

# INSPECTION REPORT

## OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115290

Headteacher: Mr Adrian Hayes

Lead inspector: Fiona Robinson

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 261195

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	219
School address:	New London Road Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM2 0RG
Telephone number:	01245 353755
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Sr Sheila Sumner
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School is average in size and is located in Chelmsford Essex. It has 219 pupils on roll (107 boys and 112 girls) aged from four to 11. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds; most are white and none are at an early stage of English acquisition. The levels of knowledge and understanding of children when they join the school are about average. The proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs, including statements, is below the national average. Pupil mobility is low, and as such is not an issue for the school to take on board.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>31</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that provides a good standard of education. The leadership of the school by the headteacher is **good** and the quality of management is **good**. The curriculum is **good** and is broad, balanced, rich and relevant. The quality of teaching is **good overall** with some **very good** and **excellent** teaching observed. The school provides **good** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are very good by the age of 11.
- The provision for the Reception class is very good with excellent features.
- Provision for special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
- Very high attendance is having a very positive impact on standards.
- There is a very good, wide range of extra-curricular activities, including very good musical, sporting and language opportunities.
- Children are keen to come to school because of the very caring ethos.
- The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped in some areas of the curriculum.
- Assessment procedures in the subjects other than English, mathematics and science are underdeveloped.
- Self-evaluation can lack rigour and the use of assessment to inform planning is inconsistent.

The improvement since the last inspection is **sound**. There were no key issues from the previous inspection and the school has introduced systems for monitoring teaching and learning. There has been an appropriate focus on English, mathematics and science. Standards are **well above average** in these subjects by the time pupils are 11. The children get a **very good** start to their education in Reception. The **effective** leadership by the headteacher has resulted in an improved curriculum and stimulating learning environment. The **good** school improvement plan is focused on improving standards, teaching and learning. Shared vision and high expectations are providing a firm steer to the school's work and effective teamwork is evident. The ethos of the school is **very good** and most pupils have a clear understanding of what they are expected to achieve. The school has many strengths and is well placed to improve still further.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	A*	A*	A*
Mathematics	C	A	A	A*
Science	D	A	A	A*

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

**Pupils' achievement is good.** They enter school with broadly average standards and make **very good** progress in the Reception class. By the end of this year standards are **good** with most children meeting and a significant number exceeding the Early Learning Goals. They make **good** progress over time in both the infant and junior phases. They demonstrate **good** attitudes to learning, especially in English, mathematics and science. At the time of the inspection standards were **good** at the start of Year 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. They were **good** in art and design, design and technology (DT) and physical education (PE). In music they were **good** in Year 2 and **very good** by Year 6. Pupils are well placed to exceed their current targets in

English, mathematics and science. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests Year 6 pupils achieved **well above average** standards compared to all schools and similar schools in mathematics and science. They were **very high** in English.

The development of pupils' personal qualities is **very good** overall and leads to the **good** attitudes and increasing sense of responsibility that they display. Their behaviour is **very good** and pupils enjoy coming to school. They work hard and are keen to please their teachers. Attendance and punctuality are **excellent**. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good with some very good features.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** Overall, teaching is **good** across the school in literacy and **mostly good** in numeracy. Some **very good** and **excellent** teaching was seen in the Reception class. Learning is effective because of good teaching; pupils respect their teachers and they are keen to do their best. A small amount of **unsatisfactory** teaching was seen at the lower end of the junior phase. **Very good** teaching was seen in English, science and music. The use of assessment is **good** in English, mathematics and science, but less effective in all other areas, where the use of assessment to monitor progress is underdeveloped.

The curriculum is **good** and is enhanced by **very good** opportunities for enrichment. The school cares for its pupils very well and provides **very good** extra-curricular activities. Collaboration and partnerships with parents are **very good** and enhance pupils' education. Links with the community are **very good** and valuable opportunities to promote pupils' achievement occur.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall.** Leadership by the headteacher is **good** and he provides clear vision and focus to the school's work. Teamwork is **effective** and support staff are used very well to support the curriculum. The monitoring role of the co-ordinator is not fully developed in some of the non-core subjects. Management is **good**. Governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is **good** and they are supportive of the school's efforts. They have a strategic overview.

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

**Parents have good views of the school.** They are particularly pleased with the expectations of staff, teaching and the way in which the school is led. Most of their views were positive. **Pupils** like the school and the teaching they receive.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop the role of the co-ordinator.
- Develop assessment procedures in the non-core subjects to build on pupils' knowledge and skills in a progressive way.
- Ensure that the use of assessment to inform planning is consistent.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is **good**. They enter school with broadly average standards and make very good progress in the Reception class. By the end of the Reception year most children are on target to meet or exceed the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 2. They make good progress in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. At the time of the inspection standards were **good** at the start of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. They were **very good** in music and **good** in art and design, DT and PE. They were **satisfactory** in ICT and all the other subjects. Pupils are well on track to exceed their current targets in English, mathematics and science in the 2004 national tests.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are high by the age of 11.
- Standards are very good in music and good in art, DT and PE.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress.

#### Commentary

1. In the 2002 national tests boys and girls in Year 6 achieved well above average standards compared to all schools and similar schools in mathematics and science. Results were very high (in the top five per cent) in English compared to all schools and similar schools. Results in the 2003 national tests, as yet unconfirmed, are very positive and show that these high standards have been maintained. Boys and girls are making similar good progress. Parents are pleased with the standards their children achieve.
2. In the 2002 national tests boys and girls in Year 2 achieved well above average results in writing, above average results in reading and satisfactory results in science compared to all schools. Results in the 2003 national tests (as yet unconfirmed) are positive and show an improvement in reading and mathematics. The high standards in writing have been maintained. Pupils of all abilities are making good progress and parents are pleased with the standards their children achieve.
3. At the time of the inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were good at the start of the year in Years 2 and 6. Pupils are well on track to meet or exceed their current targets in each of these subjects in the 2004 national tests. All pupils, including the higher-attaining children and those with SEN, are achieving well in relation to ability. Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are taught well and there is effective use made of assessment to take pupils' learning forward. The quality of planning is good, expectations are high and work is matched well to pupils' ability.
4. Standards are very good in music in Year 6 and good in Year 2. The subject leader has very good subject knowledge and understanding. The quality of teaching is very good and all pupils participate in concerts and school productions.
5. Standards in art and design and DT are good in Years 2 and 6 as evidenced by displays which help to provide a bright, purposeful learning environment.
6. Standards in PE are good throughout the school. The quality of teaching is good and this has a positive effect on the good progress pupils make in gymnastics and games lessons.



