Pupils get good opportunities to gain confidence about their culture through assemblies, music and art. However, there are not many notices, signs or pupils own work in their home languages to show that the school values other languages.

#### *Resources and accommodation*

27. The match of teachers to the curriculum and to pupils' needs is good. This is due to well-developed provision for the continuing professional development within the school. There is a

good number of learning support staff but the quality of the support they provide is variable. Some support staff are very effective in helping pupils' learning but overall, their contribution is satisfactory.

28. Resources are very accessible and of good quality. In most subjects, resources are extensive and provide good support for learning. The school has worked hard to improve its accommodation which was criticised on health and safety grounds at the last inspection. There have been very good improvements to the buildings so that they now provide a pleasant and safe environment for learning. A useful addition since the last inspection is the ICT suite, although it is too cramped to be fully effective. There are a number of small rooms useful for teaching groups. Although much has been done to improve the outside facilities, restrictions in the accommodation hold back pupils' progress in games and limit opportunities for children in Reception to work outside.

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

Good care is taken of the pupils and **good support, advice and guidance** is given to help them develop into good citizens.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers know the children well and there are good relationships throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are supported particularly well.
- Pupils' personal development is good because have good role models to follow and good opportunities to broaden their experiences of life.
- Pupils are made aware of what is expected of them and what they are capable of.
- The school actively seeks to involve the pupils in initiatives aimed at raising standards but yet has no formal method of gauging their views.

### **Commentary**

#### *Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety*

29. Procedures for support, guidance and welfare of pupils have greatly improved since the last inspection when they were judged unsatisfactory.
30. Child protection procedures, then unsatisfactory, are now good. Safety issues relating to the premises have been addressed. Risk assessment procedures are good. Entries in the accident record book are monitored for evidence of trends. The potential for risks occurring is minimised by the very good care given to keeping the school tidy and clean, and making it a well-organised place in which to learn.
31. The school's environment reflects the values and aims of the school that all pupils should do well. It breaks down many barriers to learning by establishing trusting and caring relationships between pupils and adults. Therefore, pupils have no hesitation in approaching staff with any concerns. There are good opportunities for them to seek support from adults in school whom they trust and know them well. Unexpected changes in patterns of behaviour are noted and recorded and form part of the good procedures for child protection and the good anti-bullying strategies. Teachers act quickly on their concerns in establishing the facts, dealing with the problem and caring for those affected.
32. Staff view all incidents of racism or intolerance between individuals and groups of pupils as serious incidents and everyone in school understands their duty to report and to combat them. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to work constructively with each other and to develop a worthy sense of self-esteem. Good role models for pupils to emulate are manifested in governors, staff, parents, visitors and the pupils themselves. The emphasis in one

assembly, for example, was on how it good it felt to be able to play a musical instrument after only a few weeks of tuition. Pupils were encouraged by the efforts of their friends.

### *Involving pupils*

33. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take on responsibility and they are developing an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of living in a community. Their behaviour and sense of responsibility contribute to making the school the well-ordered place it is. For example, two pupil monitors explained that they saw their role as one of helping, not disciplining, other pupils. They also felt that they could act as a voice for others and suggested ways in which this could be done: "We could have a suggestion box in school. The headteacher could open it in assembly. He could say if our suggestions were good, or maybe give us reasons why they wouldn't work". However, there are few systematic opportunities for staff to ascertain the views of pupils. The headteacher is giving consideration to setting up a school council in the very near future.

### *Support and advice*

34. The staff know the pupils well and are concerned to ensure that they learn to the best of their capabilities. The progress of each individual pupil is carefully assessed and regularly monitored over the year. This enables pupils to be given the appropriate support quickly to stop them from falling behind. Pupils' achievement and effort are recognised and celebrated, helping them to develop the confidence they need to improve. All staff contribute strongly to the care, guidance and support of pupils with special educational needs and they achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language are also well cared for, guided and supported. New pupils are made to feel very welcome, whether they start school in the Reception class or enter at other times.

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

The **good links** the school has with parents and the community support pupils' learning and achievement well. **The links with partner schools are good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents think highly of the school. They give good support to their children by valuing their Catholic education.
- The school does not yet fully consult parents about their needs or expectations.
- Pupils benefit in many ways from the worthwhile links made between the school and the local community.

### **Commentary**

35. Parents, at their meeting and in questionnaires returned, made it clear that they are very happy with the school. Some also came into school to tell inspectors how pleased they were with the education their children were receiving. They highlighted the good relationships pupils have with staff and the good links the school has with a local playgroup. A mild criticism expressed by parents, which inspectors support, was that the school should consult them more.
36. Reporting to parents is good. Annual reports show clearly how pupils have progressed year on year and make it clear to parents what their children need to do to improve. The reports, however, miss the opportunity to comment on how irregular attendance or lateness has affected a pupil's progress. The school makes very good use of assemblies and displays of pupils' work to impart useful information about what the pupils are learning and the standards they have achieved. Most parents find they have sufficient opportunities to get their views across to teachers and to have their questions answered to their satisfaction. The good assessment procedures support the well-informed feedback parents receive from face-to-face

meetings with staff. Parents whose children have special educational needs are kept fully informed about their progress and are consulted about their individual education plans. The school has good procedures to involve the parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Where necessary, the staff and parents who can speak more than one language help in interpretation and translation.

