

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Portsmouth

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 116385

Headteacher: Miss C Hobbs

Lead inspector: Kevin Hodge

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> –9<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 263584

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:	Church Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	238
School address:	Cottage View Landport Portsmouth Hampshire
Postcode:	PO1 1PX
Telephone number:	023 9282 1055
Fax number:	023 9281 5056
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Egan
Date of previous inspection:	19 <sup>th</sup> October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school was built in 1980 and is situated near the centre of Portsmouth. It is of average size and the number of boys and girls is approximately the same. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than average and the socio-economic background of the pupils is generally below average. When they start school, pupils have a wide range of ability levels, but are below average. Relatively few pupils are from ethnic minorities or speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is approximately 17 per cent, similar to the national average. There are no pupils who currently have a statement of educational needs, although one has been applied for. The number of pupils who joined the school at a different time from the majority of their class varies between year groups, but is broadly average overall. The school is part of the government's *Excellence in Clusters* initiative; it has received from the DfES a school improvement award and two school achievement awards, the most recent in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18466	Kevin Hodge	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English; History; Geography; Physical education.
9388	Anthony Mundy	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
26292	Helen Mundy	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Science; Art and design; Music.
20832	Mohinda Gadwalia	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Design and technology; English as an additional language; Special educational needs; Personal, social and health education.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St John's school provides a good standard of education** and good value for money. The headteacher leads the school very well. The youngest pupils generally achieve well, except in two areas of learning. The pupils generally achieve and learn well throughout and the oldest pupils achieve very well in key subjects. The ethos of the school is very caring, inclusive and highly focused on the individual. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) learn and achieve effectively.

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

- The leadership shown by the headteacher is very clear, determined and innovative.
- By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics, science and ICT skills.
- The Nursery provides a good start for children.
- The caring, Catholic ethos of the school is promoted very well.
- Staff expect high standards of conduct from all, and they lead by example.
- The quality of teaching is good, although there are variations between year groups and subjects.
- The pupils in the Reception class do not achieve well enough in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in the creative aspects of their early learning goals.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good.
- Assessment arrangements are not thorough enough in the Reception class.
- Attendance is below the national averages despite efforts to improve it.

Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. The co-ordination of subjects is now satisfactory and a scheme of work in place for the subjects identified. Improvement in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) has been good. The school has received DfES improvement awards, along with two achievement awards in 2002/3, for its success in raising standards. The governors have addressed the issues relating to the school prospectus and annual general report.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**The pupils achieve well overall**, given their lower-than-average starting point when they enter the school. Children in the Foundation Stage do not reach the expected standards in two areas of learning, but in the remainder they achieve well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in all subjects and reach expected standards in their reading, writing and mathematics. Their speaking and listening is particularly good. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in English, mathematics, science, and ICT are better than those expected. In English, pupils read widely, and write with flair and imagination. Pupils achieve very well in their number skills and are very confident when working out problems. In science, the standards that pupils reach are better than expected. In ICT, pupils achieve well and reach good standards.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

In the national tests for 2003 for the oldest pupils, the results declined from the previous year in all three subjects, however the pupils' results matched those reached nationally. Compared to similar schools, their English and mathematics results were above average. Since 2000 there has been a gradual rising trend in the results, but there have been some yearly variations due to the nature of each year group. The 2002 year group, for example, contained some particularly able pupils. Pupils who have SEN, or who are from ethnic minorities, achieve well in all areas.

### **Pupils' personal development is very good and they have very good attitudes to school.**

Pupils' behaviour is generally of a very good standard. The pupils in the Nursery behave very well. The vast majority of pupils respect and like their teachers, who are good role models for them. The school council meets regularly and pupils have a variety of different responsibilities. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is very good.** Aspects of their cultural development are comparatively less well developed. The attendance rate is below the national average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good overall** and meets the needs of all pupils, irrespective of ability, gender or ethnic background. **The teaching is good overall.** It is consistently stronger in the Nursery class and in the oldest year groups. This helps pupils achieve well in many areas of learning and in subjects. Some very good teaching was seen in Years 1, 2 and 3 and some excellent teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6. The quality of teaching sometimes varies, however, according to subject or year group. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards and the computer suite to enhance learning and promote ICT skills in other subjects. Assessment procedures are generally satisfactory, but in the Reception class insufficient use is made of assessment information. Curriculum planning and provision is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is extended by a number of activities after school, including sports and music clubs. Very good quality accommodation and good resources support learning effectively. Links with parents and the community are good overall. The school develops useful and productive links with other local schools and colleges.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The management of the school is good. The governors give satisfactory support and challenge. The governors ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements. The headteacher gives the school a very good sense of direction and purpose. She is ably supported by her management team. The school is keen to improve and the raising of pupils' achievement has been tackled particularly well. The governors, several of whom are new, support the work of the school appropriately. The governors oversee the effective use of the school's finances particularly well. Although the school currently has a higher than average surplus of funds, these have been earmarked for substantial improvement projects.

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

The vast majority of parents believe the school provides a good education for their children. The parents at the pre inspection meeting were supportive, and they appreciated particularly the care and the individual attention the school provides. The pupils enjoy their school very much, and they like the firm and fair approach of the teachers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve Foundation Stage pupils' experience and achievement in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Improve assessment arrangements in the Reception class, so that progress can be assessed more rigorously.
- Although teaching is good overall, improve the consistency of teaching across subjects and between year groups.
- Seek improvement in attendance to bring it nearer to national averages.

*Elements of these improvements have been identified in the schools planning.*



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve well in the Nursery, but less so in the Reception class. In two areas of learning they do not achieve well enough. The majority are on course to reach the expected standards in nearly all the areas of learning. Throughout the school, the pupils achieve well, and reach the expected standards. In Years 3 to 6 they achieve particularly well in English, mathematics, science and ICT work and exceed the expected standards by the time they leave the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- By the time they leave the school, pupils exceed the expected standards in English, mathematics and science and they achieve very well.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well developed for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and they achieve very well.
- Foundation Stage pupils do not achieve well enough in their creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

#### Commentary

1. The children come into the school with varying levels of ability, but are generally below average. This view is confirmed by the school's own analysis. Pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve well in most areas of learning. Many are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals, but their progress is not capitalised upon in the Reception class, as the activities do not build upon the good Nursery provision. They are unlikely to reach the expected standards in the knowledge and understanding of the world and in the creative development.

2. In English, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and reach the expected standards. They listen carefully, speak confidently, and develop their writing appropriately. Their reading skills are developed systematically and they enjoy reading. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well in reading, speaking and listening. The pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects such as science, geography, and history. The tables indicate the pupils' results slightly dipped in some areas from the previous year, but they generally matched or exceeded the national average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (15.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.8 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.7 (17.5)	16.3(16.5)

*There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27 (28.5)	26.8(27)
Mathematics	27.2(28.4)	26.8(26.7)
Science	28.8(30.1)	28.6(28.3)

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

3. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and reach the expected standards by the time they are seven, and their progress increases and by the time they are 11, they exceed the expected standard. This is reflected in their national test results in 2003. In science, findings from the inspection indicate that pupils reach standards above those expected by the time they leave the school.

