

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Plymouth

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113487

Headteacher: Mr Paul Cotter

Lead inspector: Dr John Collings

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 267043

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	212
School address:	2 Beaumont Road St Judes Plymouth
Postcode:	PL4 9BE
Telephone number:	(01752) 225 420
Fax number:	(01752) 252 293
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Debbie Story

Dates of previous inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a slightly smaller than average primary school with a strong Catholic ethos central to its mission. There are seven classes, one per year group from reception to Year 6. The Catholic ethos draws pupils from outside the school's immediate catchment area. As at the time of the last inspection, attainment on entry is wide-ranging but broadly average. The socio-economic mix is also wide-ranging and broadly average.

The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is broadly average at 15.1 per cent. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is below average 5.9 per cent and the number of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is broadly average.

Almost all pupils are white British with a small number of mixed race, Black British African, and Chinese pupils. There are four refugees and/or asylum seekers and eight pupils for whom English is an additional language. This is higher than most other schools.

The school has been awarded a Healthy Schools award, a Citizens award and a School Grounds award. The school is involved in initiatives such as the Primary Strategy Consultants Leadership and Plymouth Networked Learning Community. It is also involved with the Family learning programme through parenting skills workshops, sharing masses and sacramental preparation. There are also strong links with feeder schools through challenge days and retreats, and support through specialist status.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2075 2	John Collings	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education
8937	Howard Allen	Lay inspector	
2868 6	Liz Walker	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology
1211 6	Christina Morgan	Team inspector	English History Geography Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Holy Cross Primary School provides **very good** education for its pupils. The standards attained vary with different cohorts of pupils; current standards are **good**. Achievement is consistently **very good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership and management, and teaching is **good** throughout the school. The school is **very effective** and gives **very good** value for money.

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

- Standards in the 2004 national tests are likely to be well above national averages in English, mathematics and science.
- Current standards are good in English and science and very good in mathematics.
- Standards are above national expectations in information and communication technology.
- The very good leadership and management of the headteacher and the senior management team are major factors in creating the very good ethos for learning and personal development.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is very good and results in very good attitudes and behaviour in its pupils.
- The school includes all its pupils fully in every aspect of school life.
- The governing body are excellent.
- The outdoor provision for pupils under-five is unsatisfactory.
- The indoor provision for older pupils' physical education is only adequate.
- The computer suite is very small but adequate.

The effectiveness of the school is very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. It has responded well to the key issues raised. The building has been imaginatively remodelled and, although spaces are still small, for example, the hall and the computer suite, the school makes very good use of the space available. Although there is room for improvement, provision in the Foundation Stage has improved and is now at least satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to explore, investigate, solve problems and answer questions they have raised themselves have significantly improved and are now very good. Marking of pupils' work overall is now good.

Pupils' achievement is **very good**. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in Year 2 was average. Attainment is now above average and showing significant signs of continued improvement. In Year 6, attainment was often above average; it is now consistently above average and often well above average. The value the school adds to pupils' education between Years 3 and 6 is good, and often very good, when compared with similar schools. The quality of teaching and learning is now good with many very good features. The provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils' attendance continues to be satisfactory but their punctuality has improved and is now good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

science	C	A	C	C
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*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.*

Although not yet available, early indications from the national tests in 2004 are likely to show that attainment in English, mathematics and science are well above average. As these children enter the school broadly average, this represents very good achievement, including those for whom English is an additional language and for pupils with special educational needs. Sound provision in the Foundation Stage means the vast majority of children are on course to meet the early learning goals and many will exceed them. In Year 2, standards achieved are good overall. Standards achieved in the current Year 6 are also above those expected nationally. Both these groups of pupils, however, entered the school with attainment below that expected for their age and are making very good progress overall. Pupils' attitudes and personal qualities are very good and behaviour is very good. There are very good relationships between pupils, and teachers and pupils. Attendance is in line with the national average and punctuality is good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** quality of education. Teaching and assessment are good across the school, with a significant amount of very good teaching. Good assessments, particularly in English and mathematics, lead to very good rates of learning for all pupils, including those with English as an additional language and special educational needs. Through very good linking of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum, the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum very well. There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, which makes a significant contribution to their achievements in other areas of the curriculum. All pupils play a full part in lessons and in the excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are fully included.