37. The school's strong focus on working together has meant parents are increasingly aware of the role they can play in improving the school. Parents, who wish to, make a good contribution to their children's learning by regularly listening to their reading and making an effort to find out more about how the school operates and how their children learn. The school works closely with parents to help pupils with special educational needs work towards targets for learning. One important innovation has been a regular surgery when parents can drop in to discuss any problem. The response to this opportunity has been very good. However, as yet, there are no formal methods to gather the views of parents. The school has also to find out why some parents do not send their children to school as regularly as they should.
38. The school is keen to involve the community in the life of the school. A wide range of visitors come into the school which helps to give the pupils a view of life beyond the school. The pupils are involved in a number of activities locally and they have good opportunities to participate in inter-school sports events. Pupils engage in a broad range of subject-based day visits during the year covering sport and creative, environmental, community and artistic activities. All this has had a positive effect on the pupils' motivation to learn. Parents are good at finding new ways to raise funds for the school. They have added a long list of business organisations, including some multi-national companies, to the good number of links already forged between the school and the local community.
39. There are good arrangements to link with other schools in the area, both for children coming into the school from pre-school settings and those pupils transferring to the secondary schools. Involvement in the Education Action Zone (EAZ) has helped the school forge effective links with other local schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by an effective deputy headteacher and other staff with key management responsibilities. The **governance of the school is sound.** The school is well managed, uses its resources well and gives **good value for money.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The strong partnership of headteacher and deputy headteacher provides effective educational leadership to the school.
- The school has a very positive ethos and commitment to inclusion is good.
- The chair of governors has played a significant role in developing the governing body.
- Teamwork is good with all staff working well together for the benefit of the pupils.
- The school has some effective procedures to monitor its work but it needs to develop further ways of checking how well it is doing.
- Resources, including finances, are managed well.

### **Commentary**

#### *Leadership*

40. The headteacher provides good leadership because he gives the school a very clear sense of purpose and has high expectations of staff and pupils. He and the deputy headteacher make an effective partnership, clearly focused on raising standards and improving provision.

Teamwork is good, with all staff working well together for the benefit of the pupils. This creates a very positive ethos within the school. Parents and pupils appreciate the family atmosphere, the warm and harmonious relationships and the Christian values that permeate the life of the school. The school shows a good commitment to inclusion. All pupils are equally valued and staff work hard to meet the needs of all pupils. The school's good working relationships with a local school with a unit for severely disabled pupils reflects its very positive approach to inclusion.

41. The school has good procedures for planning actions and initiatives to bring about improvements. The school's approach to development planning provides a useful tool for improvement and gives the school a clear set of priorities and planned actions. In consequence, there have been good improvements in many areas since the last inspection.
42. Curriculum leadership has improved since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher plays an effective role in co-ordinating and monitoring curriculum developments to ensure effective planning and coverage of the curriculum. The headteacher places good emphasis on developing the role of the subject leaders and the school provides good support to enable staff to fulfil their subject management responsibilities. Following a review of staff responsibilities, most staff have taken on responsibility for new subject areas from the beginning of this academic year. A positive feature of these changes is that all new subject leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision, producing realistic action plans. Staff with subject leadership responsibilities are developing the roles well but not all are doing so with the same degree of effectiveness. The new English co-ordinator maintains the high quality leadership and management provided by her predecessor. The leadership of science, ICT and music are good. Mathematics is soundly led.

### *Management*

43. The school is well managed. There is a clear sense of order to all aspects of school life and the school is very well organised and runs smoothly. The headteacher delegates responsibilities effectively and this leads to good development of staff. Induction of new staff is good and newly-qualified teachers feel well supported. Staff development is also well supported by well-established performance management procedures.
44. The school has some effective procedures to monitor its work but it needs to develop further ways of checking how well it is doing. Procedures to monitor the performance of teachers are good. Co-ordinators have a sound overview of provision but, with the exception of the literacy co-ordinator, do not monitor classroom practice. Although there is a sound plan for improvement, it is not supported sufficiently by evaluation of impact of planned actions. In some subjects, the lack of effective assessment arrangements means co-ordinators do not have a clear understanding of standards. The school's systems for tracking pupils' progress in the core subjects do not enable the school to produce 'value-added' measures for individuals and year groups from year to year.
45. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is managed well. The co-ordinators work closely with teachers and learning support assistants to engender effective teamwork to promote pupils' progress. The staff receive good guidance on how to support pupils' learning. The information gained from assessments is used well when required to provide additional support. Governors with special responsibility for this area work well with the school. The school has good working relationships with support agencies.
46. The management of the schools' finances is good. Financial management has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was judged to be poor. The headteacher and chair of governors have worked together to address the significant failings in financial planning that they inherited. They have put the school on a sound financial footing by identifying appropriate savings, tightening of financial controls, seeking sources of additional funding and

linking budget decisions to the educational priorities of the school. As a consequence of their good management, a deficit budget of over £50,000 has been transformed into a significant surplus. In addition, the school premises have been greatly improved and the curriculum properly resourced.