4. The trend in results for Year 2 pupils has kept pace with the national trend, but the results for the oldest pupils were slightly above the national trend. In comparison with similar schools, whose pupils attained similar results in Year 2, the oldest pupils compare better in English and mathematics.

5. In ICT, the pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, and their progress increases so that by the end of Year 6, they reach better than the expected standards and achieve very well as a result of good teaching and learning and very good resources. In the remaining subjects, where these were inspected in detail or sampled, pupils reach the expected standards and achieve well.

6. No significant differences in current achievement between year groups were noted during the inspection, although the good achievement found in the Nursery is not capitalised upon in the Reception class. This has been partly due to some staffing difficulties, but is also connected to the planning for activities in this class. Provision for pupils with SEN is good, which is a similar picture to the last inspection. This is due to the provision of well-thought-out activities and the support of teaching assistants who often lead small groups. Other groups of pupils, such as some pupils in Year 5, are given more specialist help on a daily basis. There are no significant differences in either attainment or achievement between girls and boys, but in one mathematics session, the grouping of pupils whose first language is not English with pupils who have SEN, hindered the progress of the former.

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

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to learning, and their behaviour **is very good**. Pupils' personal development is **very good** because the school provides **very good** spiritual, moral, and social education. The standards noted during the previous inspection have been maintained.

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

- Pupils enjoy lessons, and the variety of informal activities and clubs.
- Pupils receive good support and advice.
- Relationships are very good among pupils, and between pupils and staff.
- International and multicultural contacts are underdeveloped.
- Attendance is below the national average for similar schools.

### **Commentary**

7. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They are polite and cheerful, and are rarely involved in disputes. In lessons, they concentrate for extended periods, and persevere with their work. Behaviour is usually very good in classrooms, although some teachers are not always consistent in their management of pupils who call out or interrupt. Pupils have no concerns about playground bullying. They know that incidents are very rare and are quickly and effectively countered by the headteacher and staff. Children in the Foundation Stage listen carefully to adults, and respond confidently to questions and instructions. Their behaviour is always at least very good, and is often excellent.

8. The attendance rate has been declining for several years. A small improvement noted in the current year will not significantly affect the school's low position when measured against the national average for similar schools. A small number of families resist the headteacher's best

efforts to ensure their children’s regular attendance, and a much larger number disregard appeals not to take holidays in term time. The school monitors attendance, although initiatives to improve it have not been successful with all families. Staff and governors are not fully aware of the higher figures attained in most other schools.

9. The school very successfully develops pupils’ personal qualities. In assemblies, they follow the staff’s good examples when praying and singing. Most pupils have very good understanding of spiritual values. For example, in a very good meditation session seen in Year 6, the school’s part-time chaplain led them to appreciate their own qualities and to define how those qualities might be used to help others. As ‘critical friends’, they evaluate and improve each other’s class work. Pupils in all year groups enthusiastically support local and national charities. They have good understanding of western culture, and are respectful of other cultures, but their multi-cultural and multi-ethnic experiences are more limited. They have no contact with schools in developing countries to enable them to compare their own experiences and lifestyles with difficult conditions elsewhere. A very good relationship is established with the cathedral, and clergy are frequent and welcome visitors.

10. In lessons, teachers often lead pupils in successful discussions of moral values within themes of friendship and difference. In a good English lesson seen in Year 4, pupils learned to understand some of the evils of the apartheid system in South Africa. The staff are very good role models, and the consistently good relationships between staff and pupils promote strong moral values in all year groups. All pupils understand and apply concepts of right and wrong. In the Foundation Stage, children know that all living creatures must be respected, including worms and woodlice! A very good programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) guides pupils in understanding and applying concepts of right and wrong. They rarely need reminding of the school’s brief rules for behaviour. They are co-operative, friendly and respectful to their peers and teachers, and are relaxed and adept with visitors. In all year groups, boys’ and girls’ interest in a wide range of dance, performance, sport and other activities enables them to work amicably together, without tension or embarrassment.

**Attendance**

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2003)***

<b>Authorised absence</b>	
School data	6.7
National data	5.4

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
School data	0.3
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 quality of education is **good overall** and pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are well provided for. The teaching is stronger in some classes and year groups than others. Overall, it is good throughout the school. The curriculum is planned well for the key subjects such as English, mathematics, science and ICT. Activities such as PSHE are well conceived and fit in well with the caring ethos of the school. The care of pupils is very good. The school develops good links with parents and good links with other institutions.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good overall**. In Years 3 to 6 and in the Nursery, it is **good** and in Years 1 and 2 and in the Reception class, it is **satisfactory overall**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour.
- Time is used very effectively in all year groups.
- Some excellent teaching was seen in mathematics for the oldest pupils.
- Where they are available, electronic whiteboards are used well to enhance learning.
- Assessment is consistently good in Years 3 to 6.
- Assessment arrangements in the Reception class are not well implemented.

11. The quality of teaching is good overall, and has improved since the previous inspection. In this inspection, it was good or better in nearly two thirds of the lessons seen, including two lessons which were excellent. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, ICT, and in the Nursery. In other subjects teaching is often good, but is less consistent. Where teaching is excellent, work is closely matched to pupils' needs and provides rigorous challenges for all. In these lessons, teachers often use technical vocabulary to develop pupils' understanding of advanced concepts.

12. Where teaching is good or very good, learning objectives are always displayed and explained to pupils as lessons begin. In Years 3 to 6, teachers have good subject knowledge. Most lessons are interesting and fast paced, and pupils are rarely distracted from their work. Occasionally, teachers respond inconsistently when pupils call out answers or talk among themselves. In the single unsatisfactory lesson seen during the inspection, progress was limited because the teacher was uncertain about how to improve pupils' dance skills and expectations were too low. Additionally, pupils were continually withdrawn in groups for an activity unrelated to the lesson. In some lessons, teachers make good use of technology, in particular electronic whiteboards, which add an extra dimension to lessons and enhance learning. In two excellent lessons in Years 5 and 6, the teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics was exceptionally good and the pupils made significant strides in their learning. The combination of examples, practical work and challenge increased the pupils' learning significantly.

13. The best teaching attempts to meet the needs of all pupils both the very able and those with SEN. Year 5, for example, has been identified as needing extra help and support and each morning some of them are taught in smaller, more specialised groups. Teaching assistants are fully involved in most lessons, and contribute significantly to the progress of pupils with SEN. Pupils with English as an additional language are fully integrated and they usually achieve well.

