

# INSPECTION REPORT

## OUR LADY OF GRACE RC JUNIOR SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Brent

Unique reference number: 101538

Headteacher: Mr D O'Farrell

Lead inspector: Mr D Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 02 - 04 February 2004

Inspection number: 263864

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Junior  
School category: Voluntary aided  
Age range of pupils: 7-11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll; 227

School address: Dollis Hill Lane  
LONDON  
Postcode: NW2 6HS

Telephone number: 020 8450 6002  
Fax number: 020 8208 3430

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr P Bell

Date of previous inspection: 18 - 21 May 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided School is of average size compared with other primary schools in the country with 227 pupils on roll. Nearly all pupils live in the school's catchment area. Many different ethnic groups are represented in the school. The largest groups are white Irish, white British, black African and other white backgrounds. Pupils with Asian, Caribbean and Chinese backgrounds also attend the school. Three pupils from travelling families and one refugee also attend the school. Fourteen pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Around seventeen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is average. Seventeen per cent have special educational needs and three have statements of special educational needs, which is similar to most schools. The main needs are specific learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The rate at which pupils join and leave the school is below average. Attainment on entry to the school is above average. The school was awarded Beacon status in 1998. It achieved a School Achievement Award in 2002 for achieving high standards. A Staff Achievement Award was achieved in 2003 as was the Healthy Schools Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2905	David Shepherd	Lead inspector	Science Geography History English as an additional language
9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector	
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs
32168	Ann Keen	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Music

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House  
Station Road  
CAMBRIDGE  
CB1 2RS

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Junior School provides **a good education for its pupils and gives good value for money**. Standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are above nationally expected levels and most pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management of the school are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is well led and managed and this results in a positive atmosphere where everyone is valued
- Standards are above average in all aspects of English and in most aspects of mathematics and science. Pupils do not achieve as much as they should in problem-solving in mathematics and in investigative science and standards are lower than they should be as a result
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and, overall, plan lessons well for pupils, although work set for pupils with special educational needs is occasionally too hard for them
- Procedures for assessment are very good and good use is made of assessment data
- Very good support and guidance is given to pupils and their views are taken into account very well. As a result, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good
- Pupils are provided with a very good curriculum that includes a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Very good use is made of specialists to teach in a number of subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, music and physical education
- Links with other schools, parents and the community are very good

**The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.** Systematic programmes of work are now taught in all classes. Assessment is now very good. The strategic planning for the school is now good. The school provides more opportunities than it did for pupils to solve problems and carry out investigations but pupils are not yet involved enough in planning their own work in these aspects of mathematics and science. Overall, standards in English, mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection. The high standards of teaching and learning since that time have been maintained.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

The National Curriculum test results dipped last year after a period of significant improvement over the previous four years. This was mainly because of long-term staff absence. When pupils from Year 6 in 2003 were in Years 4, 5 and 6, they had been taught by a number of different teachers, including temporary teachers, and this slowed down the pace of their learning. In addition, seven higher-attaining pupils left during this time and six lower-attaining pupils joined the school.

**Achievement is good overall.** Pupils' attainment on entry is above average, and, with the exception of last year, they leave the school with standards that are above and, sometimes, well above average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science

are above average and pupils, including those from different minority ethnic groups, achieve well. Standards in speaking, listening, reading, and writing are above average. However, standards in problem-solving in mathematics and science investigations are not as high as they are in other aspects of these subjects because pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to use their initiative and plan their own work when carrying out these activities. Pupils' achievement in these aspects of mathematics and science is satisfactory. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good overall, but, on occasions, they do not achieve well enough because the work they are set is too hard for them. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well because they receive a significant amount of specialist teaching.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent.** Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their attendance is similar to the national picture.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know their subjects well and plan lessons carefully. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall, although sometimes work for these pupils is not always pitched correctly at their levels of capability. Good use is made of specialist teaching in a number of subjects. Teachers encourage pupils well in their work and assess their progress very well. The curriculum provided by the school is very good and is supplemented very well by extra-curricular clubs and activities. The school looks after its pupils well and has very good links with parents, other schools and the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher provides good leadership and has set a clear direction for the development of the school. He receives good support from the deputy headteacher and other staff. Subject co-ordinators carry out their responsibilities well. Governors are supportive of the school and **governance is good.** Statutory requirements are met in all respects.

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

Parents are very supportive of the school and think it is doing a good job. Pupils enjoy coming to school and hold very positive views about it. They particularly enjoy taking part in the many additional activities that are provided for them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to use their initiative and plan their work in problem-solving in mathematics and in investigative work in science
- Plan work for pupils with special educational needs to suit their levels of ability on all occasions

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects**

Overall, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement throughout the school is good.