47. The money available to the school is being used well and the school gives good value for money. However, further improvements in management of finances could be made:
- approximately half the surplus has been earmarked for future building projects but this still leaves considerable funds formally unallocated;
  - the governors should make clear to parents the educational impact of its budget decisions (An unwarranted concern expressed by some parents was that the budget surplus was created only as a result of unspecified 'cuts');
  - there is a need for a better system of budget allocation to subjects that is clearly based on identified needs; and
  - best value principles are applied satisfactorily but there is insufficient consultation with parents and pupils.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	572,225	Balance from previous year	92,152
Total expenditure	571,320	Balance carried forward to the next	93,057
Expenditure per pupil	2,960		

## Governance

48. The governing body provides good levels of support, shows sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and ensures that statutory responsibilities are fully met. It conducts its business efficiently and increasingly plays a purposeful and effective role in shaping the direction of the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and owes much to the strong and effective leadership of the chair of governors who, since his appointment, has played a significant role in leading the governing body and ensuring its smooth and efficient working.

## COMMUNITY PROVISION

The school has developed good and effective links with the local community that not only benefit its pupils but other young people in the area.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Involvement with the local Education Action Zone (EAZ) has been beneficial to the school and its pupils.
- Working with other schools and local businesses has widened the range of worthwhile learning opportunities for pupils and has helped the school make improvements.
- Pupils from different schools have good opportunities to learn from each other's achievements.
- The school provides good education for a small number of severely disabled pupils with the support of a local specialist unit.

## Commentary

49. The school is part of the South Greenwich Educational Action Zone. Participation in this EAZ has brought a number of benefits to the school. It has helped the school to develop its links with the community and improve provision for its own pupils.
50. Pupils from the school join with pupils from other schools for a range of activities, including music, sport and drama. In this way, pupils benefit from knowing that they are part of the same community, involved in similar learning activities and are able to enjoy the conviviality of friendly competition. Exchange visits are made to school productions. Teachers are carefully deployed across the schools to help individuals discover their hidden talents. With the benefit of their shared expertise, the pupils were able to compose and perform music in the style of 'Abba'. Year 3 and 4 pupils' involvement in the annual 'Eltham Lights Up' lantern parade gave them the chance to share in the creativity of the whole community. This year, they joined the spectacle proudly carrying the Chinese lanterns they had made as part of their design and technology work. Teachers and support staff from the other EAZ schools have good opportunities to meet and to share good classroom practice and useful tips on who might be worth inviting into their school. Through a network of contacts, pupils have, for example, sung with a Gospel choir, taken part in Japanese drama and learnt more about what it takes to be a successful footballer and good team player.
51. The EAZ supports the school's efforts to develop pupils' personal and social education and citizenship. For example, as part of its Care Partnership programme in Years 5 and 6, visits from a locally based youth theatre group have proved particularly relevant. The play endeavours to counteract some commonly held misconceptions on asylum seekers by focusing on the positive contribution they can make to the economic and cultural life of a community.
52. Some initiatives started by the EAZ and taken up by the school are now shared with other schools within the local education authority. The EAZ funds an 'author in residence' programme which has led to the publication of a number of anthologies of pupils' written work, with a significant contribution from the pupils at St Thomas More.
53. The school's involvement with the community has led to a number of changes for the better. Pupils are keen to show visitors their 'quiet' area of curved walkways and flowerbeds. The area was plain bare tarmac before parents, staff and other community volunteers set about improving it.
54. The school has good working relationships with a local school with a unit for severely disabled pupils and consequently, it has effectively integrated a small number of severely disabled pupils into the school. Good links with educational professionals and support agencies serving the community have helped staff become more confident in working with pupils who have specific medical needs or behavioural problems and including them in all the activities enjoyed by their peers.
55. There are good transfer arrangements in place that ensure the children have a happy and confident start to their school career and make a smooth transition to their choice of secondary school. Parents highlighted the links between the local playgroup and the Reception class as particularly good.

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

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

Overall provision is **satisfactory**.

The school has one Reception class and attainment on entry to the school is average in all six areas of learning. Children's achievement is satisfactory in all areas and is good in personal, social and emotional development. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and are well used to enrich the curriculum. However, the outdoor learning area is not yet well developed to enrich children's experiences. The teacher and the teaching assistant work well as a team and contribute equally to the satisfactory provision and quality of learning. Teaching is planned with a focus on one area of learning each day with activities provided in all areas of learning. It would be more beneficial for young children to experience more short and intensive periods of daily teaching of literacy and numeracy. Assessment is not used consistently to determine next steps in learning, as more capable children do not receive work that is of an appropriate level of difficulty. Staff explain subject-related vocabulary and concepts well and question children to ensure that they have understood. The reception teacher provides sound leadership and management for the early years. Overall, the school has maintained the satisfactory provision, teaching and learning and standards since the last inspection.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children behave well and are keen to learn.
- Resources are used well to make learning interesting.
- Good opportunities are provided to discuss right from wrong.
- The routines and the encouragement children receive help them feel secure and confident.