14. Where teaching is no more than satisfactory, the pace of lessons is noticeably slower, and teachers' questions are not directed at individual pupils; similar work is provided for pupils of all abilities, and low-attaining pupils are simply expected to do less of it

15. When children enter the Nursery, their attainment is below national expectations. They quickly develop very good attitudes to learning, and all try hard to do their best work. Consequently, their achievement is good and, by the end of Year 2, standards in English, mathematics and science

reach national standards. Pupils' workbooks reflect the quality of teaching seen during the inspection: most are neat, and most work is completed. Pupils are trusted to work independently and in groups, and boys and girls willingly co-operate in a wide range of activities.

16. Assessment procedures are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but some individual assessments in Year 2 have been curtailed because assessment procedures have not been used sufficiently well. Assessment is good in Years 3 - 6, where teachers have good knowledge of individual strengths and weaknesses in English and mathematics. In the Reception class, assessment procedures are not used sufficiently well to assess the progress of the pupils. Teachers' marking is consistently good in English and mathematics and relates well to the skills being learnt. Class targets are reviewed half-terminally, and individual targets are included in teachers' annual written reports to parents.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2(5%)	8 (21%)	14 (36%)	13 (35%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

**THE CURRICULUM**

The school provides broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements in Years 1 to 6. Provision for enrichment activities is good. Aspects of planning in the Reception class do not reflect the needs of the pupils. The school has very good accommodation and good resources.

**Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Curricular provision in English, mathematics and science is good.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) forms an integral part of teaching and learning in other subjects.
- The curriculum is enriched through extra-curricular provision.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good.
- The planning of activities in the Reception class does not always match pupils' needs.
- Accommodation and resources provide good support for pupils' learning.
- Provision for the PSHE of pupils is good.

**Commentary**

17. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. As at the time of the previous inspection, it is broad and balanced. Links between subjects and common themes are well developed. Information and communication technology (ICT) is integrated into teaching and learning throughout the school. Schemes of work for music, physical education and history are now in place.

18. In recent years, the school has focused much of its energy into providing an exciting curriculum in English, mathematics, science and ICT. This has been successful, and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have helped to improve standards, particularly in Years 4 to 6. Planning in mathematics has focused strongly on developing calculation strategies and solving problems. English activities are well planned and often linked to other subjects such as history, science, and geography. The development of skills, for example in ICT, also features highly. The activities planned in the Reception class do not fully reflect the needs and the age of the pupils. For example, resources are not always fully to hand. Opportunities to extend the pupils creativity and exploration are often too structured.

19. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, irrespective of ability, race or gender, and all have equal access to it. Provision for pupils with SEN is good and, in addition, they have access to specialist, one-to-one teaching, as well as good support within classes. Planning for pupils for

whom English is not their first language is usually effective. Strategies such as talking to partners contribute effectively to these pupils' learning of English.

20. Parents appreciate the good range of activities which enrich the curriculum. They include: African art week, a music festival, a science fair, music performances, and a drama company performance of *Oliver Twist*. The range of visits and visitors is extensive and includes a theatre visit, a farm visit, children's University and a book award drama performance. Some pupils attend Pompey Study Centre for two hours for five weeks as part of 'Playing for Success'. Some of these activities are supported under the government's 'Excellence in Clusters programme'. Visits to art galleries and other cultural sites are relatively rare, which limits pupils' cultural development. The school provides a good range of after school sports activities such as football, netball, and hockey, as well as music clubs for flute, recorders and clarinet. An 'integrated learning system' before and after school and at lunchtime is improving pupils' ability in English. A family-learning programme, praised highly by a local educational authority review, is a very useful initiative to help parents assist their children's learning.

21. Accommodation and resources are very good. The building is kept in very good decorative order and is pleasant for teaching and learning. The classrooms are spacious and well organised. There is a separate good-sized and well-organised music room. Specific areas for art and cookery are well used. The ICT suite is of spacious, though it becomes very hot during sunny days. The school has plans to install air-conditioning to remedy the situation. The school also makes good use of facilities in the neighbouring secondary school, and some of the secondary staff visit the school to demonstrate teaching and learning in physical education, for example. Resources are good in most subjects. Teachers and support staff are well matched to the needs of the curriculum and learning needs of pupils.

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

**Very good** procedures ensure that arrangements for child protection, and health and safety are of a high standard. The caring environment has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. The school provides **good** support, advice and guidance for pupils, and informally monitors their personal development. These standards maintain the quality noted during the previous inspection.

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

- Teachers and other adults know the pupils well, and respond quickly to their needs.
- The headteacher is very approachable, caring and experienced.
- The school values pupils' views, and often acts upon their suggestions.

### **Commentary**

22. Very good procedures have been established for child protection and pupils' welfare. Care is good in the Foundation Stage, where staff are always attentive to children's needs. However, the Foundation Stage outdoor play area and equipment are shared with pupils in other year groups, sometimes to the detriment of the youngest children. Care for pupils is generally good at lunchtime, although midday assistants are not always effectively guided or deployed in the playground. Pupils eating outdoors at picnic tables in fine weather are protected from the sun by colourful parasols. The school's health and safety policy is adapted from the local authority's recommended policy, including procedures for risk assessments and ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out-of-school visits. One member of staff is fully qualified in first aid. The school and grounds are commendably clean and well maintained. The recent subsidence in the playground has been fenced off appropriately and poses no apparent risks to health and safety.

23. Pupils are relaxed and very happy in the school community. They receive very good individual care from the headteacher and staff, with additional regular support from an experienced counsellor. All adults listen carefully to pupils, and value their comments and opinions. They have good

knowledge and understanding of the personal development of individuals, although little information is formally recorded. Teachers encourage the school council's initiatives and, whenever practicable, implement its suggestions. A good induction system quickly settles children into the Reception class. Pupils joining other year groups soon make friends in the welcoming school community.

24. The school generally makes good use of academic assessment information. All teachers maintain very good, detailed, records of pupils' progress in English and mathematics, and good records in science. Satisfactory records of progress are maintained in other subjects. In the Reception class, assessment has not been used effectively enough to plan pupils' work and gauge progress. In classes, teachers guide the progress of different groups of pupils towards agreed, half-termly targets. All pupils, including those with SEN, understand their targets for attainment and behaviour. Parents are informed of targets, and many parents contribute to their children's learning at home and school.

25. Pupils in all year groups enthusiastically collect reward stars for effort and good behaviour. Sustained good work and personal qualities are rewarded with merit certificates at celebration assemblies, when parents are invited to applaud their children's successes.

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

The school has **good** links with parents, the local community and other schools. These standards maintain the quality noted during the previous inspection.

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

- The school offers parents numerous opportunities for involvement in their children's education.
- Teachers' annual reports to parents are very informative.
- The school has a successful family learning programme in place.
- Some parents do not respond to the school's efforts to encourage their involvement.