7. Pupils with SEN receive good support and as a result they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Higher-attaining pupils are suitably challenged through questioning and work is matched well to their ability.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.9 (17.4)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.7 (15.7)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	16.4 (17.0)	16.5 (16.2)

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

8. The table above shows that the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics exceed the national average. There has been further improvement this year in the 2003 national tests for Year 2 pupils. Pupils in the current Year 2, who will take the tests in summer 2004, are achieving above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are above average in science. Pupils achieve good standards by the age of seven in art and design, music, design and technology and PE. They are average in all other areas. Good teaching is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and achievements.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.4 (30.9)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.9 (29.3)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	31.3 (31.2)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

9. The table above shows that very high standards in English have improved and high standards in mathematics and science have been maintained. There has been further improvement in the 2003 national tests. Pupils in the current Year 6, who will take the tests in summer 2004, are on course to meet or exceed the current targets.
10. Pupils achieve above average standards in art and design, DT and PE. In music, standards are well above average by Year 6. Standards have risen because of good leadership and good teaching that are having a positive effect on pupils' learning and achievements.

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

11. The school's very positive ethos fosters pupils' personal development well, so that they grow into mature, considerate young people. Their attendance is very high and well above the national average. They are almost always punctual. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good, aided by the very good quality of relationships they enjoy with one another and with staff. Pupils' moral and social development is very good. Their spiritual and cultural development is good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very high and prompt attendance has a very positive impact on the standards they achieve.
- Pupils form very good relationships with others, which helps to ensure that bullying is rare.
- Teachers provide pupils with a good range of opportunities to take responsibility so that they become mature, confident members of the school community.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good, both in lessons and outside the classroom.
- There are no significant weaknesses; this aspect remains a strength of the school's work.

## Commentary

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.3	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

- 12. Pupils' attendance is very high and they are almost always on time.** Attendance at the school is consistently very high, with low levels of unauthorised absence as indicated in the table above. Pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive promptly in the morning. The school promotes the importance of good attendance very well and follows up any unexplained absences both quickly and thoroughly. Parents support the school very well. In particular, they ensure that family holidays are rarely taken during term-time. The very high attendance makes a strong contribution to the good standards pupils achieve.
- 13. Relationships throughout the school are very good and this leads to bullying and other forms of harassment being rare.** Pupils are encouraged through the strong Catholic ethos, the good role models provided by staff and by engaging in group work and discussions to form very good relationships with teachers, other staff and fellow pupils. From their earliest days in the school, children are encouraged to enjoy working and playing with others. Teachers consistently promote a strong moral code and this helps to make the school a harmonious community. Pupils and their parents are confident that bullying occurs rarely and, when it does, is dealt with very effectively. The very good relationships also help to ensure that all pupils develop the confidence to contribute their best in lessons and that play and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions.
- 14. Pupils respond very well to the wide range of opportunities they have to take responsibility.** All pupils are expected to help in their classroom and teachers provide a range of tasks appropriate to their age, so that when they reach Year 6 pupils willingly undertake such jobs as librarians, ICT monitors and help with sporting activities. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 take an active role in the school council. Pupils take pride in raising funds for a number of charities. This extends their sense of community into the wider world.
- 15. Behaviour throughout the school is very good.** Pupils are well motivated by the rewards and merits they receive and greatly appreciate them. In almost all lessons behaviour is very good, although at times when the pace of the lesson is slow a few pupils lose interest and their concentration flags. Pupils are polite and considerate of others and are encouraged to treat others fairly so that the school is a friendly, orderly community. There have been no exclusions at the school in the last year.

16. **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development remain significant strengths of its work.** The school has successfully maintained and built on the high standards noted in the previous inspection report.
17. Pupils' personal development is very good. They are interested in other cultures and traditions, and most like to help those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility. All know that they should care for others and assist adults, and most try to do so. Pupils enjoy helping to set up the hall for assembly.
18. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies make a good contribution, for example, when pupils discover that everybody has a special gift to offer. An atmosphere of excitement and wonder is created in some lessons. For example, in one science lesson the teacher captured Year 5 pupils' attention by saying "Let's see how blood flows around the body" as they were about to follow its trail around a life-size drawing of the heart on the school playground. Pupils co-operated well and soon put theory into practice.
19. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. All adults in the school set very good examples and help pupils to learn the difference between right and wrong. During lessons, pupils are reminded about how their actions affect other people. Class and school rules are known by all pupils and teachers encourage pupils to discuss moral issues such as conservation.
20. Very good provision for pupils' social development permeates the curriculum, and a very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided. Pupils work together well, sharing ideas and helping one another during lessons. Pupils develop a great sense of responsibility towards others, helping all to feel included and safe. Residential visits by Year 6 pupils to France and Year 5 pupils to a regional education centre contribute very well to pupils' personal and social development.
21. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. There is a wide range of visitors who share their experiences and a good range of visits that heighten pupils' awareness of the world about them. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the excavation of the Roman remains near their school. Dramatic performances in school and working alongside professional artists enhance pupils' appreciation of the performing arts.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.**

### **Teaching and learning**

The school provides a **very good** quality of education in the Foundation Stage. The overall quality of teaching is **good**, with **satisfactory** teaching throughout the school and **good** teaching in most year groups. It is **very good** in Reception. Some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the lower juniors. The strongest teaching is in English, PE and music where the teaching was **very good**. An outstanding lesson was seen in the Foundation Stage. Pupils with SEN are well taught.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Lessons are planned well and pupils are well motivated to succeed.
- Teachers are good at developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Teaching of music is of a high quality.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and involve pupils well in their learning.
- Teachers make good use of questions to check out progress or to extend learning.

- Assessment is too informal to identify where pupils' work needs to be improved.
- Where teaching is unsatisfactory there is a lack of challenge and pace.

## Commentary

22. The strengths in teaching outweigh the area for improvement in assessment. The headteacher is monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and is well aware of what needs to be done to raise further the overall quality of teaching.
23. Children in the Reception class are very well taught and they make very good progress. Lessons are well planned, and are firmly based on the 'stepping stones'<sup>1</sup> for learning. There is a very good balance between the teacher-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. Where teaching was excellent the children's learning was excellent, for example when they successfully worked out the solution to a difficult problem of how they could get a spoon out of water without wetting their hands.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### **A Reception class lesson where outstanding teaching resulted in pupils making excellent progress and achieving high standards.**

The teacher inspired pupils from the outset and engaged excellent productive learning. Through outstanding preparation of materials for planting seeds, she enabled children to be independent and skilfully encouraged them to use a wide range of skills as they tried to get a spoon out of water without getting wet hands. The interactions with adults were outstanding, with children making very good gains in knowledge, confidence and skill. There was an excellent aura of fascination as children shared the contents of their 'surprise' boxes with one another at the end of the session.