### **Commentary**

56. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. As a result of good entry procedures, children quickly settle into school. There are clear routines that help children to feel secure and to be independent. Children are taught what is right and wrong and how and why they should share equipment. Children understand and obey the rules such as 'share', 'help' and 'do not throw', when they play in the sand. They are given opportunities to decide on rules, for example to play skittles, ensuring that rules are fair. Good use is made of the Smart Board to demonstrate the rules of games and the need to obey these. Children learn to be active and explore when they role-play and serve pizzas in their Pizza Express or play in the Baker's Shop. Consequently, they develop a good understanding of appropriate behaviour. Children's attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children need more adult support to develop their communication skills through the use of role-play areas.

## Commentary

57. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and so is children's achievement. Careful attention is given to using props and explaining vocabulary to ensure that children understand tasks and activities. For example, when reading the Christmas story, the teacher ensured that children knew the names of all the characters. Children develop a sound knowledge of letter names and their sounds and are beginning to link initial letter sounds to whole words. More capable children are beginning to recognise some familiar words and use picture clues to read. Most children are beginning to copy their names and the more able can write from memory. Children need more adult support to develop their communication skills through the use of role-play areas. Most children are likely to meet the levels expected at the end of Reception and more capable children's attainment is above the expected levels.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical activities support children's mathematical development.
- More capable children are not consistently given more challenging tasks.

## Commentary

58. The quality of teaching and learning is sound and children's achievement is satisfactory. Children learn a number of rhymes and songs that extends their knowledge of numbers. For example, children sing a song of 'Five Little Frogs' and learn the concept of 'one less'. Most can count to ten and more capable pupils can go beyond and can add numbers to ten. Cooking activities allow children to apply concepts of measuring weight and volume. Most children can name simple two-dimensional shapes. However, more capable children who have already achieved the Reception Year numeracy objectives are not given more difficult levels of tasks. Staff assess pupils well but do not consistently use the information to plan the next steps in learning. Most children are likely to attain the levels expected for their age.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits to the local area are used well to engage children's interest in their learning.
- Children's attainment in information and communication technology is above the expected levels.

## Commentary

59. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children's achievement is satisfactory. Children learn about a variety of materials when using construction toys, sand, water and plasticine. Children make fruit salads and cook pizzas. This helps improve their scientific knowledge about the changes that occur when ingredients are mixed. They make tree diaries and observe leaves and note the changes in the colours. When using the computer, they confidently use the mouse to click and drag objects. They use the Smart Board well to draw pictures and sequence the story of Christmas. Their achievement and attainment in information and communication technology is above the expected levels. They learn about the past through talking and looking at the pictures of themselves when they were young. Most children are on course to meet the levels expected by the end of Reception.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children move with control and confidence.

### Commentary

60. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children's achievement is satisfactory. Children learn to use the space appropriately in their jumping, hopping and running activities. They learn to throw the ball accurately when they play skittles. However, lack of outdoor space hinders their progress in using large apparatus and wheeled toys. Children talk about warming up and cooling down. However, they do not discuss the effect of exercise on their heart rate. They learn to use a good range of tools, for example, paintbrushes, sticky tape dispensers, dough cutters, scissors and felt tips. They hold the pencil correctly and are beginning to learn to write accurately. Children are likely to meet the levels expected by the end of Reception.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides a variety of opportunities to use a range of materials and media with increasing control.

### Commentary

61. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and children's achievement is satisfactory. Children are introduced to a range of activities such as painting, dance and singing. In one lesson, children painted their pictures in the style of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night'. As a result of good teaching, children produced some effective pictures. Children play musical instruments but are not given sufficient opportunities to explore sound and make their own music to develop their appreciation of different sounds. They sing songs and rhymes. Children play in their Pizza Express and role-play but, without adult help, they are not able to develop the story line. Overall, children are on track to meet the levels expected by the end of Reception.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good because the quality of teaching is good.
- Standards are above average but pupils' spelling and punctuation are often careless.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management.
- The curriculum is broad and provides a good balance of activities.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' work are very good and are very well used.