### **Commentary**

26. Parents' views were very positive at the pre-inspection meeting, and were confirmed by similar responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Pupils benefit from good relationships between parents and teachers. Some parents and friends provide consistent, valuable help in lessons to groups of pupils and to individuals, but the school has not recently enquired if parents have skills or interests to broaden the curriculum. The reconstituted parents and friends association will further aid social and educational links. A very good parent-and-pupil learning programme welcomes up to 25 families in each term of the school year. On completion of the ten-week programme, parents receive a special certificate at school assembly, presented individually by their own children. Pupils benefit from learning with their parents, and a successful return to learning has stimulated some parents to apply for college courses.

27. Parents are well informed of the school's routines and expectations when their children enter the Reception class, or join other year groups. Each term, teachers provide detailed over-views of the curriculum to help parents monitor and support their children's learning at home. Teachers' annual written reports are of very good quality, showing clearly what pupils know, understand and can do, and suggesting next steps for improvement. At two consultation evenings each year, parents are informed clearly and in detail of their children's progress. Parents who do not attend

are counselled and offered alternative appointments. Regular newsletters are informative about events and important dates. The school prospectus conforms to legal requirements, and the 2003 governors' annual report conforms generally, though it does not include all the required information about facilities for disabled pupils.

28. Occasional visitors to the school include authors and artists. Regular visitors include ministers of religion, representatives of the police and fire services, nurses, Pompey football coaches and a water-safety specialist. Pupils regularly visit the cathedral, and other local places of interest and, in Year 6, they enjoy a short residential visit. The school fulfils its allotted role in a local consortium, and maintains good links with secondary schools to ensure that pupils transfer with minimum stress at the end of Year 6. Each year, student teachers and secondary school students benefit from effective mentoring at St. John's, and make valuable contributions to school life.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the school is **very good**. The management of the school is **good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

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

- The headteacher leads the school with vision and creativity.
- The management of daily routines is orderly and effective.
- The financial management of the school is good.
- Senior staff are effective in promoting the ethos of the school.
- The drive to raise the achievement of pupils is determined and successful.

### **Commentary**

29. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are committed to improvement, raising achievement and promoting the Catholic ethos of the school. The DfES have recognised this, giving a 'school improvement award' and two 'achievement awards' in 2002 and in 2003. Several issues were identified in the last inspection prior to the headteacher's appointment. The drive to build upon those issues, along with others identified, has led to the school making good improvements in several areas, not least in the achievement of pupils, the links made with parents, and significant improvements to classrooms and other aspects of the building.

30. The drive to raise standards generally has been successful, particularly when compared to similar schools. The results are consistently higher, particularly by the time the pupils leave the school. The initial indications from the latest results in 2004 for the oldest pupils are very positive. All pupils are believed to have reached the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. The deputy headteacher, who was recently seconded to an advisory post within the local authority, has contributed to the drive to raise achievement. The school has also focused upon assessment procedures and has been a part of the national 'assessment for learning' project. This had led to changes in classroom management and improved the way pupils learn. For example, the pupils are given more thinking time before answering and are given more information about their progress. The wider aspects of self-evaluation of school performance such as test results and monitoring of pupils' progress is good. Monitoring by co-ordinators is less systematic, and not always sufficiently developed, particularly in securing more consistent teaching both for individuals and within year groups. In September, the management roles of some staff are changing and their roles have been clearly defined. Aspects of curriculum organisation are also changing which will enable staff to have some specified and regular planning time during the day.

31. The headteacher manages the school enthusiastically. The daily routines are well established and low key. The headteacher has high expectations and promotes an effective ethos for learning throughout the school. Her role as a consultant headteacher for the diocese and for the national



consultant leadership programme is combined well with her day-to-day responsibilities. The staff are managed and guided sensitively, but with purpose and drive. They work closely as a team, set high standards for themselves in most areas and relate very well to the pupils. In nearly all classes, the pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected. The teachers, office staff, teaching assistants and site officer work hard to set good examples. The teaching assistants also make an effective contribution with pupils in small-group work and by supporting them within classes. The school has an appropriate number of ways of promoting staff development such as performance management, training, and coaching. This has been effective for most, but not all staff. For example, not all performance management procedures have been completed. The school's improvement planning is clear, thorough and focuses on the essential areas. It is supported by subject-specific action plans that are helping to improve standards.

32. The governors provide the school with satisfactory guidance and they meet all their statutory responsibilities. They are supportive to the headteacher and staff, although several governors have only recently taken up their positions. The chair of governors assumes the role of 'critical friend', while newer governors settle into their roles. He provides appropriate support and challenge to the headteacher. The arrangements to induct new governors have been effective. For example, governors are now linked with subjects and particular classes in order to support and monitor the work. Governors have sufficient knowledge of areas of the school's work such as health and safety, resources and special needs. The school implements its race equality policy effectively and promotes racial harmony among the pupils. The school has identified several areas which are barriers to learning, but has identified ways of overcoming them through the development of family liaison and learning.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	730,451.00	Balance from previous year	129,945.00
Total expenditure	596,630.00	Balance carried forward to the next	133,821.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,528.00		

33. The school's finances are organised and administered well. The priorities for development are budgeted for, and both the administrative officer and headteacher monitor expenditure closely. The routines and procedures to deal with the financial running of the school are well thought out; they provide governors with good levels of information. The school has arranged regular checks by the finance department of the local education authority who report on any difficulties and necessary improvements. The school implements 'best value' principles effectively, particularly in terms of obtaining competitive quotations for work and supplies. The administrative officer is knowledgeable about recent developments in national financial reporting and uses the nationally available figures to compare costs with those of other schools. The school has a relatively high surplus of funds, but these have been earmarked for a number of projects including boiler replacement, fencing upgrades and repairs to the playground. Taking into account the staffing levels, the standards reached and the income available per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

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

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

34. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, although below the standard noted during the previous inspection. Provision in the Nursery is good, and children's achievement is good. Provision in the Reception class is satisfactory, and children's achievement is satisfactory in most areas of learning. Attainment and achievement in the Reception class have been affected by long-term staff absence. At the end of their Reception Year, most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development. Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are good in the Nursery, but unsatisfactory overall. Few children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in these areas of learning.

35. When children enter the Nursery, their attainment is below the national average, and is particularly low in speaking and listening, and in personal and social development. Special educational needs (SEN) are quickly identified, and parents are alerted. Children with English as an additional language receive good support throughout the Foundation Stage. Assessment is good in the Nursery, but is weak overall because staff changes in the Reception class have disrupted the on-going assessment process.

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

Provision is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses in this area of learning:**

- Children's attitudes and behaviour are always very good.
- All relationships are excellent.
- Too many activities in the Reception class are directed by the teacher.