24. Lessons are planned well and pupils are well motivated to succeed. The quality of planning is good where teaching is good and care is taken to ensure that curriculum requirements are covered. Objectives are shared effectively with pupils and they are clear about what they have to do.
25. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good. Planning is consistent and most staff are confident at teaching the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Speaking and listening skills are developed well, and reading is very well taught. The pupils' reading skills are good and reading is enjoyed by everyone. Writing skills are taught well and sufficient challenge is provided for the higher-achieving pupils. Work is matched well to pupils' ability and those with SEN are supported well.
26. The teaching of music is of a high quality. In a very good music lesson the pace of learning was brisk and pupils were very involved in their own learning.
27. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and involve pupils well in their learning.
28. Teachers make good use of questions to check out progress or to extend learning. Much of the learning is effective as a result. They use questions to check out learning and understanding well or to extend pupils' knowledge. For example, "What is the difference between 'Fact' and 'Opinion'?" was well defined by pupils in a good Year 4 English lesson.
29. The quality of assessment is good in English, mathematics and science but informal in all other areas. This lack of formal assessment hinders planning the next steps in learning. This is an area of development identified by the school.
30. Where teaching was unsatisfactory there was a slowing in the pace of teaching literacy and numeracy skills and a lack of challenge for pupils of all abilities.

<sup>1</sup>Learning stages set out nationally for children in nurseries and reception classes

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	7 (22%)	13 (41%)	9 (28%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

### The curriculum

**The quality and range of the curriculum are good.** All statutory requirements are met. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good and is valued by pupils and parents. The standard of accommodation and resources is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enrichment of experience through extra-curricular activities.
- Very good Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Very good provision for pupils with SEN.
- The standard of accommodation and resources is good.

### Commentary

31. The Reception class curriculum is very good, with some excellent features, and takes full account of the Early Learning Goals. Children are given a good range of learning opportunities and enjoy visits and visitors. The curriculum is exciting and effective.
32. The curriculum for infant and junior pupils is good. It is broad and balanced with a strong focus on core subjects. Coverage of content is carefully planned and work to develop skills is included. The school improvement plan indicates that continuity in skills is to be further developed. Broad indications of how time should be used are agreed but in some subjects, such as history, there is insufficient monitoring to ensure a consistent approach. The curriculum is inclusive and is equally appropriate for boys and girls. There is appropriate provision for personal, social and health education. Music and PE are particularly well provided for.
33. Planning in core subjects now takes account of differing abilities of pupils, although some staff do not make full use of this. In non-core subjects this differentiated approach is insecure. Good use is made of the National Strategies for Numeracy and Literacy.
34. The curriculum for pupils with SEN is very good. They are given the same broad range of opportunity but their work is carefully matched to their needs by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and class teachers.
35. The curriculum is significantly enriched by the use of visits, including residential trips and an exchange arrangement with France. Pupils have very good opportunities for sport and music and drama. They also have the opportunity to learn French or to go to the Latin club. Clubs are well supported by pupils and parents and often benefit from specialist coaches or tutors.
36. Overall, the quality of the accommodation is good. The building is well maintained and provides adequate space for teaching and learning. The outdoor area provides well for PE and outdoor play and the good-sized hall provides especially well for gymnastics and school assemblies. Resources are generally satisfactory, although the home reading materials are limited in quantity and range. Resources for music and PE are good.

## Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good arrangements to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. In the Reception class, these arrangements are exemplary. The arrangements for admitting children to the Reception class are very good and they are sensitively prepared for the move from Reception to Year 1. Teachers provide pupils with sensitive support and guidance on personal issues. Advice and support for learning is less effective because teachers do not consistently use information gained from assessment to guide pupils' achievement in all subjects. Pupils are well involved in the life of their school; they are consulted and their views are taken seriously.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health, safety and arrangements for child protection are very good and have a high priority.
- Arrangements for induction are very good.
- Support and guidance on any personal issues are readily available and sensitively offered to all pupils.
- Teachers do not use information from assessment sufficiently consistently in order to provide advice and support for learning.

## Commentary

37. **Arrangements to ensure pupils' health, safety and well-being are very good.** Child protection procedures are very clear. First aid is very well organised. Risk assessments are carried out to a very high standard. The whole staff team, including the governors, gives a high priority to the welfare of pupils. In the Reception class, the attention paid to these aspects is exemplary.
38. **Pupils' induction to the Reception class and preparation to enter Year 1 are very good.** Parents and their children are fully involved in the induction process to the Reception class. This means that the children are confident and happy, ready and eager to learn from the start, while their parents are well informed and know how best to help their children. Pupils also receive a thoughtful induction as they leave Reception and enter Year 1 so that they are prepared for the change to the National Curriculum and rise to the new challenges this presents.
39. **Pupils feel safe and happy in school because they know there is always an adult to turn to in times of need.** Teachers and other staff know the pupils very well and use this sensitively to provide support and guidance when needed. Pupils know that any concerns they have will be taken seriously and that action, for example when bullying is reported, is swift and effective. The caring, Catholic ethos, which pervades the school, is translated into thoughtful support and guidance that meets the needs of the individual pupil very well.
40. **The academic guidance is less effective because pupils do not always know how to improve their work.** Teachers assess pupils' work regularly, especially in mathematics, English and science. However, the results of assessment are not used consistently well in all subjects and by all teachers to ensure that pupils have a realistic target to aim for. In particular, marking does not routinely provide pupils with helpful comments to move their learning forward. Although there are examples of good practice, overall this is an area for development.
41. **Pupils' views of their school are sought and they are involved in decisions that affect school life.** The school council is well established and is used effectively to gain pupils' views and ideas for change. Councillors are highly articulate and have a very clear understanding of the best things about their school as well as of the improvements they would like to see. For example, the council recently petitioned the Friends Association for money to

provide a notice board, and they use this very well to publicise their work. They are currently investigating the options for recycling within school.

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

The school benefits from very good links with parents, who support the school very well. Parents are well informed about school life and routines but progress reports do not always indicate where pupils need to improve. Links with the community are largely centred within the parish and are very strong. Links with other schools are good and there are some innovative links developing with local colleges and universities, although their impact is, as yet, limited.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has a very strong, positive relationship with parents, who are extremely supportive of the school and its work.
- Links with the parish community are well established and contribute well to the very good Catholic ethos.
- The school is developing good links with other institutions in order to raise standards further.
- Although the school provides parents with a wide range of useful information, pupils' reports do not consistently indicate areas for improvement or set targets.