### Commentary

62. Standards are above average and have improved since the last inspection. The achievement of all groups is good.
63. Pupils achieve well in the national tests. Results have improved at a better rate than the national trend. In 2003, results were well above national averages in both Years 2 and 6 national tests. Higher-attaining pupils did particularly well; the proportion of pupils achieving above expected levels was well above average in both tests. Although girls do better than boys in the national tests at Year 6, no significant differences in the standards of work was noted during the inspection.
64. There has been good overall improvement in provision since the last inspection. The improvements have helped to raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good. In turn, this has had a strong impact on pupils' learning in writing. Over time, lessons cover a wide variety of ways for pupils to develop and use their writing skills. Older pupils write extended stories of good quality and thoughtful poetry. Both reflect teachers' attention to promoting pupils' spiritual development. They develop their skills from an early age and teachers give them clear guidance on how to improve their work. By Year 2, pupils are achieving well and their writing is at a standard above that typically found, with the more able writing in complex sentences. Pupils in Year 6 attain well above the national average standards, for example, most pupils sustain a plot and develop characterisation over pieces of good length. They use vivid description to capture the reader's interest. Pupils present their work well with good standards of handwriting. Nevertheless, they are often careless with their spelling and punctuation because they are not as good as they could be at correcting their own work.
65. Good focused teaching of reading skills in Years 1 and 2 has improved standards in reading so that they are now above the national average throughout the school. Although some pupils in Year 2 are a little hesitant in reading aloud, they can give detailed descriptions of the plot in books and the characters in stories. The higher attainers are fluent readers and can explain why they would like to be one of the characters. By Year 6, pupils read with good expression, compare different authors and are confident in using a non-fiction library. Similarly, pupils attain good standards in speaking and listening, although teaching varies in its expectations. Pupils speak at length when encouraged to do so, as in Year 3 where they were asked to describe in their own words what makes a good bicycle. Teachers also ensure pupils learn proper terminology in other subjects, such as 'hyperlink' in computer work. Pupils are attentive and listen well to one another in group work and in other subjects such as music.
66. The school adopts an inclusive approach to teaching English. Consequently, most pupils achieve well, including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English attain standards that are similar to their peers.
67. The new co-ordinator maintains the high quality leadership and management provided by her predecessor. She is building on the good improvements made to English since the last inspection. The scheme of work provides proper guidance to teachers in organising a curriculum which covers all aspects of literacy. There is a much more thorough system of assessment of pupils' work. The school regularly reviews its provision in the subject. This, together with what it learns from testing, helps teachers to modify their planning so that pupils' needs are better catered for. These plans include improved programmes of support for pupils' individual and special educational needs. Resources for the subject, especially books, are now up-to-date, of very good quality and easily accessible.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

68. Teachers provide a sound range of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects but more could be done. In science, for example, older pupils write well-structured reports of their experiments. In design and technology, pupils write about their plans to make slippers, for example, and learn to evaluate the quality of their finished work. However, there

are infrequent opportunities in history for pupils to apply their literacy skills. There are limited opportunities for pupils to apply their word-processing skills in other subjects. Pupils make insufficient use of ICT in drafting and modifying their work rather than producing 'best work'.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Standards overall are above average. Pupils' numeracy skills are good but more could be done to develop their data-handling skills.
- Results in national tests at Year 6 have risen significantly since the last inspection.
- Assessment arrangements are good.
- Developments are not supported sufficiently by effective evaluation.

### **Commentary**

69. Standards are above average. The achievement of all groups is good. Higher-attaining pupils do well and pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English attain standards that are similar to their peers. Although boys do better than girls in the national tests at Year 6, no significant differences in the standards of work were noted during the inspection.
70. There has been good overall improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in assessment practices have led to better achievement by pupils and improved standards. This improvement is reflected in pupils' performances in national tests where results have risen significantly since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in the national tests. In 2003, results were well above national averages in both Years 2 and 6 national tests. Higher-attaining pupils did particularly well; the proportion of pupils achieving above expected levels was well above average in both tests.
71. Inspection findings are that nearly all the pupils in the current Years 2 and 6 are working at least within the expected range for their ages but the proportion predicted to achieve above national expectations is not likely to be as high as this year's results. The school's targets indicate that results in next year's tests are not likely to be as good as 2003 although in line with the above-average results in previous years. Pupils have good numeracy skills. By Year 2, most are developing a good understanding of place value and are confident with numbers to 100. Year 6 pupils have a good grasp of operations with decimals and fractions. Pupils' mental arithmetic skills are good. They can use a variety of mental and written strategies to solve problems and use appropriate mathematical language to explain their methods. Pupils show good understanding of the properties of shape and competence in using measures. However, the development of pupils' data-handling skills is less secure and work undertaken is not sufficiently challenging. Standards of presentation are good.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In all lessons seen, teaching was good. Analysis of pupils' work shows good achievement since the beginning of term. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and manage pupils well so that they work productively and are attentive and stay focused on their work. Teachers take appropriate account of the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers start lessons briskly with an effective oral session to develop pupils' mental arithmetic skills and use questions well to check their understanding and give opportunities for them to explain their answers. Lessons are carefully planned with different activities to meet the learning needs of all pupils, including extension activities for the more able and effective use of assistants to support pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. There is good emphasis on developing different number strategies and on use of correct mathematical vocabulary.