#### **Commentary**

36. Children are keen to attend Nursery, and they have very good attitudes to learning. Relationships are excellent among children, and between adults and children. In both classes, support staff contribute significantly to children's learning. Behaviour is consistently very good throughout the Foundation Stage, and is often exemplary. During the inspection, children in the Nursery listened attentively to Saint Saens' *Carnival of the Animals*. One child said 'This bit's scary!' Children in the Nursery take turns, share, and enjoy collaborating in activities. In the Reception class, children have few opportunities to work collaboratively. The timetable is modelled on a Year 1 timetable that does not name or integrate the six areas of learning. For example, during the inspection, children were rarely encouraged to contribute ideas or plan their activities. In both classes, children have good understanding of right and wrong. Children have good understanding of Christianity and western culture, but their access to other faiths and cultures is limited. For example, they do not learn common words in the home languages of children with English as an additional language.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is **satisfactory** overall, and is good in the Nursery.

### Main strengths and weaknesses in this area of learning:

- Children's speaking and listening skills are good in both classes.
- The Nursery provides good activities to develop children's reading and writing skills.
- Reception class reading records are not as useful as they could be.

37. All children listen attentively to adults, and to each other, and they speak coherently. Children in the Nursery are encouraged to speak in full sentences. For example, the Nursery nurse persuaded each child to say 'Please may I have a...'. In the Reception class, children confidently followed detailed instructions in preparation for an outing. A few high-attaining children recognise the days of the week. In the Reception class, children of average attainment recognise many words in their story books, although they have few strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Individual records include the names of books children have read. These provide some clues, but are limited. Consequently, reading progress is limited in the Reception class because supply teachers do not have basic assessment information. In the Nursery, children enthusiastically experiment with mark-making and writing. For example, in their café, they take customers' orders for sausages and coffee. In Reception class, most children make good progress in writing, but the opportunities provided to write and draw are not sufficient or linked well enough to their imaginative play activities.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **satisfactory** overall, and is good in the Nursery.

### Main strengths and weaknesses in this area of learning:

- In the Nursery, mathematical development is fully integrated with other areas of learning.
- Teaching methods in the Reception class are often too formal.

38. Children of average attainment in the Nursery count objects accurately to five. They have some knowledge of larger numbers. For example, in a skittles game, a very young child knew that his score of 15 skittles was significantly 'more' than his partner's score. Children accurately use a tally system when searching for mini-beasts in the outdoor area. In the Reception class, all children make good progress in mental arithmetic. They write numbers to 20, but often reverse the digits. Analysis of previous work shows that mathematical development is restricted by the excessive use of worksheets. Children in the Nursery recognise shapes in two and three dimensions, including spheres and cylinders and children in the Reception class are beginning to understand symmetry. During the inspection, and particularly in the Reception class, mathematics was not integrated into other areas of learning.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is **unsatisfactory** overall, but is good in the Nursery.

### Main strengths and weaknesses in this area of learning:

- Good teaching in the Nursery quickly improves children's practical knowledge and early scientific skills.
- In the Reception class, much work is unrelated to the Early Learning Goals.
- Resources are unsatisfactory in the Reception class.

39. Children entering the Nursery have limited understanding of the world around them. However, they quickly learn that planted seeds develop into flowers and plants. They identify spiders and ladybirds, and know that a wood louse has legs, but a worm does not. In the Reception class, children watching a cartoon video identified sea horses, crabs, octopi and dolphins. However, few activities are planned for them to learn why things happen and how things work. Many activities are too advanced for them. For example, in a workbook a teacher has written 'Describe the main features of an artefact'. Many children in the Nursery have good ICT skills. They know that a photocopier can reproduce their work. Children in the Reception class have good mouse control but, during the inspection, computer work provided for them was too difficult. In the Reception class, few resources such as magnets, magnifying glasses, tools and joining materials were seen in use or readily available. No equipment was provided to stimulate activities in the classroom sand tray. Sand and water activities in the playground at lunchtime tended to be quietly controlled by older pupils in Years 1 and 2.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision is **unsatisfactory** overall, but is good in the Nursery.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses in this area of learning:**

- In the Nursery, creative development is successfully integrated with other areas of learning.
- In the Reception class, planned activities are often unrelated to the Early Learning Goals.
- Resources are unsatisfactory in the Reception class.

40. In the Nursery, children's drawings are good. Their portraits correctly locate facial features, and an excellent display of painted poppies demonstrates very good observational skills. However, much of their individual work is restricted to small sized paper. Collaboratively, they have reproduced, accurately and on a large scale, a colourful illustration from a favourite reading book. Children in the Nursery listen carefully to recorded music, and many can clap in time to the rhythm. Children in the Reception class know that colours lighten when mixed with white. Creative activities were not timetabled during the inspection, and little art was displayed in the classroom or in the open areas of the school. Pupils have art diaries, issued in the Reception year, but printed guidance in them is directed to older pupils. Imaginative play is good in the Nursery, where children enjoy role play in their café and home corner, but is unsatisfactory in the Reception class. The level and accessibility of resources do not adequately support this area of learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision is **satisfactory** overall.

### **No significant strengths are apparent in this area of learning:**

- The outdoor play area is not fully suited to Reception class children.

41. In a good session during the inspection, Nursery children quickly learned the difference between rolling and throwing a ball. The teacher coached them individually to aim at skittles at a distance of some 10 metres. Most children knocked down some skittles, and all were excited by their progress. In a satisfactory dance lesson, led by a visiting specialist in physical education, Reception class children closely followed instructions to walk, march and skip. Their physical co-ordination was good, and their spatial awareness was very good. The teacher successfully used a variety of teaching methods to maintain the pace of the lesson and hold the children's attention. However, some planned activities were unsuitable for young children, and did not develop their dance skills. Children of average attainment in the Nursery and reception have good fine-motor

skills. For example, at snack times Reception children peel their own bananas and satsumas. In the Reception class, most children have good cutting skills. The Nursery outdoor area is fully resourced, and is used exclusively by Nursery children. The Reception class outdoor area is not satisfactorily resourced for each of the six areas of learning. Children in the Reception class are further disadvantaged because the equipment provided is equally available to pupils in other year groups.

### **Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage**

42. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall in the Foundation Stage, although some elements of teaching and the curriculum are unsatisfactory. The Foundation Stage manager (who does not teach in the Foundation Stage) has recently returned from maternity leave. Temporary teachers, including the headteacher, have covered the continuing, long-term absence of the Reception class teacher. Consequently, provision is much better in the Nursery than in the Reception class, where management is often on a day-to-day basis.