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

- Overall, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and most aspects of mathematics and science are above average
- Most pupils achieve well. However, in a few lessons, pupils with special educational needs do not achieve as much as they should
- Pupils' achievements in investigative science and problem-solving in mathematics are not high enough

#### **Commentary**

1. When pupils join the school in Year 3, they have above average skills and knowledge overall in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. These skills are developed systematically and most pupils achieve well and leave the school with standards in these subjects that are above average, and sometimes well above average. However, this was not the case with pupils in Year 6 in 2003. These pupils did not achieve as well as their peers in previous years. When compared with pupils in other schools who attained similarly at the end of Year 2, their achievement was satisfactory in science, below average in English and well below average in mathematics. This is because this group of pupils had an unusually large number of different teachers since they were in Year 4. When in Year 4, one of the classes was taught by two teachers during this year, the other by a number of supply teachers following the illness of their class teacher. When in Year 5, one class was taught by four temporary teachers because of the illness of the class teacher. When in Year 6, arrangements for teaching these pupils in smaller groups had to be abandoned because of the need to cover other classes due to staff illness. This pattern of disruption meant that these pupils did not receive enough stability in their learning. In addition, twelve pupils left this year group during these years, seven of whom were above average in attainment. Eight pupils joined these classes during this time, six of whom were below average. Given these factors of staffing and pupils' mobility, it is not surprising that the attainment of pupils in Year 6 in 2003 was below that of previous years. Pupils' attainment in 2003 was higher in science than in English and mathematics. This was because the gaps in their knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics were greater than in science and teachers found it easier to make up lost ground in science than in the other two subjects. For example, teachers found it very difficult to make up for below average skills in number work because pupils had not gained a good grasp of their times tables and other computational skills by Year 6. Similarly, pupils had not gained enough skills in writing in order to build on sufficiently to achieve well during Year 6. The following data of their performance should be viewed with these factors in mind.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (29.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.5 (30.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.9 (30.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*



2. In spite of this `blip` in results in 2003, the trend of improvement in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science over the past five years is above the national trend. In fact, between 1999 and 2002, there were significant rises in standards overall in these subjects. In recognition of this, the school was awarded a School Achievement Award in 2002. The school met the challenging target it set for itself in English in 2003, but did not meet that in mathematics.
3. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 6 are above nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are particularly good and this helps pupils learn in other subjects. Standards in number are higher than pupils' abilities to apply this knowledge to help them solve mathematical problems. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of science are better than their abilities to carry out investigations on their own. Because of the good teaching, most pupils, including those from different minority ethnic groups, achieve well throughout the school. Higher-attaining pupils achieve particularly well because they receive a significant amount of specialist teaching in English, science, music and physical education. Pupils who join the school part way through the year are included well in the life of the school and make good progress, so that they, too, achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language and those from travelling families achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall and make good progress towards the learning targets set for them. The exception to this is that, in a few lessons in English, mathematics and science, these pupils are not set work that is pitched closely enough to their capabilities. Standards in ICT are at expected levels. No judgements were made about standards in other subjects.

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

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are very good. The provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is excellent and for pupils' cultural development very good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils get on with each other very well and behave very sensibly around school. They enjoy being at school and respond to lessons enthusiastically
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development leads to excellent relationships around the school and between pupils from different backgrounds

### **Commentary**

4. Pupils are interested in what happens in school and they enjoy their work. They settle down quickly in lessons, listen attentively and follow instructions well. They are eager to answer questions and prepared to contribute their thoughts and ideas in class and in assemblies. Pupils' very positive attitudes are an indicator of the excellent relationships in school. They also reflect the good quality of teaching and the wide variety of interesting activities provided for them. Pupils' very positive attitudes are similar to those reported at the last inspection.
5. Staff act as good role models for pupils and they respond very well to this and are developing into sensible and mature young citizens. Pupils from different backgrounds are integrated well in classes and take part fully in the life of the school. They feel secure and work hard. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
6. Pupils' excellent spiritual development is fostered by the school's links with the local church, the whole school assemblies and the wide range of opportunities for pupils to gain insights into values and beliefs of different people and cultures. Lessons in personal, social and health education and presentations by pupils in assemblies help pupils to value their own worth and self-esteem and to be aware of others who think differently from themselves.

7. Pupils behave very well in the classroom, at play and lunch times. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong and are aware how their behaviour affects others. They are well mannered, polite to adults and each other and welcoming and courteous to visitors.
8. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to work with their classmates during lessons and pupils enjoy working with others in this way. Pupils in Year 6 show maturity when undertaking a range of responsibilities around the school, including helping younger pupils. The school council enables pupils of all ages to work together and suggest ideas for improvements in aspects of the school. They take part eagerly in inter-school sports matches and this helps them get on with pupils of similar ages at other schools. Pupils and parents confirm that they are unaware of any bullying taking place.
9. Lessons in history, art and design and music, among others, provide pupils with a fuller understanding of the world around them. Pupils appreciate the cultural background of the past during their work on the Tudors in history and European artists and composers. The school provides many opportunities to enable pupils to learn about the lives of people around the world. At the same time it enables them to appreciate the multicultural nature of British society. Pupils from a varied range of different cultures mix well with each other and it is very apparent that racial harmony is one of the strengths of the school.

### Attendance

10. The table below shows the attendance figures for the school. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now similar to that of primary schools around the country. Attendance registers are monitored regularly and pupils with very good attendance are rewarded with certificates presented in assembly. However, the school does not contact parents on the first day of absence to find out why their children are not in school. Punctuality is good overall and pupils settle down quickly to their work leading to a prompt start to lessons.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.1	School data :	0.4
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

### Exclusions

Four pupils were excluded for fixed periods during the last school year.