73. Assessment arrangements are good. In lessons, teachers use appropriate strategies to assess pupils' understanding and progress, reinforce learning points and plan next steps in learning. There is a consistent approach to setting individual learning targets for pupils, which is useful in helping pupils focus on areas they need to improve upon. Marking is satisfactory although teachers could do more to indicate to pupils how they might further improve. Teachers undertake two assessments each term to monitor progress. These are effective because assessments are matched to National Curriculum levels and provide useful checks on individual progress. In addition, the use of optional national tests at the end of each year provides further checks on progress.
74. The subject is soundly led. Whilst there are strengths in some areas of management, there are also areas for development. Curriculum planning is good and ensures good coverage of the curriculum. The co-ordinator has a sound overview of standards and provision but he does not monitor classroom practice with sufficient focus on improvement. Although there is a sound plan for improvement, its evaluation lacks rigour.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

75. There are some examples of the use of pupils' good numeracy skills in other subjects such as in science and geography. When given such opportunities pupils apply their numeracy skills well. However, such opportunities are not sufficiently planned for. Teachers do not plan enough links with ICT. For example, the use of ICT to develop pupils' skills in data-handling is underdeveloped.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Pupils of all capabilities achieve well and standards achieved across the school are above average.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is consistently good across the school.
- Teachers place very good emphasis on providing opportunities for investigative work.
- The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Assessment procedures are sound, but its use to set targets for individuals or classes is identified as an area for development.
- Opportunities for linking science and ICT are not sufficiently planned for.

#### **Commentary**

76. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are above average. The achievement of pupils has improved and is now good. Across the school, pupils of different ethnicity, capability and those who have English as an additional language achieve well. They make good gains in their knowledge and understanding because the subject is planned very carefully and taught well.
77. Results in the 2003 national tests for Year 6 pupils were above the national average and above those of similar schools. Results have improved strongly since the last inspection and have been above or well above the national average for the past four years. Teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2003 were well above average. The proportion of pupils achieving above the expected levels in both Year 2 and 6 was above average. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

78. Inspection findings are that pupils in the current Year 6 and Year 2 are on line to attain above average standards. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the topics they have covered. They are able to hypothesise well, to adopt a rigorous scientific approach in their work, to record their work accurately and communicate reasoned explanations of what they have done.
79. Pupils in Year 2 understand that materials change when they are cooled. They investigate ways to melt ice and record their observations in a table. More capable pupils learn that some changes are reversible, such as melting and cooling chocolate. Pupils are introduced well to the process of scientific investigation. Pupils in Year 6 are particularly accomplished in the way they approach investigational work when they study micro-organisms and learn about Edward Jenner who developed vaccination against smallpox. Pupils use scientific vocabulary appropriately when they discuss their work and apply literacy and numeracy skills well when they record work.
80. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is consistently good, with some very good lessons seen. Planning is very effective. Teachers set clear learning objectives and pupils are aware of what is expected of them. They understand how the present lesson links to previous work. Teachers explain new scientific vocabulary and concepts well, continually reinforcing these during the lessons. As a result, pupils learn and use the appropriate scientific vocabulary when they ask and answer questions. Across the school, pupils are managed well. Teachers use praise and encouragement successfully to motivate pupils. Pupils' interest is maintained by careful questioning. The strength of the subject is the use of appropriate resources for investigating and experimenting purposes. All pupils know how to predict and find out by 'fair testing' and record results and conclusions, as was seen in Years 2, 3 and 4 lessons. As a result of this good teaching, pupils achieve well during their time in school.
81. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection, leading to improvements in standards and pupils' achievement. The co-ordinator has a good view of the working of the subject across the school and an appropriate plan for improvement. Assessment in the subject is sound, but its use to set targets for individuals or classes is identified as an area for development. Teachers make good use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There are some sound examples of the use of ICT to support pupils' learning. For example, in Year 5, results collected as part of an investigation on pulse rates were presented in graphical and table forms. However, opportunities for such links are not sufficiently planned for.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been good improvement in the school's provision since the last inspection.
- There is good leadership and management of the subject.
- The school has made good use of available space to create an ICT suite but it is too cramped to be fully effective.
- The introduction of interactive whiteboards is having a positive effect on teaching and learning.
- Arrangements to enable pupils to assess their own progress are good but teachers do not assess pupils' attainment against nationally agreed criteria except in Year 6.

### **Commentary**

82. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are in line with national expectations. The achievement of pupils has improved and is now satisfactory.

83. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Staff development has improved teachers' confidence and expertise, better planning ensures a broader curriculum and resources have improved, including the development of an ICT suite. In addition, the school has benefited from its participation in the Education Action Zone. This has led for example, to the recent addition of four interactive whiteboards to aid whole-class demonstrations. These arrangements help ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement and the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities, which it was failing to do at the time of the last inspection. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that they experience the expected range of opportunities to develop their ICT skills in word-processing, graphics, the Internet, data-handling and control and modelling.
84. Pupils' competence in ICT is average. In lessons seen, the majority of pupils used computers confidently and with real interest. However, although pupils are confident in using the mouse, many lack proficiency in their keyboard skills due to the limited opportunities to practise. Pupils in Year 2 are confident in their use of 'draw' and 'paint' programs. They have a sound knowledge of the functions of various tools and experiment confidently with various techniques to create different effects. In the lesson seen, they made good progress in applying their skills in designing a Christmas card. The word-processing skills of Year 3 pupils are sound and Year 4 pupils have a sound understanding of the layout of a newspaper. With support from their teacher, a group of lower-attaining pupils make slow but steady progress, writing into text boxes and using draw tools to create a picture to go with the text. Year 5 pupils make effective use of the Internet to research their Victorian project and their graphical modelling skills are sound. The current Year 6 pupils are preparing multimedia presentations and are confident in the use of tools to create illustrations and enter text. Most can assemble pictures and text to create linked slides. They show good ability to change the layout and appearance of text and to access the Internet for appropriate images. Some higher-attaining pupils make very good progress in producing linked pages to create a Christmas quiz. They show good awareness of audience, creating an interesting presentation combining text, images and animation and adding a hyperlink.
85. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Most lessons seen were good but teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson. In good lessons, teachers plan work well with a good emphasis on developing pupils' skills. Lessons are effective because they build well upon pupils' prior knowledge and learning. During lessons, they use appropriate strategies to assess pupils' grasp of the main learning points so as to plan next steps in learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and show good knowledge of the software and confidence with the hardware. For example, they make good use of the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate software procedures. However, one lesson was unsatisfactory because of inadequate organisation. The teacher provided effective support for lower-attaining pupils without sufficient regard to the learning needs of the rest of the class.
86. The achievement of all groups is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and in most lessons, the activities are sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls and pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to others.
87. Teachers have satisfactory arrangements to monitor pupils' performance, based on the use of pupil self-assessment booklets. These are well designed and, when used well, provide an effective basis for checking pupil achievements. However, at present, there is insufficient monitoring by teachers of pupils' own assessments, resulting in too much variation in how pupils record these. As teachers do not assess pupils' attainment against nationally-agreed criteria, there is no clear view of how well pupils are doing compared with standards nationally, except in Year 6 where the school uses a test devised by the local education authority, based on National Curriculum benchmarks. This is a useful measure of standards and the school does well in these tests in comparison to other local schools.
88. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She has done much to develop the school's provision for ICT. That standards have improved is in

no small measure due to her expertise and commitment. There is a detailed action plan based on the co-ordinator's good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. The school has made good use of available space to create an ICT suite but it is too cramped to be fully effective.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

89. There are some examples of teachers making sound use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects, for example in art and design, humanities and science. However, opportunities for links with other subjects are not always sufficiently planned for. Year 5 pupils' work inspired by Andy Warhol is a particularly good example of linking ICT with art and design. Pupils make sound use of their word-processing skills: in Year 3 to produce work on the Romans, in Year 4 to write stories as part of the literacy work and in Year 5 to 'publish' newspaper stories. In many lessons, pupils use computers to consolidate numeracy skills but more could be done to help pupils achieve well with data-handling.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography and History**

Provision in geography and history is **satisfactory overall**.

#### **Commentary**

90. Only two lessons in history and two in geography were observed during the inspection so no overall judgements can be made about the quality of teaching and learning, or improvement since the last inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and on display, and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that the standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
91. **In geography**, the evidence from books, as well as discussion with pupils, shows that pupils in Year 2 can identify physical and human geographical features associated with the seaside and give an opinion on why they prefer one place to another. Pupils in Year 6 in their study of a river have visited the local river and measured the velocity and depth of the river at various places. They had carried out experiments on how deposition in rivers occurs. Pupils are introduced to geographical vocabulary and they use it well when they explain their work.
92. **In history**, pupils by the end of Year 2 are aware of the order in which things happen and study some famous people such as Anne Frank. Year 1 pupils learn to use the time-line to put toys in order of very old, old and new. Year 4 pupils learn to read and write hieroglyphics when they study the Egyptian civilisation. Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of key dates, periods and events in British history. However, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use their literacy skills to write reports, accounts or letters to give their views about particular events.
93. The new co-ordinator has made a good start in reviewing the subjects and setting issues into a realistic action plan. The long-term curriculum plan is implemented and end-of-unit assessment procedures are followed. The resources are satisfactory. A number of visits to places of educational interest enhance pupils' learning.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Physical education

Provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school achieves well in competitive sports.
- Standards in gymnastics do not improve sufficiently from the age of seven.
- Deficiencies in outdoor facilities limit pupils' progress in games.
- There are no effective procedures for the assessment of pupils' skills.
- The new co-ordinator is fully aware of what needs to be done to improve provision.