### **Commentary**

42. **Parents provide the school with a great deal of practical support and value its work very highly.** The school benefits from a wide range of parental support, both in the classroom, on visits and trips, and at home. Parents are enabled to make a very good contribution to their children's learning at home, especially with reading, through the information and guidance they receive from teachers. Those parents whose children have SEN are very well involved and informed at all stages so that they become true partners in their children's education. The Friends Association organises a range of very well-supported fund-raising and social events, providing the school with considerable additional income. Those parents who made their views known to the inspection team were almost unanimous in the strength of their positive views.
43. **Strong links with the parish underpin the Catholic ethos of the school.** Pupils benefit from the many opportunities they have to visit and attend services at the church as well as from visits to school by the priest and parish representatives. The charity fund-raising undertaken is often in support of local Catholic charities or CAFOD. Parish links are also well used to support the school's relationship with the families.
44. **The school has good links with partner schools and is developing links with colleges and universities to raise standards higher.** There is a strong partnership between the Catholic schools locally, which ensures that pupils make a smooth transition from primary to secondary education. Links with the high school are being developed in ICT so that pupils can benefit from its expertise in this area. The school is bidding to be part of new initiatives that will further develop its work on teaching and learning, so that pupils will be helped to learn in the way best suited to each of them.
45. **Annual reports do not indicate consistently where the areas for improvement are, or how these could be addressed.** Reports provide parents with good information about the work their children have done and the standards they have achieved. However, targets for improvement are set inconsistently and the weaker areas of each pupil's progress are not made sufficiently clear. This means that parents are not always able to provide appropriate support. Other information for parents, such as the prospectus and newsletters, is of a high quality.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The governance of the school is **good**. The headteacher provides **good** leadership and there is effective team spirit among key staff.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership of the headteacher which is motivating teachers and support staff.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The management of the school is good.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator is not fully developed in some areas.

### Commentary

46. The headteacher provides good leadership. He leads the school with the full support and confidence of the governors. In partnership with parents, governors, staff and pupils, he has created a very good, vibrant, positive ethos. All feel involved and valued for their contribution to the life and work of the school. He is well supported by teaching staff and competent teaching assistants. The dedicated and hardworking staff team work well together and are strongly committed to improvement. Most staff are leading their subjects with commitment and enthusiasm. In some of the foundation subjects co-ordinators do not monitor teaching, planning and pupils' learning on a regular basis and so are not sufficiently aware of standards and where improvement is needed. All staff have the capability to be good subject leaders.
47. The governance of the school is good. Governors bring expertise to their roles. They have a good understanding of the work of the school through regular reports from the headteacher and personal visits to see at first-hand. The chair of governors works closely with the headteacher and provides a good steer to the work of the governing body. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and act as a critical friend to the school. They are fully involved in planning and prioritising issues on the school improvement plan. They are becoming more involved in monitoring the work of the school through the school self-evaluation process.
48. The management of the school is good. The day-to-day running of the school is efficient and all of the school family have a clear understanding of their roles.
49. Teachers are well supported by the teaching assistants. The SENCO fulfils her role very well and provision for the SEN pupils is very good. All staff take on responsibilities enthusiastically and work closely together under the guidance of the headteacher. Induction and mentoring systems are good. Performance management procedures and the professional development of staff is effective.
50. Teachers and their teaching assistants form effective teams, making a positive contribution to the learning, attainment and development of pupils. There is an effective team spirit amongst the staff and shared commitment to succeed.

### Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	564,347	Balance from previous year	38,454
Total expenditure	582,665	Balance carried forward to the next	26,892
Expenditure per pupil	2,661		



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

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

The provision in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. It is even better than at the time of the last inspection. Children start school with broadly average attainment. As a result of very good teaching, characterised by very good planning and use of assessment, achievement is very good for children of all ability levels. By the end of Reception standards are good, with most children meeting and exceeding the Early Learning Goals.

- Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good.
  - Children's progress in literacy is excellent.
  - Standards by the end of Reception are good.
  - Pupils achieve very well.
  - Teaching is very good.
51. Children start school in September in the year of their fifth birthday. For the first term they are part-time and this enables the staff to get to know them very well, providing carefully matched activities and support which results in rapid progress. All will be full-time from January. The arrangements for new children are very good; there are strong links with parents and they are closely involved in their children's learning. As a result children are happy. They feel safe and secure. The Foundation Stage staff have great respect for the children and provide excellent role models for co-operation and care for others. The nursery nurse is an essential member of the team and makes a very good contribution to the teaching and learning.
52. Management and leadership of the Foundation Stage are very good. Materials, space, time and equipment are used well to support learning. The co-ordinator has created very productive partnerships with parents and other staff and has very effectively developed the curriculum and assessment. She has a very good understanding of the needs of the children and a vision of what can be achieved. This, with her high expectations, informs and sustains the work. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's achievement is excellent.
- Teaching is excellent.
- Standards are very good.

### **Commentary**

53. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. They are interested in their learning and eager to take part in all activities. They concentrate extremely well. They listened with rapt attention as one of them opened his 'special box' and confidently explained his treasures. The teacher used this activity superbly to enhance language, self-esteem and turn-taking. The atmosphere was one of real excitement and wonder as each item was revealed. The class staff provide excellent role models for the children. They are caring and considerate but also provide high expectations of behaviour. The careful structure of the session provides children with plenty of opportunities to make choices, play alone or with others and to learn to share and co-operate. The children are friendly, co-operative and confident. They are developing good independence such as when they find and eat their own snacks and manage their own clothes and this is an excellent preparation for later learning.

The staff skilfully create a quiet and reflective atmosphere at prayer time, using candles and allowing the children to take turns to prepare the table. This is a good contribution to personal development.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent teaching and learning.
- Very good partnership with parents.
- Excellent leadership and management.