#### Ethnic background of pupils

#### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – any other White background	25	4	0

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

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum provided by the school is very good. The school provides pupils with good levels of care and looks after them well. Links with parents, the community and other schools are very good.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers encourage pupils very well in their work and pupils respond by working hard
- The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very rigorous and used well
- Good help is given to pupils when they are stuck. Marking in English, mathematics and science helps pupils to improve, but this is not the case in all subjects
- Teachers ask probing questions that extend pupils' thinking further
- Very good use is made of specialists to help pupils learn
- In a few subjects, pupils are not given enough opportunity to use their initiative
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good help in their work overall, but in a few lessons, they are not given enough guidance in recording their work

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	8	11	4	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons;

11. A high proportion of the teaching and learning during the inspection was very good. Very good teaching was observed in all year groups with most being observed in English, but some was also observed in mathematics and science. All teachers encourage pupils very well in their work and are successful in their management of behaviour during lessons. Pupils are very responsive to their teachers and teaching assistants, behave well, work hard and carry out their work quietly without making a fuss. This means that teaching time is used very efficiently.
12. The school has developed very good procedures for assessment. Teachers systematically assess how much pupils have learnt in all subjects at the end of units of work. Their achievement is then recorded in detail and monitored well by teachers to see if they are learning enough when compared with their capabilities. If this is not the case, useful discussions are held between the classteacher and the co-ordinator of special educational needs to see how the learning of pupils who are underachieving can be improved. Sometimes these pupils are identified as having special educational needs and well-thought-out programmes of work are planned for them that include specific targets for their learning. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is also assessed well at the end of each year using national tests. The school makes good use of the results of these tests because if pupils are not making the progress they should, extra lessons in English and mathematics are planned for them. This is to enable them to achieve the nationally expected levels in these subjects at the end of Year 6.
13. Relationships are good and this encourages pupils to ask for help when they are stuck. In their turn, teachers and teaching assistants readily give pupils good help when it is needed. They explain carefully what is being taught to them individually or in groups so that they understand and this helps them to make good progress and achieve well. Marking, especially in English, mathematics and science, often helps pupils improve and includes what pupils need to do next. However, this does not occur as frequently in subjects such as geography and history where marking, although encouraging pupils in their work, does not help them to improve.

14. A feature of the very good teaching is that teachers ask pupils questions that cause them to think hard. This helps them to remember what they have been taught during previous lessons and extends their thinking about what they are being taught in this lesson. Pupils find answering questions helps them learn well. Higher-attaining pupils, in particular, respond well to the challenges posed by questions that ask them to think about, 'what might happen if.....?'
15. The school makes very good use of as much specialist teaching as possible. A few teachers have very good expertise in a number of subjects, for example, in English and science. The high levels of expertise in these subjects are used to train other teachers at the school or to teach pupils in different classes in these subjects. Year 6 pupils attend lessons in science at the secondary school taught by secondary school specialist teachers and a specialist teacher from the secondary school comes to school to teach drama to these same pupils. This helps extend pupils' knowledge and understanding in these subjects as well as helping them to get used to the idea of transferring to secondary school themselves. In addition, the school employs specialists in music and tennis on a part-time basis and these lessons help pupils to develop their skills in these subjects well. Good use is made of the skills of teaching assistants in sewing and art to help pupils develop their skills in these subjects also.
16. In spite of this positive picture about teaching and learning, two weaknesses were noted during the inspection. The school provides pupils with sufficient opportunities to investigate in science and to solve problems in mathematics. However, on some occasions, these do not present pupils with enough opportunities to use their initiative and find their own ways of carrying out investigations and solving problems. Pupils with special educational needs receive good help in their work from teaching assistants. Sometimes these pupils are withdrawn from classes to work on specific tasks in order to improve their skills. These sessions help pupils a great deal by boosting their confidence and their willingness to write. Teaching is very sharply focused in these sessions; it is well planned and directly deals with pupils' specific needs. However, on a few occasions, the work set for these pupils is not pitched at the correct level for their capabilities and their written work indicates they have not achieved as much as they could. The high standards of teaching and learning noted at the last inspection have been maintained.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good. A very wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- National guidance for teaching literacy and numeracy is followed well
- The strengths in English and the very wide range of extra-curricular activities are indicators of the very good curriculum provided for pupils
- The expertise of staff and other subject specialists is used very effectively to improve the curriculum

### **Commentary**

17. The National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy are taught well and this is a significant factor in rising standards over time in these subjects. The curriculum for English provides pupils, including those with English as an additional language, with very good opportunities to develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and this provides them with a very good foundation for learning in other subjects. As a result of pupils' performances, including in national tests, the school adjusts its curriculum well overall in order to meet pupils' needs. Pupils from travelling families receive a curriculum that reflects their culture well. Pupils with special educational needs receive a very well planned curriculum. They are able to contribute fully to the life of the school. Individual learning programmes are devised for them that take good account of their needs. These programmes are reviewed and

updated regularly to ensure these pupils make the progress they should. The curriculum provided for higher-attaining pupils is enriched by the significant amount of specialist teaching provided by the school. The curriculum is better than it was at the last inspection.