The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school has been remodelled. Innovative teaching, imaginative use of the accommodation and the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils ensure very effective use is made of the space available. The small hall and the small computer suite, however, impede aspects of physical education for older pupils and large group teaching of information and communication technology.

The support, advice and guidance given to pupils are very good and pupils are very well cared for. Links with the community are very good, as are the links between other schools and with the parents. The views of pupils are sought very well through the effective school council and questionnaires.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are **very good** and are significant factors in enabling pupils' very good achievements as they create a very good ethos for learning. The headteacher and governing body have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governance of the school is excellent overall.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school. Results from the school's own questionnaire, the questionnaire issued for the inspection and the parents' meeting indicate they think their children are taught very well, that behaviour is good, their children are treated fairly and support for home learning is good. Pupils like the school, want to learn and work hard.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school needs to improve are:

- the outdoor facilities for children in the Foundation Stage;
- the accommodation for physical education; and
- the computer suite to enable larger groups of pupils to work simultaneously.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

National tests in 2004 are likely to show that pupils were **well above national averages** by the end of Year 6. This represents **very good achievement** as these pupils entered the school with attainment that was broadly in line with that normally found for their age. Inspection evidence shows that standards overall are above national averages in Year 2 and Year 6. This still represents very good overall achievement because these cohorts of pupils entered the school with attainment below that normally found for their age.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good from Years 1 to 6.
- Standards are currently above national averages in Years 2 and 6.
- Attainment in the Foundation Stage at this early stage in the year is in line with that normally found for their age and achievement is good.

#### Commentary

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage with attainment that is broadly in line with that expected for their age. Overall, the current Year 2 and Year 6 entered the school with attainment below that expected for their age. Although early in the year, children currently in the Foundation Stage entered school with attainment broadly in line with that expected for their age and are likely to achieve well and meet, and in many cases exceed, the early learning goals by the end of the year.
2. In national assessments in Year 2 in 2003, attainment was average in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science showed attainment above average. In 2004, early indications show that pupils were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and achieving very well overall. When compared to schools in similar contexts in 2003, pupils were average in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. At the time of writing, there are no similar school comparisons for 2004 available.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (17.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.7 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.2 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)



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There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in Year 2 is currently not as high as in 2004 because this cohort of pupils entered the school with attainment below that expected for their age; however, they are achieving very well overall. Standards are well above national expectations in mathematics and above national expectations in science at this stage of the academic year. Standards in English are currently broadly average and very likely to be above average by the end of the year.
4. When compared with all schools, standards in national tests for Year 6 in 2003 were above average in English, well above average in mathematics and average in science. When their progress is compared with schools whose attainment was similar in 1999 at the end of Year 2, pupils were above average in English, well above average in mathematics and average in science. The overall value added gain for pupils between 1999 and 2003 was very good.
5. In 2004, early indications show pupils in Year 6 are likely to be well above average in English, mathematics and science. As yet, there is no reliable data to compare pupils' attainment in Year 6 in 2004 with similar schools. Detailed school analysis, however, shows very good achievement and this analysis is used very well to target and support pupils who are not making better than average progress.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (24.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.7 (24.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.3 (26.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. In Year 6, inspection evidence shows standards are above national expectations in English and science, and well above expectations in mathematics for this point in the school year. This represents very good achievement as these pupils were below average in reading and well below average in writing at the end of Year 2 in 2001. The school has worked hard on the differences between reading and writing, and the detailed school records demonstrate an ongoing narrowing of the difference between these scores.
7. The very good achievement in English, mathematics and science is also true for pupils for whom English is an additional language, ethnic minorities and those who have special educational needs. Higher-attaining pupils are also challenged. This is largely due to the good provision for these pupils and the good support they receive from co-ordinators and teaching assistants. Any difference in the attainment of boys and girls tends to vary year-on-year, so is not significant overall. Girls' attainment in English, however, tends to be higher than boys'. The school is aware of this and has put strategies in place to improve particularly boys' writing. As a consequence, the difference between boys' and girls' attainment is getting narrower.
8. In English lessons, pupils demonstrated understanding of the term genre, an enthusiasm for a variety of children's writers and read fluently and with good comprehension from some challenging texts. Improvements in writing are supported by 'writing conferencing', which is having a noticeable impact on pupils' attainment in writing. It provides a constant review of pupils' individual progress towards specific targets and also increases pupil interest, motivation and understanding of how they can improve their work.
9. In mathematics, by Year 6, pupils are very confident and mature in their reasoning about the number facts. Their behaviour is very good because they are involved in the lesson and are very clear about how they can make progress. Their work is marked very well and individual discussion provides very clear guidance. A key feature of this good teaching is the acquisition