### **Commentary**

54. Children start school with average understanding of books and reading. They enjoy looking at picture books and trying to tell stories. By the end of the Reception year almost all exceed the Early Learning Goals and a significant number are reading simple books independently. This is achieved through excellent teaching which involves parents fully and enables children to develop reading skills and a love of books at a rapid rate. Progress in writing is equally outstanding. Children move from attempting to write their names at the start of the year to most being able to write a simple account unaided by the summer. Some are using capital letters and full stops and all attempt sentences and to spell simple words. Teaching ensures good coverage of skills but also fosters confidence and pleasure through excellent use of emergent writing and opportunities to write as part of play.
55. The development of speaking and listening is integral to all activities in the classroom. Children are encouraged to express their ideas and to listen to one another. They are taught how to ask questions and as a result they were able, after only a few weeks in school, to gain a great deal from a short talk by the road safety officer. Vocabulary is constantly extended through play. This area was a strength at the last inspection but has improved well and is a significant contribution to the good standards achieved higher in the school.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in mathematical development is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well.
- Very good use of assessment.

### **Commentary**

56. Children's mathematical development exceeds that expected for their age. During the inspection they counted in ones backwards and forwards starting from numbers less than 10 and match numerals to their names and patterns of dots. Work from last year indicates that by the summer the majority will be able to add and subtract to 10, name shapes, complete sequences and use comparative language accurately. Teaching is good. Children are engaged by lively activities such as number bingo, matching games and practical tasks. Every opportunity is taken to encourage children to count and order as they look at books, give out materials, and decide if there is a space at an activity. The children are enthusiastic and confident. A clear example of the excellent teaching was when a dropped spoon provided an opportunity for developing problem solving skills. The teacher encouraged the children to try to retrieve it without getting wet hands. She patiently supported their thinking through questioning and prompts and their self-esteem grew visibly when the spoon was removed

from the water. This teaching, which embeds mathematics and problem solving in everyday life, gives a solid foundation for later learning.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make very good progress.
- Teaching is very good.

### **Commentary**

57. Children develop good knowledge and understanding of the world through a range of well-planned activities. They grow grass seeds, learning to provide water and compost, and use magnifying glasses to watch them grow. They learn about traffic and safety by listening, looking at pictures and going on a safety walk with the safety officer and parents. They display good knowledge of safe places to play and what might happen in a hospital. They use the computer independently and use software for number and art. They make models with kits and paper, boxes and glue. They learn about themselves and their families. Teaching is very good and is enhanced by visitors, visits and the use of practical activities.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children move confidently on outdoor play equipment.
- Children use small tools and equipment well.

### **Commentary**

58. Children's physical development is good. On the outdoor play equipment they climb confidently, challenging themselves to go higher or faster. They do so safely and with good guidance and support from their teacher. They use wheeled toys with growing skill. In a very good indoor session they were able to tiptoe and to move at different speeds and in different directions and to balance on the benches. They have frequent opportunities for this large-scale play on good equipment, although timetables and location mean that it is not available in independent play. The good range of construction equipment, small toys and the usual tools ensure that manual skills develop well. Children gained skill with a spoon measuring out compost and water for the seeds.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in creative development is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children sing well and enjoy music.
- Teaching of music is very good.

## Commentary

59. Children's creative development meets expectations for their age and exceeds them in music. They are given a good range of opportunities for role-play. During the inspection a well-equipped hospital area was used to treat all available adults for broken bones and to provide them with X-rays! Children's development is well supported by the involvement of the staff in play activities, following and extending the children's ideas. Provision for music is very good and is supported by specialist teaching. In a short session children learned to use visual and sound cues for playing simple instruments as well as singing and listening with great enjoyment. They develop skills in painting, drawing and other techniques and have opportunities to express their own ideas in a number of media. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

**Provision in English is good.**

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is often good.
- Attainment is above and well above the national averages at seven and at 11 and pupils achieve well in comparison to pupils in other schools.
- Pupils with SEN are well supported and make at least good progress.
- The role of the co-ordinator is effective but needs now to be developed further.
- Marking is variable and does not always give pupils information about how to improve their work.
- Some reading resources are unsatisfactory in quality and quantity.

## Commentary

60. **Standards in English** at the end of 2002 for Year 6 were very high when compared with national and similar schools. At the end of Year 2 standards were high and very high for writing. In reading they were high when compared with all schools but were average when compared to similar schools. Data for 2003 would suggest that standards have been maintained for the 11-year-olds. However, there has been an improvement for seven-year-olds so that it is now above or well above in all areas. Overall there is no significant difference in the standards of boys and girls.
61. At the time of the inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were good at the start of the year in Years 2 and 6. Pupils are well on track to exceed their current targets in each of these subjects in the 2004 national tests. All pupils, including the higher-attaining children and those with SEN, are achieving well in relation to ability. Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are taught well and there is effective use made of assessment to take pupils' learning forward. Where teaching is good or better, the quality of planning is good, expectations are high and work is matched well to pupils' ability. However, where teaching is unsatisfactory, the same work is given to the whole class. Some marking does not give pupils guidance on how to improve their work and on occasions there are pockets of unmarked work in books.
62. **Standards in speaking and listening are good.** Pupils listen carefully to instructions such as in the Year 2 ICT lesson when pupils were given details about how to use a program. They speak confidently in the majority of lessons when they are fully engaged. In Year 1 the pupils were skilfully questioned about the difference between fact and opinion and contributed well to the discussion. They also spoke with confidence in discussions about their work and some older pupils were able to express opinions about authors. They are able to work collaboratively

when given the opportunity to talk with a partner. This was effectively used in a Year 5 English lesson where they discussed their recipe for 'Teachers Pie' and in Year 6 when talking about ICT work. Teachers use good questioning skills so pupils are encouraged to give full answers. The end of year drama production involves all of the older pupils and has impacted in this area.