18. The breadth of the curriculum offered to the pupils is very wide. The curriculum complies with statutory requirements and is based well on national guidelines. In addition to this, the school provides pupils with very good opportunities to improve their skills in science, ICT, gymnastics and dance by being taught by subject specialists. A music specialist is also employed to teach music throughout the school and a number of pupils play instruments such as the flute and violin taught by specialists from the local education authority. The school teaches personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs education. No lessons in this area were observed so no judgement about the quality of this provision made.
19. The school provides a very good wide range of extra-curricular activities to improve pupils' learning. Pupils have very good opportunities to take part in numerous sporting and physical activities, such as football, cricket, tennis, gymnastics and netball. Teams from the school compete with other local schools in football, cricket and netball. Extra-curricular clubs are held for learning the computer, singing in the choir and learning `circus` skills, such as balancing and juggling. Specialist lessons are also held in science and ICT at the local secondary school on Saturday mornings from time to time. Many pupils take part in extra-curricular activities. Provision for extra-curricular activities has improved since the last inspection.
20. The school uses the expertise of its staff, parents and other subject specialists very well. Pupils are taught to sew by one of the teaching assistants. The tapestry of The Lion King displayed in the school hall indicates the high quality of much of this work produced by pupils. Another teaching assistant with artistic skills helps pupils with art and design. She has created many striking and visually attractive murals all around the school corridors and this enriches significantly the school's learning environment. The school employs a technician to provide technical expertise during ICT lessons, providing staff with specialist knowledge and ensuring children receive good support and attention in their work. A tennis coach provides private instruction before school each week and also teaches all pupils tennis skills during the school day. Specialist teachers from local secondary schools teach classes in gymnastics and games. The use of specialist staff has improved since the last inspection.
21. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The school is adequately equipped to teach the curriculum and has plans to improve provision for the library and computer suite. Recent improvements to the accommodation have improved the school's environment. These include security features, new tables and chairs for pupils and the development of the outside area. Pupils now have a raised stage in one of the playgrounds on which they give 'performances' during break-times, quiet areas in which to sit and play board games and a good space to play more active games.

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

The school looks after pupils' care, welfare, health and safety well. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is very good. The involvement of pupils in the school's work is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils trust their teachers and other staff and know there is always someone to whom they can turn
- The school provides a very wide variety of opportunities for pupils to express their opinions about life in school
- The school monitors and promotes pupils' academic and personal development very well
- The school has very good arrangements to enable pupils new to the school to settle in

### **Commentary**

22. Parents confirm that their children settle in well when they first join the school. This is because of the good links with the nearby infant school. Each week during the summer term before they start school, Year 2 pupils in the infant school meet and work with Year 5 pupils in the junior school so that they have a 'buddy' when they eventually start in September. Pupils who arrive at other times of the year are also allocated a 'buddy' to work alongside them. In addition, the headteacher checks regularly with parents whether their children are experiencing any problems in school. Relationships are good and pupils trust their teachers and other staff. They know they have someone to whom to turn if they are unwell or if they wish to discuss any issues that concern them. They consider that teachers listen to their ideas. The school provides a variety of ways for this to happen, for example, during the school council, lessons in personal, social and health education and other class discussions. Discussions during the school council, in particular, have led to pupils being provided with playground equipment during break-times.
23. Pupils are guided very well in their personal and academic development. Their self-esteem is raised by the way they are praised by staff in recognition of their achievements. Pupils explained that their teachers provide clear guidance for them at the beginning of lessons so that they can judge how well they are doing. When they mark the pupils' work in English, mathematics and science, teachers regularly indicate what pupils need to do to improve. Targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics and for their personal development. The academic targets are based upon the test results and are reviewed each term. They are particularly effective in English and mathematics where they are helping pupils to make good progress. The level of care and support provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Detailed records are kept of their progress and achievement.
24. The school provides pupils with good levels of care and welfare. Arrangements for first aid are good. Several staff are trained in first aid. Child protection procedures are good; the school follows the local authority procedures for child protection and all staff are reminded regularly how to deal with any concerns that may arise. Provision for health and safety is good overall. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons, such as in science, design and technology and physical education. The school carries out risk assessments satisfactorily for visits out of school. Other risk assessments have not been carried out recently. The school has arranged for a safety officer from the local authority to visit the school in the near future to evaluate whether other risk assessments are satisfactory. Provision for pupils' care, welfare and guidance are similar to those reported at the last inspection.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of what the school provides
- Parental support makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement
- The school provides a very good range of information about what happens in school
- Annual reports on pupils' progress do not give parents enough information about the progress of their children in all subjects

### **Commentary**

25. In the very high response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated they are very pleased with what the school provides. Their children like school, the staff expect their children to work hard and their children make good progress. The school sends home fortnightly newsletters about events in school and these keep parents very well informed about what their children are doing. Teachers are readily available to discuss issues affecting their children with parents, especially at the end of the day when they go into the playground to dismiss their

class. From the relaxed, informal conversations seen to take place during the inspection, it is apparent that parents are comfortable talking to the staff. Teachers and parents meet formally for parents' evenings during the Autumn and Spring terms. Annual reports on progress are sent home at the end of summer term but the quality of the information provided is unsatisfactory. These reports include a grade for effort and attainment in all subjects but, apart from English, mathematics and religious education, provides no further information on what the pupils know and understand in the subject.