of a rich mathematical vocabulary by pupils. Work in every class is matched carefully to the different capabilities and more-able pupils are fully challenged.

10. Inspection evidence shows that science standards for the current Year 6 pupils are above average. This is because pupils at this early stage of the year show significantly better than average skills at investigating questions they have raised themselves.
11. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected for their age in Year 2 and above those expected by Year 6. This is in spite of a small computer suite of only eight computers. This is compensated for by good use of information and communication technology equipment in classrooms and the very good support of teaching assistants in a computer suite.
12. Judgements on provision, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning are not possible in art and design, design and technology, music, history, geography or physical education because too few lessons were seen. There is a large amount of evidence, however, around the school in art and design and design and technology. This showed standards above national expectations. The focus on teaching pupils to recognise and interpret the work of different artists is good. There are very good links and pupils consolidate learning using art and design skills in many areas of the curriculum. Music has maintained the high profile that it enjoyed at the time of the previous inspection. In particular, the standard of singing is high throughout the school and the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Music is a key element in the ethos of the school and pupils are enthusiastic. History and geography are well established, with an interesting and stimulating curriculum which makes very good use of the locality. Both history and geography are used regularly as a focus for work in literacy through pieces of extended writing and there are frequent opportunities for pupils to engage in detailed research. The accommodation for physical education is barely adequate. The hall is small, particularly for older pupils, and the school uses a playing field in a local park, resulting in some time lost in travelling. The standard of dance however, seen in a Year 6 lesson, was above that expected, largely due to very good teaching and making best use of facilities available.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are all **very good**. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school ethos encourages all pupils to flourish, respect others and be respected.
- Pupils' very good behaviour.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to their work.
- The very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults.
- The school sets high standards with regard to pupils' conduct.
- The wide range of cultural and multicultural experiences enjoyed by the pupils.

### **Commentary**

13. The level of pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with similar schools. Pupils generally arrive promptly for school, and lessons start promptly throughout the day. The school or education welfare officer follows up any concerns about pupils' attendance or lateness. There have been two exclusions in the last year but none permanent. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there were two exclusions, none of which was permanent.
14. Pupils' behaviour has improved even on the high standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils are always courteous and show respect for property and each other. Pupils go out of their way

to make visitors welcome. There is a calm atmosphere enabling pupils to learn. Pupils behave equally well outside the classrooms; for example, even at break and lunchtimes when pupils are able to let off steam, there are no incidents of rough play and the playgrounds and dining hall are safe places for even the youngest pupils.