### **Teaching**

43. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Teaching in the Nursery is consistently good, and sometimes very good. The teacher has high expectations of very young children, and they respond enthusiastically to a very wide variety of activities. Teaching in the Reception class is satisfactory overall, but is not always linked closely to the Early Learning Goals. Assessment is good in the Nursery, but is weak in the Reception class. The needs of individual children are not identified well, which sometimes results in the provision of unsuitable work for them.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 (Years 1 to 6)**

44. Unless otherwise stated, the learning and achievement of children with SEN, is good throughout the school. The pupils who have English as an additional language generally achieve well, although, in one activity seen, their progress slowed when they were grouped with pupils who had different needs. Pupils with SEN benefit from good planning which identifies their areas for improvement, and the teachers make good provision within activities. The regular forming of a small teaching group from Year 5 is an example of this. Good use is made of classroom assistants in general activities, and they are particularly effective at supporting small groups of pupils for precision teaching and 'booster' type activities.

## **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good** overall. This is an improved picture from the last inspection.

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

- Pupils write creatively and use different styles well.
- Pupils' listening skills are very good.
- The oldest pupils speak very confidently and clearly.
- Literacy skills are applied well in other subjects.
- The co-ordination of the subject is good.

### **Commentary**

45. By the time pupils are seven, they reach satisfactory standards in their writing and reading, and levels of speaking and listening are better than expected nationally. The oldest pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are better than expected nationally for their age. When they enter the school, the

pupils' attainment is generally below average, which indicates that the pupils achieve very well, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

46. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 speak with confidence and willingly explain what they are doing to visitors or the class teacher. They listen well and this helps them to learn effectively and make good progress. The teachers create good opportunities for them to respond and have some thinking time before answering. This generally improves the quality of their response. In small groups and in paired discussion, the pupils are vocal and readily discuss the ways pets should be looked after, for example. The older pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also very confident in their speaking abilities, as was evidenced in a Year 6 lesson which focused on the D-Day landings and in other lessons where pupils asked questions of a classmate who acted the part of a soldier preparing to take part in the invasion. The pupils listen well in nearly all classes, though a small minority in a Year 3 class were less attentive when some of the teachers' explanations were too long. The pupils learn and achieve very well, and the way that teachers plan activities to develop pupils' skills during the lessons increases their rate of learning.

47. The pupils' reading skills develop systematically, building on the secure skills gained in the Nursery and Reception classes. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 read fluently and with good expression. Pupils enjoy reading storybooks and are confident in reading aloud from the large class story books that are used. They enjoy reading their books to other adults and taking them home. Older pupils in Years 3 to 6 read confidently, with expression and have well developed skills in comprehension. For example, when reading extracts from a 1940s' newspaper, the pupils were skilful in recognising the particular viewpoint being expressed. Pupils are able to express and justify their preferences about books and authors, and the D-Day celebrations had prompted them to choose books relevant to that period. Classes have targets for the number of books read, reading reviews and have school/home reading diaries to record progress.

48. By the time the pupils are seven, their writing skills are developed to the levels expected nationally. Their progress speeds up in Years 3 to 6 and by the time they are in Year 6, they reach standards better than those expected. In Year 2, the pupils develop their writing skills appropriately. For example they wrote simple questions to find out which animals were hidden from view on a worksheet. In a Year 1 activity in the computer suite, the pupils learnt the simple difference between writing about significant and less important events. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress in their writing. For example, by the time they reach Year 6, they examine different styles of writing and what can improve it. Other work in Year 4 indicated they know how to write simple poems, using old age as a focus, and presenting simple dilemmas in their writing to make it interesting.

49. The teaching is good overall, and strongest in Years 4 to 6. In some lessons in Years 1 and 3, the teaching did not always motivate the pupils effectively, as there was too much explanation before activities started. In contrast, in Year 2, the teacher skilfully built upon the pupils' learning through a good introduction, followed by relevant and interesting activities that motivated the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, particularly in Years 4 to 6. Several examples were seen where this helped the learning and increased the achievement of the oldest pupils. The best teaching made good use of the pupils' contributions, motivated them with good use of audio-visual resources, and developed their understanding of the skills being taught. The clear referral to what the pupils were expected to learn each lesson was very effective.

50. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. She has worked hard to identify weaknesses and indicate strategies for improvement. She organises extra help for pupils and enables teaching assistants to make an effective contribution to pupils' learning both in lessons and in small groups. Pupils' work is monitored and assessed effectively in almost all classes, thanks to the school's involvement in a national assessment initiative. The monitoring of teaching has been conscientious, although it has not yet led to teaching which consistently matches the best found in the school.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. The pupils have good opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum, particularly writing. The teaching in other subjects also develops pupils' speaking skills. In a Year 1 history lesson, for example, pupils questioned a fellow pupil who took the role of Grace Darling. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils spoke sensitively about how characters in a book might be feeling. In nearly all activities, the pupils listen effectively, particularly in Years 4 to 6, where the use of extra technology helps to motivate them. Pupils have opportunities to develop their writing skills in history, geography and science. Their reading skills develop satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2; they read stories on computers, guidance sheets, reference books and the variety of stimulating displays found in classrooms. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils' reading skills are well integrated into many subject areas.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good** and has improved since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve very well.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 exceed national expectations.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Pupils display very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Direct monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet fully developed.

### Commentary

52. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. They make good progress overall, however, and achieve very well throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are confident in their ability to solve simple addition and subtraction problems when working out the change needed when shopping. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils successfully explored the concept of capacity. They developed their mathematical vocabulary well, using terms such as 'half full', 'litres' and 'units'. Pupils behave well and enjoy the subject.

53. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils use a good range of methods in their number work, and solve word problems successfully. Pupils can round numbers with two decimal places and the higher-attaining pupils multiply such numbers by 100 and whole numbers by 1000. In another lesson in Year 6, pupils learned successfully to interpret data in bar charts. The lesson was superbly organised and structured to maximise learning. The teacher asked very challenging questions, and tested pupils' ability to locate numbers on number lines with increasing accuracy. In another lesson, the pupils were skilful at interpreting statistical information about local mortality rates. The pupils are motivated to learn, behave well and work well together.

54. Teaching and learning are systematically good and lead to very good achievement. Teachers' command of mathematics is very secure, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Teaching focuses on the development of strategies for calculations, solving word problems and requiring pupils to explain their reasoning. These strategies deepen pupils' understanding of mathematics. In one lesson, the grouping pupils who are learning English as an additional language with pupils with SEN was not productive for either of these groups, as they had different problems.

55. The co-ordination of the subject is good and has led to good improvement in standards since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has addressed weaknesses in mathematics, such as applying mathematics and calculation strategies, making those parts of the curriculum more exciting and relevant. Effective booster support is provided in Year 6 by creating higher and lower ability groups. In Year 5, extra work is provided for small groups of pupils. Assessment is effective. It is carried out

at half-termly intervals and the information is used for monitoring progress and target setting. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well integrated into the teaching and learning of mathematics. Direct monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet fully developed, so that best practice can be identified and extended to all classes.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. Numeracy skills are practised in other areas of the curriculum, for example, data handling in science, geography and history. Spreadsheets and databases are used in science. Pupils measure and use standard units in science and design and technology.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision is **good** and has improved since the last inspection.