26. Parents' involvement with the school makes a good contribution to its work and to the achievement of pupils. Most parents attend the parents' evenings with the teachers or meet them shortly afterwards. Many parents come to see their children perform at the weekly class-led assemblies. Pupils confirm that their parents usually insist on the homework being completed and this helps them make good progress. Though only a few parents help regularly in school, many more volunteer to help on educational visits. The committee of the parents' association works hard to successfully organise both fund-raising and social events. The school sends out questionnaires regularly to canvas the views of parents on key aspects of the school.
27. The very good links with the nearby infant school ensure continuity in the teaching of subjects such as English and mathematics and help to ensure pupils settle in quickly when they join in Year 3. Contacts with secondary schools also help to smooth the transfer of pupils at the end of Year 6. In addition, the local secondary schools provide staff and resources to improve the teaching of a variety of subjects in school, such as drama, science, ICT and physical education. Pupils' sporting skills are improved by the employment of local coaches for football, tennis and gymnastics. The extensive links with the church provide additional very good support for pupils' understanding of the work of the church in the local community. The curriculum is enriched by the wide range of visits to places of local interest. Visitors to the school also add significantly to pupils' learning in specific subjects. The school has the confidence of its local community. Links with parents, other schools and the community are similar to those reported at the last inspection.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are good. The leadership and management provided by subject co-ordinators are good. Governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher leads and motivates staff very well
- Governors are effective and support the school well
- Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are good

### **Commentary**

28. The headteacher, supported effectively by the deputy headteacher, works with vision and energy and has established an effective and successful team of staff that work together for the benefit of pupils. The school's aims are clear and staff work hard to ensure they are met. The role of the senior management team is clearly defined and includes the systematic evaluation of standards and the quality of education. Subject co-ordinators are trained well and lead and manage their subjects well. The school has good systems for monitoring and recording pupils' progress and achievements. Staff are quick to pick up on gender and ethnic trends in achievement and take prompt action where it is needed to correct any underachievement. In these ways, the strengths and weaknesses of the school are known to the staff. Weaknesses are included in the school improvement plan until they have been corrected.
29. Since the appointment of the headteacher two years ago, there have been good improvements in a number of areas. These include staffing, including the employment of specialist staff in a

number of subjects, curriculum provision and accommodation. Issues from the previous inspection relating to assessment and schemes of work have been corrected successfully. Assessment is now very good and used well by staff to set targets and raise levels of achievement. The school improvement plan is now a clear and useful aid for the headteacher, staff and governors. Although opportunities for pupils to take more initiative in their learning have been partially implemented, there is still some way to go, especially in the areas of the independent investigational work in mathematics and science.

30. The induction and professional development of staff are managed well. The performance of staff is regularly reviewed and targets for their future development are agreed. Staff's targets are closely linked to priorities in the school improvement plan for the following year. Morale amongst the staff is high. The school has a good capacity to improve further.
31. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. Support for these pupils is well planned and provision is monitored to ensure it is effective. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well provided for and annual reviews of their progress are fully up to date. The co-ordinator for special educational needs works effectively with outside agencies, such as the health authority, to ensure the best possible provision for pupils. Governors oversee the work of special educational needs well.
32. Governors fully share the school's vision for improvement. They support the headteacher well and ensure that all aspects of proposals are considered before decisions are made. They are keen to see standards rise and set priorities to enable this to happen. Governors work well with staff. Governors regularly monitor aspects of school and they receive reports about standards in subjects from co-ordinators. In this way, they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

### **Financial information**

33. Governors oversee effectively the financial management of the school. They are aware of the possible impact of a declining budget once the school's funding for beacon status ends and are already taking measures to lessen the effects of this whilst endeavouring to maintain the quality of provision for pupils. The substantial sum carried forward in the budget has been prudently used to improve the décor, provide new furniture, significantly improve ICT provision and the number of teaching assistants. Beacon funding is being used well to improve standards in physical education, art and design and drama and to establish firm links with the feeder infant school and other schools. The principles of best value are used well in purchasing goods and services.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	617,424
Total expenditure	678,597
Expenditure per pupil	3,016

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	98,899
Balance carried forward to the next	37,726



## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well overall
- Teaching and learning are very good overall
- The school monitors well the performance of pupils and this helps teachers to provide a curriculum that is closely matched to pupils' needs. However, sometimes, tasks set for pupils with special educational needs are too hard for them
- Computers are not used enough to help pupils in their writing