15. Pupils' attitudes to work have also improved since the last inspection and are now also very good. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and respond well to the good, challenging teaching. They are eager to answer questions and clearly enjoy learning new things. Teachers and teaching assistants help improve pupils' confidence by ensuring their efforts are acknowledged and successes celebrated. During the inspection, many pupils approached inspectors to show off the work of which they were rightly proud.
16. The school promotes good behaviour and positive attitudes very well. Pupils are proud of the house points they receive for good work or good deeds and their efforts are celebrated at assembly. Class circle time is used effectively to promote positive attitudes and values. Other acknowledgements, such as the Headteacher's Award, and Pupil of the Week Award, all help towards promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
17. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has also improved overall on the good standards of the last inspection. Whole-school assemblies are of a very high standard, and their spiritual dimension provides an excellent start and sets the tone for the day. The Catholic ethos of the school makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on moral issues and assemblies are also used well to encourage pupils to respect the feelings of others and support each other. This was evident from the first morning of the inspection when the school sang 'Haere Mai' ('Welcome' in Maori) in such good voice to the inspection team. Pupils have many opportunities to gain an understanding of the cultures and beliefs of others. Pupils not only have an understanding of their local community, its history and culture but also gain a good understanding of the wider world and the multicultural diversity that exists in society today. There is an effective school council through which pupils take a significant level of responsibility. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is also good.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
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.*

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British – African
Chinese

No. of pupils on roll
164
2
1
3
1
3
7

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
2	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
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*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 **very good** overall.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning, and assessment, are **good** overall, with many very good aspects.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between pupils and teachers engage and motivate pupils to learn and ensure pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach ensures lessons are well planned, challenging and well matched to pupils' age and capabilities.
- Teachers' high expectations and inclusion of all pupils ensures all pupils achieve very well.
- Planning of cross-curricular links enables pupils to apply and consolidate learning in one subject in another.
- Teaching assistants are used very well to ensure all groups of pupils are challenged appropriately.
- Lessons have good pace and resources are used well.
- Assessment, and its use in planning, is good overall, particularly in English and mathematics.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	7	14	5	0	0	0

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

18. Teaching is good overall. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and good, with a significant proportion of very good teaching, in Years 1 to 6. Good relationships, not only between pupils, but also between teachers and pupils, results in pupils collaborating well and developing increasing independence. All pupils are fully integrated into lessons, ensuring all make good progress. Teachers, from the least to the most experienced, create an ethos for learning where pupils are keen to come to school, have very good attitudes to learning, behave very well and want to learn.
19. Almost all lessons seen were well planned to ensure the full range of pupils in the class were challenged appropriately, including pupils for whom English is an additional language, those who have special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils. This was apparent in an excellent Year 6 mathematics lesson on the classification of quadrilaterals. All pupils were engaged in investigating the number of sides and angles of given examples and then hypothesising whether the 'rule' found was true of others. Good challenge to meet the needs of all pupils was seen also in a Year 1 English lesson where they were encouraged to find substitutes for rhyming words.
20. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They expect them to work hard, to have positive attitudes and behave well. In a Year 2 science lesson, pupils' very good behaviour enabled them to be fully involved in a very good range of activities to develop their understanding of sound during a visit to the local museum. High expectations challenged pupils to express their understanding through very good use of technical vocabulary such as: loud, soft, high, low and vibration.
21. A particular strength of the planning is the school's increasing use of cross-curricular links between subjects. This is where the knowledge, understanding and skills taught in one subject are applied and consolidated in another. Where links are made, these are made clear to pupils, so they understand the inter-relationships between subjects. Particularly good examples were seen in Year 4 and Year 5, for example, a very good Year 4 design and technology lesson on the comparison of different types of bridges had strong links to science

and the measurement of forces. Good links were also made between music, history and dance in Year 5. Here, pupils' choreographed steps for a Tudor dance in music in preparation for a performance in physical education. Good use is also made of information and communication technology across subjects, for example, pupils use the Internet to research information, compose, carry out calculations and record and present their work.