63. **Pupils make very good progress in reading and standards are overall good.** This is a strength of the school. As they move through the school pupils generally make good progress. Most achieve standards above and well above those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They display enjoyment of books and have good comprehension skills. Most children read fluently and with expression by the end of Year 2 and this is built on well in the junior phase. Parental support for reading is very good and most complete the home-school reading record. This is having a very positive effect on reading standards in the school. However, in the upper school there appears to be no check on the books pupils choose from the class library and as result a minority of pupils had chosen books that were too difficult. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading. However, some of the home reading resources are unsatisfactory in terms of quality and quantity. Although worn out, this is not impacting on the high standards of reading in the school.
64. **Attainment in writing is well above** national averages and those of similar schools. Pupils make overall good progress, although this is variable through the school. Writing has been identified as a priority for the school. There are opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and, in the main, skills are systematically developed. Pupils are given the opportunity to write in a number of other subjects such as history and science. They use word processing very effectively to publish and edit their work and for topics. Staff feel that the writing frames introduced across the curriculum have had an impact, especially for boys. At the beginning of the junior school there is some lack of challenge and under expectation for the majority of pupils. There are other instances seen in books and lessons where pupils with different ability levels are all given the same work.
65. **Handwriting is broadly satisfactory** but again this is a mixed picture linked to teachers' expectations. Spelling is above the expected levels for pupils throughout the school.
66. Teachers' marking is weak and does not support pupils in improving their work. There are a few occasions when comments are good but there are other occasions when work is not systematically marked as a matter of routine. Targets are set for pupils but there currently seems too little emphasis on the achievement of these for them to be effective.
67. Pupils with SEN are well supported in lessons and in small groups. The tasks they are expected to do are challenging and as a result pupils make good progress and this contributes to the overall standards reached by the school in the national tests.
68. Teaching in English lessons is good overall and is particularly effective in the infant department where it is consistently good. In the juniors it is mixed, with some weaker teaching in the lower juniors but good teaching in Years 5 and 6. This results in pupils making overall good progress across the school. Most teachers have good understanding of the subject and teach it well. The learning intention is shared with the pupils and in most instances recorded on the board for pupils to see. A plenary session at the end of lessons consolidates and checks pupils' understanding well. Pupils are almost all well managed and praise is effectively used. As a result pupils are well motivated.
69. The management of English is sound. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has a clear view of the strengths and needs in the subject. She analyses the information from the end of Year 2 and Year 6 tests well and uses it to inform the school improvement plan. The planning is monitored termly and books are also viewed at the end of the year. She has this academic year observed lessons on one occasion and provided feedback to teachers.

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

70. The National Literacy Strategy (NLS) has been implemented but is not always well adapted to meet the needs of all the pupils. There are occasions when higher-achieving pupils could be better challenged in the lower juniors.
71. Pupils have good opportunities to write and develop skills in other curriculum areas such as in science, geography and as a follow-up to visits. ICT is used well to enhance presentation, and programs are used to develop skills. Pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 are given topics to complete and this is supporting the development of English skills. Pupils are given the opportunity to develop subject-specific vocabulary such as in science and ICT.
72. The library is small and pupils have some access to it for research on an individual level but there is no systematic programme for the teaching of library skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### **Provision in mathematics is good.**

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

- Standards are good by the ages of seven and 11.
- Pupils achieve well.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good and they make good progress.
- Marking is variable and gives insufficient feedback to pupils.
- The overall quality of teaching is good but was unsatisfactory in one lesson in the lower juniors.

#### **Commentary**

73. Standards in mathematics are good and results in national tests at ages seven and 11 have improved since the last inspection. Boys and girls achieve well and pupils of all abilities make good progress through the school.
74. When children start school their understanding of mathematics is broadly average. They make good progress in the Reception class and continue to achieve well in the infant classes. In Year 1 pupils develop their skills in number by counting in 2's, learning pairs of numbers to make 10 and how to double, add and subtract. They use everyday objects as measures and begin to understand the properties of shapes. By Year 2 they can use centimetres for measurement and estimation and perform calculations such as  $43+28$  and  $46-27$  mentally.
75. Achievement is satisfactory in the lower juniors and good in the upper juniors. This variability reflects the quality of teaching. In Year 3 they develop mental strategies such as adding 29 by adding 30 and then going back 1. They learn about line symmetry and consolidate work in measures. In Year 4 they convert simple decimals into fractions and look for pattern in their work. They investigated adding odd and even numbers, concluding for themselves that two odd numbers will always give an even result. In Year 5 they use halving and doubling to mentally solve such questions as 'What is half of 126?' They have a variety of strategies and can explain their methods. By Year 6 they are confident with the four rules of number, they measure angles and can construct tables using data which falls into ranges.
76. The overall quality of teaching was good. It was good in half the lessons seen. In these lessons teachers use assessment well to inform their planning and use differentiated activities to ensure that the needs of different pupils are met. This is particularly effective in the work with pupils with SEN and is enhanced by effective use of support teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and are engaged by links between their work and everyday life. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils considering fractions of a

quantity had their interest kindled by trying to establish 1/10 of a £5 note. Teachers have very good relationships with the children and support them in working independently and in groups, which they do well. Pupils in Year 2 worked well in groups to find objects of between 15 and 20cms in length while others estimated the circumference of tins, heads and jars.

77. There was unsatisfactory teaching in one lesson. The pace of the lesson was too slow and the activities were mundane, lacking challenge for many pupils. They did not know what they were expected to learn and rapidly lost interest. Teaching time was lost trying to quieten pupils and to keep them on task. The remaining teaching was satisfactory. The quality of marking varies through the school and rarely gives pupils the information they need to improve their work.
78. The co-ordinator has had a positive impact on the provision. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented throughout the school and the use of the commercial scheme has recently been improved by her introduction of differentiated plans. This will be supported by the recently introduced pupil targets. Following in-service training, oral and mental starters to lessons are mainly lively and plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used to reflect on learning in most lessons. Pupils cover an appropriate range of mathematics, although the heavy use of worksheets in some classes limits opportunities for developing skills in recording and explaining their own thinking. Resources are satisfactory. There is insufficient opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor provision in a structured way which can inform her future support for staff. There has been satisfactory improvement in mathematics since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

79. Opportunities to use mathematics in other curriculum areas are used appropriately, for example in science and DT. Younger children count and perform mathematics tasks in their play.

### **SCIENCE**

**Provision in science is good.**

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

- Pupils make good progress against their prior attainment.
- Attainment is high.
- Investigation skills are good.
- The management of the subject is good.

#### **Commentary**

80. The majority of pupils are working at levels above expectations for their age. Standards were good at the time of the inspection for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. By the age of 11 in the 2002 National Curriculum tests pupils achieved well above average standards in comparison to all schools and similar schools. Boys and girls do equally well and there is appropriate challenge through questioning and tasks for the higher-achieving pupils and those with SEN. Pupils with SEN achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
81. Examination of pupils' work and discussion with them shows that investigative skills are above average. This is an area of improvement as identified in the school improvement plan. Year 6 pupils used ICT well to plan their fair test for different soil types. They knew how to make their test fair and knew how to go about setting up a fair test.
82. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and as a result pupils make good progress. Teachers in the infant and junior stages have a good knowledge about the subject and use this effectively to explain the scientific principles in a way that all pupils can

understand. Particular attention is paid to developing pupils' understanding of scientific vocabulary.

83. The management of the subject is good. With good systems in place to monitor and improve the provision, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

### **Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory with some good elements**

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

- Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes better.
- Range of ICT opportunities good.
- ICT suite is having impact on teaching of skills.
- There are weaknesses in opportunities for modelling.
- There is insufficient use of prior knowledge to move learning on (new pupil record system should help this).
- The role of the co-ordinator underdeveloped.