#### **Commentary**

34. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of English. This is as a result of well-planned and skilful teaching. The above average standards at the school are consistent with standards achieved over time in national tests at the end of Year 6. However, standards achieved in these tests in 2003 were not as high as in previous years and pupils in Year 6 last year did not achieve as well as they should. This was because of considerable movement in staffing experienced by the pupils in this class since they were in Year 4. In addition, standards were lowered by a number of higher-achieving pupils leaving that year group and being replaced by a number of pupils of lower ability. This difficulty has now been resolved and the current Year 6 pupils are achieving well.
35. Pupils speak clearly and confidently and are willing to share ideas with others. They readily engage in informal conversations with each other and adults and express their opinions clearly and sensibly. Standards in speaking and listening are above average and higher than they were at the previous inspection.
36. Standards in reading are above expected levels at the end of Year 6. Pupils read avidly with confidence, accuracy and fluency. Their knowledge of books and authors is good; a few higher-attaining pupils prefer authors such as Charles Dickens whilst others speak about contemporary authors like JK Rowling, Jacqueline Wilson and Roald Dahl. Standards of writing are above expected levels. By the end of Year 6, most pupils write well in a variety of styles. For example, they write scientific investigations logically using the correct terminology and write equally clearly when using their imaginations. Older pupils choose precise language to describe their thoughts. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote, 'I met at night the mother of sleep, her cloak was of a violet hue.' A pupil in Year 5 chose to describe a willow tree as 'a river flowing down a mountainside' and 'a dove soaring through the sky'. Very good teaching of basic skills ensures that spelling, punctuation and grammar are mostly correct.
37. The school has identified that a few pupils from different minority ethnic groups do not achieve as well as they could in English. As a result, the school has established additional support for these pupils and is working successfully to help them achieve as well as they can. Overall, pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants. However, occasionally, tasks planned for these pupils are too hard and are not focused sharply enough on their individual needs and abilities. On these occasions, these pupils do not make as much progress as they should

38. Lessons are very well planned and teachers make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. As a result, lessons are very sharply focused on teaching specific skills and pupils work hard to achieve them. Very good opportunities are provided for speaking and listening. For example, pupils are often given time to discuss their ideas in pairs or in larger groups. This gives them good opportunities to learn from each other's ideas. Teachers ask questions very skilfully. Through probing questions, they identify what pupils already know and extend their thinking further. Reading and writing skills are linked together very well; texts are used very effectively as a basis for learning basic writing skills. Teachers expect pupils to do well in English and this helps to provide them with the confidence to achieve well. Relationships are excellent and pupils respond by working hard and co-operating fully with their teachers and one another. As one pupil commented, 'lessons are exciting'.
39. The leadership and management of English are very good. The school has effective systems for monitoring standards and teaching that are helping to maintain high standards at the school and raise them further. Some teachers have particular expertise in teaching English and are being used effectively to help raise standards in all classes. The range and quality of books are adequate to promote literacy skills. The school has developed sound plans to improve the provision of books when the new library building is completed later in the year. At present, computers are not used effectively enough to help improve pupils' writing skills. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers in classrooms. Overall, the school has maintained the high standards of provision that were reported at the last inspection and improved those in speaking and listening.

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

40. Good examples of pupils developing and consolidating literacy skills can be seen in science, history and geography. There are also some written evaluations of work in design and technology in some classes. Subject-specific language is taught well in mathematics and science, while geographical displays for example feature the correct terminology for rivers and landscapes. In art and design and drama lessons, pupils discuss and evaluate well their own and others' work. Overall, with the exception of computer lessons, literacy is promoted well across the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standard are above expected levels and most pupils achieve well, especially in mental calculations and number skills
- Staff assess pupils' achievements effectively and use this information well to improve teaching and learning. However, on a few occasions, pupils with special educational needs are not given tasks that are at their ability level
- Leadership and management of mathematics are good overall
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their initiative in problem-solving

### **Commentary**

41. Pupils calculate numbers particularly well. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to work out calculations in their heads and many pupils are very good at devising a variety of ways of solving problems mentally. Teachers encourage pupils well to be aware of the methods they are using and the most effective ways of working out problems. For example, in one lesson in Year 6, pupils calculated their 'weight in gold' converting stones and pounds to ounces and dollars to sterling in order to complete the task. This provided pupils opportunities to work out in a number of different ways an imaginative problem. Standards are above average and similar to those at the last inspection.