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

- Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Good opportunities are given for investigative work.
- Pupils do not always respond to their teachers' written comments.

### **Commentary**

57. At age seven, pupils' standards are in line with national expectations. By the time they leave the school they reach higher-than-expected standards. Overall, pupils' achievement is very good.

58. During the inspection, science was not timetabled for pupils in Year 2. Evidence is based upon discussions with pupils, and analysis of their work in books. The Year 2 class teacher has recently returned from maternity leave. In a well taught Year 1 lesson, the teacher used the interactive white board to demonstrate similarities and differences in a variety of animals. For example, pupils understood that eyes were a common feature of fish, snails and hedgehogs, but spines were not. In this lesson, the pupils used their skills in ICT to find and label illustrations. However, high-attaining pupils were not fully extended by the work provided for them. Pupils in Year 2 understand fair testing. They explain clearly how surface resistance affects the progress of a model car, but they do not use technical language. They know how to construct electrical circuits to activate bulbs and buzzers. A high-attaining pupil knew that the brightness of a bulb could vary according to the number of batteries in a circuit. Pupils are productive, although some written work is not presented to the best effect.

59. In Year 6, pupils of average attainment have good understanding of food chains, life cycles and photo-synthesis. Higher-attaining pupils write clear reports of their experiments, often illustrated with good diagrams. In a well-taught lesson seen during the inspection, pupils formulated scientific questions to establish if location affects the growth rate of dandelions. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used widely for research, and for assembling and printing data. Written work in books is neat and includes tables, grids, diagrams and detailed explanations; it is marked carefully. In Year 4, pupils' workbooks are very neat, and include original graphs and tables, and much information from secondary sources. Observational writing is very clear. For example, a pupil of average attainment wrote 'When baking powder and vinegar were mixed, some baking powder stayed underneath with vinegar on top. Bubbles appeared and made a gas'. Pupils of average attainment know the differences and relationships between solids, liquids and gases. High-attaining pupils are learning to re-phrase their ideas and suggestions so that they become scientific questions to explore. Pupils have a well developed sense of curiosity throughout the school and the ethos for learning is often very good.



60. Teaching is good overall. In the well-taught lessons seen, teachers focused closely on their learning objectives, while maintaining good pace. The teachers foster good relationships between pupils and develop their sense of curiosity well. In otherwise satisfactorily taught lessons, some misbehaviour on the part of the pupils went unchecked, and the way it was handled varied. Assessment procedures are good. In each year group, teachers assess and record science skills linked closely to the scheme of work. Marking is generally thorough and indicates that most teachers have good knowledge and expertise, Nevertheless, there is some inconsistency teachers do not always pick up important spelling errors and do pursue recurring weaknesses. As a result, pupils rarely respond by improving their work.

61. Subject co-ordination is good. The manager is very knowledgeable and conscientious, and has recently re-written the scheme of work. The revised scheme is good, but does not yet include many cross-curricular links. The monitoring of teaching and learning has been less consistent, though some monitoring of pupils' work has taken place. Resources are very good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good** and has improved since the last inspection.

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

- Pupils very achieve well.
- Use of ICT in other subjects is very well developed.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very effective.
- The computer suite is well resourced and used effectively.
- Pupils' skills are well developed and monitored carefully.

### **Commentary**

62. Pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 match national expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach above average standards, reflecting an improvement since the last inspection. Achievement throughout the school is very good.

63. By the end of Year 2, pupils use the computer competently for word processing, for writing stories, combining text and pictures, sorting information and painting, for example, The Great Fire of London. They log on and log off and perform various simple tasks confidently.

64. By the end of Year 6, pupils use spreadsheets effectively to solve money problems and model budgets. Pupils can present findings in tables and pie graphs and know how to use temperature sensors for investigating cooling of a hot drink. Pupils use different media for effective presentations. For example, they use different fonts, background, pattern, colour, word art, text, pictures and sound. They make good use of websites for learning subjects such as English, mathematics, science, history, art and geography.

65. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well organised and well prepared. Expectations are high and pupils respond with enthusiasm. A strong feature is the way that teachers integrate ICT into the subject teaching, with gains both for pupils' subject knowledge and their ICT skills.

66. Leadership and management of the subject are very effective. The subject leader monitors teachers' curriculum planning and provides effective support where needed. Action plans are very effective. For example, the quality and quantity of resources have been brought to a high standard

in a systematic way and the ICT curriculum has been meticulously integrated into the learning of other subjects. Effective skill-based assessment procedures have been developed for Years 1 to 6. Outside formal lessons, pupils use the computer suite for other activities such as learning spellings and sentence patterns.

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

67. Information and communication technology (ICT) plays a central role in teaching and learning in other subjects and was used well in a Year 1 science lesson and in a Year 4 history lesson. In both lessons, the teachers used the facility of an interactive whiteboard to illustrate the lesson and motivate the pupils. Year 1 pupils made effective use of computers to share their ideas on similarities and differences between a range of animals. Year 4 pupils carried out historical enquiry using the Internet. They researched information on Tudor monarchs in order to place them in chronological order. In both lessons, the teachers had good subject knowledge and were confident in their ability to integrate its use into their learning. The teaching assistants provided effective support.

## **HUMANITIES**

**Religious education** was not inspected due to the Catholic status of the school. Relatively few lessons were observed in **history and geography** during the inspection, and these subjects were not inspected in detail. The quality of teaching in these subjects was **satisfactory** overall and some good teaching was seen. The evidence of the activities observed, past work and discussions with pupils, indicates that pupils achieve well in both subjects and reach the expected standards for their age.

### **Main strengths and weakness:**

- The teaching in **history** for the pupils in the oldest classes is particularly strong.
- The planning in **both** subjects is clear and relevant to the pupils' interests.
- Teachers use technology well to enhance the pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

68. In **geography**, attainment is satisfactory and pupils achieve well throughout the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have an appropriate knowledge of the local area and its features, such as being near a town centre. In Year 2 for example, the pupils know about the features of cities and how they compare to those of the seaside. The pupils collected information about the favourite places of classmates and organised the information well. Past work indicates they have a useful knowledge of different weather types and conditions. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also achieve well and reach the expected standards. Pupils understand that the United Kingdom is made of different regions, each with its particular features. Year 5 the pupils expanded their knowledge of different areas the world, according to their location and altitude for example. Their past work indicates that by Year 6, the pupils also know about rivers and valley features and how these influence settlements. The planning in geography is appropriate and well matched to the interests of the pupils.