#### **Commentary**

84. At the time of the last inspection standards were good. Standards seen during this inspection are in line with those expected nationally. Expectations for ICT are now higher than they were in 1998. Overall, with the completion of the ICT suite for teaching skills, standards have been maintained.
85. Teaching in ICT is at least satisfactory with examples of good and very good teaching seen. Pupils are keen and interested in the subject and have very good attitudes.
86. Resources have improved since the last inspection. The ICT suite is effective in focusing the teaching of skills. There is evidence from pupils' books and work that ICT is used well to support learning across the other curriculum areas.
87. All pupils achieve satisfactorily with some achieving well. Many pupils have computers at home and are able to talk with good knowledge about how they use ICT. The teaching of ICT is not always meeting the needs of these more able pupils as there are too few occasions when activities are different for those with more advanced skills. Good practice in this was seen in Year 2.
88. The use of the ICT suite is timetabled so that all pupils have time to develop their skills. In Year 5 pupils were well engaged in using a spreadsheet to enter their information from science and produce charts and graphs about nutrition in food. In some lessons, groups of pupils go into the suite with support staff. There needs to be a careful check that this is not used as a reward for pupils and that there is entitlement for all pupils. There also needs to be some review of the timetable so that pupils with SEN in Year 2 do not regularly miss time in the suite.
89. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic. She has recently introduced a pupil tracking record and has supported staff in its implementation. However, most of this has taken place after school and no time has been set aside for her to fully monitor and evaluate the subject. This is an area that needs development if standards are to lift. She has been instrumental in the appointment of the technician who visits school weekly to ensure that all machines are functioning and relieves the co-ordinator of this task.



90. The co-ordinator has contributed well to the school improvement plan and the school recognises the need to develop aspects of control and modelling and multimedia presentations. The inspection would support these as priorities. There is a governor linked to ICT who supports the development of this area.
91. Resources have improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has funding but as yet does not have overall management of how it is to be spent. The co-ordinator needs to be enabled to develop her role so that monitoring, evaluation and the identification of need is an integral part of it.

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

92. Satisfactory and sometimes good examples of ICT use were found across the curriculum in the work scrutiny. Paint programs had been used to produce pictures in the style of Kandinsky and Mondrian. Graphs and charts were produced to support mathematics and science. Word processing had been used to enhance work in English such as for posters or extended writing.
93. The Cyber café run twice weekly for junior pupils is an opportunity to develop skills in ICT. Pupils report that they had been able to use the Internet for research and e-mail.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **Provision in design and technology is good**

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

- 'Design Week' in June resulted in a high profile for subject.
- Finished products are of good quality.
- Range of materials and tools used is good.
- Role of co-ordinator needs to be developed.
- Timing of design and DT needs to be reviewed and secured across year groups.

#### **Commentary**

94. No lessons were observed in DT. Observations of pupils work and displays around the school indicate that standards are good in both the juniors and the infants.
95. Evidence from the 'Design' week held in June 2003 shows good quality design and product. This was supported by an artist working in the school who has a design background. There was good evidence of progression across the school.
96. Younger pupils had completed work on puppets and had joined materials with sewing, glue, tape and paper fasteners. Work from Year 3 showed pupils' ability to use pneumatics to make moving monsters. In Year 5 pupils had made musical instruments and were able to talk about how they had refined their plans because the card was not strong enough for the drum they were making.
97. Pupils had used a variety of joining materials such as a glue gun, nails and staples. Year 6 had been involved in designing and making the stage set and costumes for a production. A video showed how successful they had been in this.
98. The co-ordinator has only been in post since January. She is enthusiastic and has already raised the profile of DT in the school following an early audit. She has been able to monitor the end products of the lessons but as yet has not been involved in any other monitoring. The role

needs to be developed so that she is able to impact on teaching and learning across the school.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **GEOGRAPHY**

**Provision in geography is satisfactory.**

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Local and further afield visits enhance the subject.
- Mapping skills are taught systematically.
- Allocation of time needs to be reviewed.
- Marking is inconsistent.

#### **Commentary**

99. Standards of attainment are in line with those found nationally. This is a similar picture to that found in the previous inspection. No teaching was observed in geography during the week of the inspection.
100. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 show that they have secure geographical knowledge. In Year 2 discussions with pupils indicate that they have good knowledge of the local area and are able to talk about the changes that have taken place recently. They were able to compare and contrast places they had visited or knew about such as Malta, Devon and Ireland. They were able to comment on the weather and the seaside and compare and contrast at an appropriate level. In Year 6 the pupils talked about the visits they had been on to local areas and about a contrasting locality in West Africa. They had used ICT for developing mapping skills.
101. Analysis of pupils' work shows that the pupils in Year 6 attain satisfactory standards. They cover a range of work and are introduced to a geographical vocabulary such as settlements and climate in Year 5. However, the quantity of work in some books is small, suggesting that insufficient time given to geography. Some year groups block the curriculum termly whilst others alternate with history weekly.
102. The marking of the work in the main is a tick, with few comments to support the pupils in improving their work. This is an area that needs some development.
103. The co-ordinator supports staff well and tries to ensure that they have suitable resources. She has insufficient time to monitor the subject, and planning and the quality of teaching is not systematically monitored. This needs to be developed in order to ensure curriculum coverage and to improve standards in the subject. The school improvement plan has identified the need to develop vision and values and global dimensions in geography.
104. There is a small annual budget but this has been supplemented from other sources such as parents' fund-raising events. Good resources have been purchased such as aerial maps and programs for use in ICT.

## **HISTORY**

**Provision in history is satisfactory.**

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

- Pupils enjoy history.

- Pupils develop a good knowledge of the periods which they study.
- Management and leadership are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils are not clear about what they need to do to improve their skills.