42. However, standards attained by Year 6 pupils in 2003 were not as high as this – they were average when compared with all schools and the pupils' achievement was well below average. The reasons for these results were specific to this particular year group. The many changes of teachers experienced by these pupils since they had been in Year 4 was unusually high and a number of higher-attaining pupils had left this year group during this time and were replaced by others who achieved below average results. This indicates that the results in 2003 represent a `dip` in the school's data.
43. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching holds pupils' interests because activities are set that relate to everyday life. Relationships are good and pupils behave well and respond eagerly to the teaching and this helps them learn well. Lessons have a clear focus and pupils are informed clearly what they are about to learn. This enables them to assess for themselves whether or not they have learnt what they should have done in the lesson. In the best lessons, teachers ask questions skilfully and this helps to extend pupils' learning. It gives pupils opportunities to `have a go`, make mistakes and learn from each other's ideas. Teaching and learning are better than they were at the last inspection.
44. Overall, teachers assess pupils' work well and use this information to plan further lessons. However, on a few occasions, children with special educational needs are not given tasks designed specifically for their levels of ability; sometimes work set for them is too hard and they do not make the progress they should on these occasions. In spite of this, they receive good help in their work from teaching assistants and achieve well overall because of the additional help they receive. However, when this help is not available, their achievement on these occasions is unsatisfactory. The achievement of pupils from different minority ethnic groups is good overall.
45. The school is placing a good emphasis on developing pupils' skills in solving problems and carrying out mathematical investigations, especially at the beginnings of lessons. At present, much of this teaching is carried out on a class or group basis. It does not give pupils enough opportunities to solve more complex problems using their own ideas, initiative and ways of working.
46. Careful analysis of assessment and test results has been used well to identify areas where the pupils are not achieving as well as they could so that specific improvements can be made. In this way, the school has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in mathematics and has developed a satisfactory plan to correct the weaknesses identified.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

47. Mathematics is used well in other subjects. For example, whilst studying history pupils used a time line to note other events that had happened between 1939 and 1945. This helps to give pupils an understanding of the order of historical events as well as a sense of time. In geography, pupils recorded the number of vehicles that pass the school using a graph. In physical education, pupils are made aware of symmetry in body shapes. In ICT lessons, computers are used to develop pupils' mathematical skills, such as when they create symmetrical patterns.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average
- Teaching is planned well and often links well with other subjects
- The assessment of pupils' progress is very good and this helps teachers in their planning of lessons; marking helps pupils to improve their work

- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their initiative and plan their investigations themselves
- Pupils with special educational needs are sometimes not given enough guidance about recording their work

### **Commentary**

48. Inspection evidence confirms the results of the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils in 2003 that were above average when compared with all schools. However, this group of pupils entered school with results that were above average and so their achievement was satisfactory overall. Results in science have improved significantly during the past five years. Pupils achieve best in their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science. Their ability to use their initiative and carry out their own investigations is not as good as this; they rely too much on teacher-directed investigations rather than on their own abilities to carry out investigations in their own ways using materials and equipment of their own choosing. This prevents results from being higher than they are, especially when compared with pupils' prior attainment.
49. Teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school and this helps pupils achieve successfully. Lessons are planned carefully and equipment needed for investigations is prepared well and ready for immediate use. This ensures that maximum use is made of the time available in lessons for pupils to learn. In the best lessons, pupils are provided with good opportunities to predict what might happen in their investigations and evaluate afterwards what happened and why it did. Good links are made with other subjects during lessons such as with music, English, mathematics and ICT. For example, one investigation focused on finding out how to alter the pitch and volume of sounds in stringed instruments such as the guitar. Good opportunities are given to consolidate writing skills as pupils record in their books what they have learnt. Results of some investigations involve measuring distances and others are recorded using graphs. Sometimes these are produced using a computer. Pupils are taught to use scientific vocabulary well. They use words such as transparent, opaque and translucent well as they describe how light travels through different materials. Marking of pupils' work indicates what pupils ought to do next in order to do better next time. In spite of this positive picture, sometimes teachers do not always allow pupils to use their own initiative often enough when carrying out their own investigations. In addition, pupils with special educational needs are sometimes not given enough guidance in how to record their work. As a result, it is sometimes not organised well enough and looks untidy. The achievement of pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds is satisfactory.
50. Leadership and management of science are good. Pupils' work is analysed and teachers' plans are monitored. All teachers are observed teaching the subject. As a result of this, the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and standards are known by the school and good steps are taken to improve upon the weaknesses identified. Pupils' progress is assessed well at the end of lessons and units of work and steps are taken to improve the performance of pupils who are not achieving well enough. This is a significant factor in pupils achieving well in the subject. The high standards of provision in science have been maintained since the last inspection, although standards are higher now than they were at that time.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

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

- Teachers explain clearly the purposes of lessons and pupils are aware of what they are expected to learn
- The technician provides very good and useful support to teachers and pupils

- ICT is not used in other subjects as well as it could be

### **Commentary**

51. Overall, standards in ICT at the end of Year 6 are at nationally expected levels. Most pupils enjoy working on computers and achieve satisfactorily. Pupils are learning to use the Internet well. They each have an e-mail address to use within school and their work is monitored well by staff at all times. Their behaviour is good. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.
52. Overall, teaching and learning throughout the school are good and tasks are planned well. At the beginning of lessons, teachers explain clearly what pupils are expected to learn and check at the end that they have learnt what was intended. Teaching and learning are better than they were at the last inspection.
53. The school has recently established a computer suite that has helped provide pupils with satisfactory opportunities to learn about computers. Further plans have been produced to improve provision of computers at the school and this should provide pupils with increased opportunities to develop their skills in this subject. The school employs a technician to help both the staff and children. This is a significant advantage in contributing to pupils' learning because it increases the amount of time pupils have for working on computers – little time is wasted due to technical faults because they have been sorted out by the technician before lessons begin. The leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory. Provision in ICT is better than it was at the last inspection.