69. In **history**, the pupils achieve well throughout the school. In Year 1, the pupils studied the character of Grace Darling and her achievements. The pupils remembered the sequence of her famous rescue. They also know something about the daily lives of the Victorians and some of the artefacts used in the period. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress in gaining an understanding of significant events. This was particularly evident in Year 6, where they studied the

war-time evacuation in connection with the anniversary of the D-Day landings. The study made a significant contribution to their social and moral awareness. The teaching was confident, and very good use was made of the interactive whiteboards to support the pupils' learning and to make activities more motivating.

70. The co-ordination of these subjects has changed several times and the headteacher is currently responsible for them, in addition to her other responsibilities. Pupils experience a suitable range of learning opportunities. These include an annual 'out and about week,' when they undertake local studies in geography and history, museum visits and a visit to a Victorian schoolroom. Useful links are made between the two subjects when addressing themes which can have both a historical and a geographical emphasis, such as 'seaside holidays'.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### ART AND DESIGN

The provision in art and design is **satisfactory**, as it was at the time of the last inspection.

- Pupils experience a good range of activities.
- Pupils enjoy their work.
- Pupils' work is not always displayed to the best advantage.
- Pupils have little knowledge of major artists.

71. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6. In Year 1, pupils weave patterns with a variety of materials, and in Year 2 they experiment with paint, and understand something of shades and tones. In a good lesson seen, pupils named primary and secondary colours. They described the techniques used by Paul Klee as 'mosaic' and 'a chapel with curves'. They found that painting in the style of Klee was much more difficult than they expected! The pupils enjoy their work and respond well to the activities.

72. Pupils in Year 4 understand that a portrait may be a sketch, a painting or a photograph, and may be influenced by the requirements of the subject or artist. In a very good and imaginative lesson, groups of pupils examined a wide selection of artefacts connected to a number of portrait subjects. Later, they dressed in the style of the subjects, and recorded their poses on a digital camera. This fast-paced lesson included aspects of drama and ICT, and pupils' progress was very good. Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of printing techniques and had printed attractive portraits from engravings on expanded-polystyrene printing-blocks. In another lesson, they made clay figures linked to their project of civilians and soldiers in World War 2. The teacher gave precise instructions on using tools and fingers to create fine effects. All figures were accurately proportioned, and the best included some thoughtful detail. Pupils are motivated in their activities and behave well.

73. Pupils retain their art diaries, adding work in successive years to show their developing skills. Detailed guidance for pupils and teachers is included in each book, but is rarely followed. For example, work is rarely dated and is rarely marked. Pupils' art is not widely exhibited in classrooms and open areas. For example, some very good observational drawings of bicycles by pupils in Year 5 are displayed, unacknowledged, in a small room off the library area, adjacent to the entrance hall. Pupils have little knowledge of major artists, and the school has few reproductions to stimulate their interest.

74. The quality of teaching in the very few lessons seen was satisfactory and had some good features. The teachers make the subject interesting and plan activities that involve the pupils quickly. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory overall, and the additional art area is well managed and used.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

75. There is insufficient evidence to make full range of judgements in **design and technology**. Brief observation of one lesson, an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' folders indicate that standards of work broadly match national expectations and those found at the time of the last inspection. Weakness in the pupils' ability to evaluate their work pointed out in the last report has been tackled effectively. Year 2 pupils have designed and made wheeled vehicles; they started by making labelled sketch drawings of their planned design; they wrote down or drew sketches of the steps needed for making and evaluating their products. Year 4 pupils have designed and made biscuits. Each project is planned very well to provide a systematic development of skills in the subject. They evaluate their work carefully. In the lesson observed, Year 3 pupils investigated the key ingredients of a sandwich for the purpose of designing and making their own.

## MUSIC

76. There is insufficient evidence to make full range of judgements in **music**. A very well taught lesson in Year 6, prepared pupils for a composition exercise effectively. The teacher questioned them skilfully about the sequence of events in a film clip. They understood technical vocabulary, including *tempo*, *crescendo* and *dynamics*. Subsequently, in groups, they composed music accurately reflecting the emotional words and actions on the screen. The teacher improved their work by questioning and prompting individuals and groups. For example, he asked how anger might be expressed by percussion instruments. In a satisfactory singing lesson in Year 2, pupils of average attainment identified high and low notes when their teacher played a xylophone. They understood something of the meaning of *pitch*. They listened attentively to a recorded song about a pirate, and joined in the words of the chorus. Music is integral to whole-school assemblies, and establishes a reverential atmosphere as pupils enter and leave. However, composers are not generally acknowledged, and few pupils in any year group could name one. Pupils sing enthusiastically, often illuminating hymns and songs with actions or signing.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**. This is a similar picture to the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The physical education curriculum is well balanced and broad.
- Pupils co-operate well, which helps their learning.
- Some very good teaching enabled the pupils to achieve well in their athletics activities.

### Commentary

77. Throughout the school, the attainment of the pupils is in line with the standards expected nationally and they achieve well from a below-average starting point. The teaching is generally good and the well-planned activities generally motivate the pupils. In Year 2, the pupils made particularly good progress in a lesson focusing upon team games. The teacher used a wide variety of activities to give pupils an understanding of the value of jogging and how to improve their relay running. For example, the teacher set up simple, but challenging physical activities such as running at high speed, and avoiding collisions. In a Year 1, a promising beginning to an activity in dance was not developed sufficiently. Although the pupils moved with some skill and control in time to some music, they failed to improve or extend their skills. Much of the activity was repetitive and the expectations set were too low.

78. By the end of Year 6, the pupils achieve appropriately and reach the expected standards. Pupils in Year 3 developed their skills in athletic activities, and dodged and marked well during the introductory athletic activities using a simple game of 'foxes and hares'. In Year 5, the pupils improved their running abilities and fitness knowledge in an outside games lesson. Discussion with the pupils indicates that they experience a good variety of activities during the year. The school takes part in a number of sports competitions and activities, and was recently successful in winning trophies in both football and netball.

79. The subject is organised satisfactorily and the co-ordinator has revised schemes of work and produced supporting material for staff. The assessment arrangements are satisfactory and enable the progress of pupils to be monitored appropriately. The range, quantity and suitability of the resources are good and they are used well. The school runs a number of sports clubs to support this area of the curriculum such as football, netball, hockey and athletics.

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

Provision in this area is **good**.

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

- The school council is valued by pupils.
- Good attention is given to the dangers of substance misuse.
- Pupils learn about healthy eating.

80. Only a small number of activities were seen in this area. The judgements are based on these observations and on discussions with pupils. The school's council functions well. Education in drug and alcohol misuse is dealt with effectively, using close links with the police. Assemblies also contribute effectively to this area of education. The school nurse makes an effective contribution to the successful development of health education. Pupils also learn about the part played by fruit and water in the development of healthy eating and drinking habits. A significant minority do not visit a dentist but the school ensures that pupils are taught the elements of dental hygiene.

## 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	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>2</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	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	2
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).*