#### Commentary

94. Standards in gymnastics have fallen since the last inspection. In line with expectations in Year 2, standards are below average by Year 6.
95. Teaching in gymnastics in the Junior age range does not satisfactorily develop pupils' skills, so that by Year 6, they are below national expectations. Overall, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. They do not give enough time for pupils to develop and refine new skills. Pupils do not learn to take advantage of the possibilities arising from working in pairs or groups, for example when developing sequences of movements. Although pupils are encouraged to assess one another's work, they do not know what should be expected for their age and often are too generous. This is not improved when teachers themselves are too free with their praise.
96. Nevertheless, there is some very good teaching. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher encouraged pupils to push themselves further in exploring ways to balance. She brought pupils' attention to how they could build the skills they were learning into a sequence of spinning movements so that their bodies remained under control. Such high expectations were matched by pupils' keenness to improve and a high degree of agility and poise. The teacher promotes pupils' speaking skills by encouraging them to explain what constitutes good quality movement. It is only where teaching is of this quality that it is inclusive, by stretching both the more able pupils and those with special educational needs.
97. The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory when games skills are taught. However, deficiencies in outdoor facilities limit pupils' progress. Teachers pay good attention to pupils' health and safety by holding warm-up and cool-down sessions before and after the main part of lessons. They also remind pupils of why this is necessary. All lessons are satisfactorily structured so that pupils revise previous learning and gradually build on the skills they have already developed. Teachers prepare resources well so that pupils can organise themselves for group work. Pupils' learning does not benefit from effective assessment.
98. Consideration has not been given to the disadvantages to restricting swimming to pupils in Year 4. Consequently, the good start they make is not built upon and the school has no way of knowing how many pupils in Year 6 attain the national expectation of swimming at least 25 metres. Those pupils who take part in sports in competition with other schools continue to achieve well. The number of extra-curricular activities in sport is good, and the school takes advantage of coaching offered by local football, cricket and rugby clubs.
99. The new co-ordinator is fully aware of the weaknesses in provision. Recognising that standards are not as good as they could be, she has clear plans for involving the staff in making improvements.

## Music

Provision for music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of performance in singing and instrumental work is good.
- Teaching is good helping pupils to achieve well.
- The school offers a wide range of performance opportunities to all pupils.

### Commentary

100. Pupils' attainment in music exceeds expectations by Year 2 and Year 6. The quality of pupils' singing in assembly and in singing practices is above that usually found. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and take a full part in all lessons. Music is entirely inclusive and embraces the whole school. All pupils make good progress and achievement is good as a result of good teaching.
101. In all year groups, performance is the strongest element of the music curriculum. By Year 2, pupils sing a variety of songs and play simple pieces with confidence and a good awareness of rhythm, as was seen in an assembly when they were practising for their Christmas concert. Pupils recognise and name percussion instruments and describe the sounds they make. By Year 6, pupils sing songs in groups and perform solos. They are able to maintain their own tune while listening to others. They use symbols when performing and expressing musical ideas and have a satisfactory knowledge of using a graphic score. Pupils develop a good awareness of audience.
102. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and four of the staff and a part-time teacher are good musicians. They inspire pupils to give of their best in performances. Music is taught for enjoyment and pupils respond readily. The teaching of singing is generally better than that of composing. Lessons are well planned and are conducted at a brisk pace. Pupils make music and experiment with sound in a secure environment. Relationships are good and teachers and pupils enjoy making music together. This promotes the unity of the school and increases pupils' self-esteem.
103. The subject is managed well. The school has made good improvement in provision since the previous inspection and the good standards compare favourably to those reported then. The music programme is well co-ordinated and adds significantly to the pupils' achievement and significantly contributes to pupils' personal development. The school offers opportunities for pupils in Year 5 and 6 to learn to play the recorder and in Years 4 to 6 to learn to play the violin. The school has a very good stock of good quality instruments.

### Design and technology and art and design

104. Not enough evidence was gained from the inspection to make overall judgements about provision in these subjects. Two lessons were observed in art and design and one in design and technology. Additional evidence was gained from a study of pupils' work and discussions with the co-ordinator for both subjects.
105. In **art and design**, teaching was very good in both lessons. In the Year 5 lesson, the teacher focused pupils' attention on important features of a painting of Mary and Jesus by Bellini. Their appreciation of the picture contributed to their spiritual and cultural development. Pupils also learnt to discuss art ideas such as 'proportion'. This prepared them to make some preliminary sketches of a pupil, which, in turn, set them up for their final piece of work. The Year 6 lesson showed similar attention to a picture of the Nativity. In both lessons, pupils showed care and attention to detail.

106. Over time, however, pupils' work lacks refinement, so that by Year 2 and Year 6, it reaches standards in line with national expectations and not as high as those attained in the two observed lessons. Pupils are not developing the skills they need to raise their achievement. This particularly applies to pupils with special educational needs and to those who are talented. However, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and pupils enjoy the subject. Pupils use computers successfully to generate pictures, such as portraits of themselves where they 'flood' copies of photographs in order to make them similar to those of Marilyn Monroe by Andy Warhol. Appreciation of the work of famous artists stimulates much of their artwork, and this is well extended by visits to art galleries.
107. **In design and technology**, the observed session was taught to a group of pupils within one of the art lessons. Here, the teaching assistant prepared the pupils well for making slippers and ensured that the necessary resources were to hand. She gave them good clear instructions. However, although pupils go through the appropriate stages of planning, making and evaluating, they are not developing the independence they need to think increasingly for themselves.
108. The co-ordinator is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses and has appropriate plans for improvement. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place but the school could make more effective use of these to raise standards further.

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

No lessons were seen so no judgements are made about overall provision.

The school has produced a useful overview of how all the strands of this aspect of the curriculum are covered. This shows that the school adopts a variety of approaches to teaching. Some aspects are covered through other subjects such as religious education, science, history and English. Much is covered through discussions on issues relating to personal and social education and practical activities on such topics as 'refugees'. The programme is well supported by visitors from outside agencies, particularly the Care Partnership in Years 5 and 6.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

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

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	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	3
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	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
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).*