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

54. Overall, ICT is not used enough in other subjects. In mathematics, pupils record the number of vehicles passing the school using a graph prepared on the computer. They learn about aspects of other subjects, such as art, by using computers well. They word process some of their work and read poems using the Internet. However, computers in classrooms are not used as much as they could be during lessons to help pupils learn about other subjects. For example, computers are not used often enough in English lessons to help pupils improve their writing and opportunities to use computers to develop pupils' mathematical skills, such as direction and calculating perimeters, are not taken often enough.

### **HUMANITIES**

55. No judgement about overall provision in **geography** can be made. Samples of pupils' work were inspected and a discussion was held with the co-ordinator but no lessons were observed. Long-term planning indicates that enough geography is taught to implement the National Curriculum. Pupils' work indicates that topics are covered in sufficient depth and that they provide pupils with good opportunities to consolidate their skills in English because pupils write out aspects of what they have learnt. They also provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their mathematics skills further. For example, pupils produce graphs that indicate the number of different vehicles that pass the school.
56. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to form a judgement about provision in **history**. Samples of pupils' work were inspected but no lessons were observed. Planning indicates that the National Curriculum is being taught well. Good links are made to literacy as pupils write accounts of what they have learnt. They draw time-lines to record when historical events took place, such as those during the second world war and this helps them to learn how long ago events in the past took place. Some work is linked effectively to geography. For instance, when learning about the local area of the school, pupils learn what the school was like in the past at the same time as drawing a plan of how the school is at the present time.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

57. Not enough evidence was gathered during the inspection to form an overall judgement about provision in art and design, design and technology, physical education and music. Samples of pupils' work in art and design and design and technology were inspected. Two lessons in music and one lesson in each of design and technology and physical education were observed. A discussion was held with each of the subject co-ordinators and teachers' plans were inspected.
58. In **art and design** there is evidence from pupils' work that all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught. Drawing, collage and painting skills are taught well to help pupils develop their skills and ideas. They often use well the skills and techniques used by famous artists in their work. Visitors to the school inspired pupils to produce some very good drawing that reflected African cultures. A recent initiative held on a Saturday morning involving parents and pupils working together resulted in some impressive portrait painting by pupils and their parents. Displays of artwork throughout the school indicate that art and design is a subject that has a high profile. One of the school's teaching assistants, whose professional background is in art, makes a significant contribution to standards achieved by helping pupils in lessons. She has also created many visually attractive murals around the corridors that provide a very stimulating environment in the school that is of exceptional quality.
59. In **design and technology** teachers' plans indicate that national guidance is used well to help plan lessons. Pupils' work indicates that they design and evaluate satisfactorily what they make. Pupils make moving mechanisms, simple structures that are designed to be as strong as possible and products such as cushions and slippers. The slippers made by pupils in Year 6 are impressive and finished off well by the patterns and decorations sewn on to them. Pupils' sewing skills are particularly good and seen to very good effect in a wall hanging that depicts the story of The Lion King. Pupils are helped well with their sewing skills by one of the school's teaching assistants.
60. In **music** the curriculum follows national guidelines well. Lessons are well planned and children are clear what they are expected to learn. Through well-planned topics, pupils learn to compose using an appropriate range of musical instruments. Their attention is drawn to instruments from a variety of countries, some of which they have the opportunity to play. Links are effectively made to other subjects such as science, giving pupils the chance to analyse and compare sounds made by different instruments. For example, their attention is drawn to the different sounds made by both an electric and acoustic guitar. Pupils are taught to respond and review their own ideas about music as they listen to a range of musical styles. Themes such as pop and jazz are used to give pupils a wide experience of different sounds. To help with this, they listen to the work of singers such as Elvis Presley, Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong. The school has recently acquired computer programs to help pupils' learning in music.
61. Pupils are improving their singing skills well. They sing with increasing confidence during assemblies and in lessons as they are taught well how to use their voices to best effect. They respond positively to their teacher and enjoy music lessons. Pupils' skills in music are assessed and recorded effectively by the school.
62. To enrich learning, pupils are provided with good opportunities to learn musical instruments, such as the violin and flute. They are able to join the choir, which is very popular.
63. Pupils like **physical education** lessons. Extra tuition by different subject specialists in tennis, cricket and gymnastics helps to promote pupils' interest and enthusiasm in these aspects of physical education. Some of these sessions take place outside the school day and help to provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their skills. The school is often successful in competitive matches and tournaments. Much interest in sports is generated by the wide range

of activities held outside the school day. The school is working hard to achieve the nationally recognised Activemark award.

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

64. No lessons were observed in **personal, social and health education** and so no overall judgement about provision in this subject can be made. The school sensibly teaches personal, social and health education in each class. During these lessons, pupils learn about the dangers associated with drugs misuse, sex and relationships education, keeping healthy and other issues of current concern and interest. This helps prepare them well for life in today's society. Pupils play and work together well. They discuss their work openly with each other and with their teachers. They take part in many out-of-school activities well and enjoy team games. They are learning well how to become responsible members of the school community.

## 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	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>1</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
<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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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	2
<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	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).*