### **Commentary**

105. Standards in history are in line with those expected at the ages of seven and 11. All pupils make satisfactory progress. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. There has been no recent monitoring of history since the co-ordinator left the school.
106. Coverage of the knowledge base is good. Pupils in Year 2 have factual knowledge of earlier times, such as, 'The Romans used to live in Chelmsford and that was after the extinct animals.' They can explain that clothes used to be different in the past. Year 6 pupils spoke confidently about Ancient Greece and could explain why they would prefer to live in Athens or Sparta. They explained how Greek words and ideas are used today and suggested that the Athenians went to war to extend their empire to gain land and resources. They can explain how to find out about the past.
107. Teaching in the two lessons seen was satisfactory and teachers used questioning well to encourage pupils to clarify their ideas. Teachers had good knowledge of the subject. Examples of previous work suggest that much use is made of worksheets, with pupils of all abilities completing the same task. Marking offers praise for effort rather than helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their understanding.
108. Pupils spoke about history lessons with enthusiasm. Role-play, trips and visitors make a valuable contribution to learning. Resources are satisfactory and are enhanced by loans. There is a limited supply of history reference books in the library. ICT is used to support learning, for example CD-ROMs for research.
109. Leadership and management of history are insecure because the subject is without a co-ordinator. Although the study units have been allocated to each year group, the organisation of time and delivery is left to class teachers. This leads to inconsistency and inhibits continuity in the teaching of skills. There has been no recent monitoring of history. However, it was monitored on a regular basis until the co-ordinator left the school.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **ART AND DESIGN**

**Provision for art and design is good.** Standards reached by the seven-and 11-year-olds are above the level expected for pupils of similar ages. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

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

- The curriculum is rich and stimulating.
- Pupils enjoy their art and design and they use a wide range of skills and techniques to produce work of better than expected standard.
- Teaching is good and pupils benefit from the regular input in teaching from an artist.
- There is no formal monitoring or assessment.

### **Commentary**

110. The curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and rich. All teachers have a good subject knowledge and understanding and pupils benefit from the regular visits from a local artist, especially in pottery and clay work.

111. Standards are good for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils and all pupils, including those with SEN, make good progress. There is a good range of creative opportunities available to pupils. They are competent when using different media, and are confident in evaluating their own work and other pupils' work. This was well demonstrated in a Year 3 lesson on 'Portraits'. The teacher had planned the lesson well. Children co-operated well in pairs as they evaluated their own and their partner's work. The teacher skilfully enabled all pupils to share the strengths and areas for development in their work with one another at the end of the lesson.
112. The quality of teaching is good. The work in Year 1 is built on successfully in Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. There is a good range of work on display throughout the school which shows the influence of other artists' work, such as the Year 1 picture completed in the style of Mondrian. Pupils confidently produce pictures in the style of Paul Klee and Georges Seurat, before comparing and contrasting the styles. Their clay work is of a particularly high quality, which demonstrates the very good input from staff.
113. The subject has a firm place in the curriculum. The co-ordinator monitors standards, teaching and learning on an informal level, but has identified the need to assess pupils' work more formally.

## **MUSIC**

**Provision for music is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in singing are good and lessons are well planned.
- Teaching is very good.
- Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The co-ordinator provides very good, clear educational direction for the subject.
- Assessment procedures are informal.

### **Commentary**

114. Standards are good for Year 2 pupils and very good for Year 6 pupils. Music is well planned for within the curriculum. In lessons, and in assemblies, pupils sing tunefully and with real expression. Pupils are encouraged to sing with feeling and to fit the mood for the purpose. For example, in a Year 6 music lesson pupils put enthusiasm and feeling into their interpretation of 'I'm the King of the Swingers' from the 'Jungle Book.' They can sing tunefully in two parts to percussion accompaniment and compose tunes and write lyrics. Music is used well in lessons and in assemblies. Valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to identify instruments and discuss the mood created.
115. The quality of teaching is very good. In both lessons seen, standards were above expectations as a result of very good teaching by the specialist teacher and the support she receives from enthusiastic and talented staff in the school. Standards are also enhanced by the high profile that music has in the school, and pupils' obvious enjoyment of the subject. All pupils, including those with SEN, make good progress.
116. Their appreciation of music is enhanced by well-chosen pre-recorded music, linked carefully to assembly themes, which is played as they lead in and out of the hall. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They co-operate well in composition work. Cross-curricular links are carefully planned for through literacy, numeracy, history, geography, art, ICT and PSHE.

117. The co-ordinator provides very good clear educational direction for the subject. There are ten extra-curricular music clubs, and former pupils have produced a video of their performance of 'Macbeth' which is currently used in a secondary English lesson. The recent production of 'Robin Hood' was very lively and included all members of Year 6.
118. There is a range of informal assessment procedures in place, which the co-ordinator uses well to plan the next steps in learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

**Provision for physical education is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are good by the ages of seven and 11.
- Pupils achieve well and are enthusiastic.
- The curriculum is broad and enriched by a very good range of after-school activities.
- Pupils have access to good-quality coaching.

### **Commentary**

119. Standards are above expectations in both the infants and the juniors and pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were in line with expectations. This is due to improved teaching and secure management and leadership.
120. All pupils, including those with SEN, take part in a variety of physical and sporting activities including gymnastics, moving to music, and outdoor games. Boys and girls take part equally. Younger pupils have swimming lessons at a local pool until they have established a basic competency in the water. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils developed their physical control and co-ordination as they moved from one balanced position to another. They all improved as the lesson progressed through good direct teaching and supportive comments on their performance. In games, Year 5 pupils developed skills in rugby. In an energetic session they improved skills in passing, swerving and running for a try and developed their understanding of the game. The very effective coaching given enabled pupils of all ability to improve and to enjoy the lesson.
121. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical activity and explain how they enjoy sports in and after school. They take part in lessons with zest. All the teaching seen was good. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers have good understanding of how to develop pupils' skills in a structured way. As a result of good teaching they make good progress in developing and applying their skills to team games. Teaching is further enhanced by the involvement of visiting coaches from a number of professional sporting organisations such as Colchester United Football Club and Essex County Cricket Club. Sport is clearly seen as a major contributor to a healthy lifestyle and lessons include good warm-up and cool-down sessions. Pupils enjoy the exertion and make good progress in developing games and gymnastics skills due to well-structured lessons and good support from their teachers.
122. There is a very effective programme of extra-curricular sport including gymnastics, cricket, rugby, football and other team games. The programme changes over the year and has also included dance and short tennis. Many pupils achieve high standards and enjoy competitions. This makes a good contribution to their personal and social development.

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

**Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision is planned well into the curriculum.
- Cross-curricular links are clearly identified.

### **Commentary**

123. The arrangements for personal, social and health education (PSHE) including drugs education are very good. The programme of work is taught through circle time, religious education and through subjects such as music and science. Pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet in science, for example, and about the effect of exercise on their bodies in both science and PE. The arrangements for sex and drug education are good. Through music pupils learn a good range of songs which build up their self-esteem and friendships, for example 'You are a star,' 'Build up,' 'As we go' and 'You are just the same.' An exciting song unit in Years 5 and 6 explores social influences and pupils learn how music affects the way in which people feel and act. PSHE also makes valuable links to history in exploring changing times and social interests and conditions.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
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	1
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
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	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*