22. Teaching assistants are used well to ensure all groups of pupils are challenged appropriately. They are well briefed by teaching staff and make a significant contribution to supporting groups of pupils, particularly those for whom English is an additional language and those who have special educational needs. Good examples were seen in information and communication technology where, after an initial input in the classroom by the class teacher, teaching assistants take groups of pupils into the computer suite to implement, practise and develop their skills. Teaching assistants are also used in other lessons, such as the Year 2 science and the Year 6 mathematics lessons cited above.
23. Almost all lessons have good pace, which is a significant factor in engaging the interest and involvement of all pupils. This was evident in a very good Year 5 mathematics lesson where the change of pace and the quiet, effective manner of the teacher ensured all pupils were actively engaged in discussion of mathematical ideas and concepts. Teachers also use resources well, particularly laptops and projectors in many lessons, enabling clear presentation of new ideas. Pupils' hands-on interaction develops knowledge and understanding and skills effectively. A good example was a Year 4 lesson introducing the use of the new programme to enable pupils to record short video clips to enhance the presentation of their work.
24. Teaching is less successful when time is not used effectively and pupils are not fully engaged, or where teaching assistants are not deployed effectively.
25. Assessment is good overall. Assessment of English and mathematics is very good. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is systematically monitored against clear targets and, where they are not making at least satisfactory progress, pupils are given additional support to ensure they achieve well. Assessment in other subjects, although satisfactory, is not used as systematically to inform planning based on pupils' prior attainment.

## The curriculum

The school ensures that all pupils have a **very good** quality and range of learning opportunities, both through the basic curriculum and through an **excellent** range of extra-curricular opportunities.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is developing good cross curricular links between subjects so that knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one subject are applied and consolidated in another.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There is an excellent range of extracurricular activities.
- Resources are good and used well.
- The accommodation imposes some limitations on the curriculum.

## Commentary

26. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with an increasing emphasis on the development of meaningful cross-curricular links between subjects. This enables pupils to apply and consolidate knowledge and understanding and skills learnt in one subject, in another. This is effectively creating a stimulating and interesting curriculum tailored to the particular

needs of the school, and one which challenges and motivates pupils. This approach contributes significantly to the high standards, good achievement and very good behaviour of the pupils. The school is constantly refining and adapting the curriculum to take on new initiatives. For example, there is a developing awareness of the different ways in which pupils learn and the need to involve pupils in evaluating their own learning through, for instance, the 'writing conferencing' programme, which is beginning to raise standards in writing in Years 3 to 6.

27. Although the school building is attractive and stimulating, the limitations of the site and the small hall restrict the range of activities in information and communication technology and physical education. The school uses all space creatively and has been inspired by the very limitations of the accommodation to come up with imaginative curriculum solutions. In particular, there is extremely good use of the local area to widen pupils' range of experiences. The school treats the nearby city centre as a wonderful resource for broadening pupils' cultural and investigative horizons. All junior pupils have opportunities for residential visits and the lack of playground space and a field have resulted in extra efforts being put into providing a wide variety of sports activities.
28. The school ensures that all pupils have access to the full range of curriculum opportunities and overall there is a good match of teaching skills to the demands of the curriculum. Support for pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English is very good. The school has achieved a good balance in its provision between enabling pupils to access the curriculum and ensuring that their individual learning needs are met. Support staff are well trained and very well matched to the needs of pupils in the school, and make a very positive contribution to the progress of pupils. Through the new initiative of 'assessment for learning', specific individual or group needs are identified and support staff are used to address them through a short intensive programme. More able pupils are appropriately challenged not only by the day-to-day curriculum but also by the excellent provision for all pupils outside the school day including sports and music. Other initiatives such as monthly mathematical investigations and opportunities for research in history and geography provide additional stimulation. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, and this has improved since the last inspection.

### Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are **very good**. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is also **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' welfare is a priority of all staff at the school.
- Every pupil is well supported by a number of adults.
- Pupils' views are valued by the school and acted upon.
- The high quality of monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development.
- Induction arrangements for children entering the school at Foundation Stage could be improved.

### Commentary

29. The standard of provision of the support, guidance and pupil welfare has improved even above the good standards reported at the last school inspection.
30. The school is very aware of the difficulties posed by the constrained site. The very good pupil behaviour helps to ensure there are few accidents when pupils negotiate the many stairs and

doorways in the multi-level school. The school and the grounds are kept very clean and there is no litter or graffiti. The school takes health and safety issues seriously. Corridors are kept clear of clutter and resources are stored away safely where necessary. The school has a nominated safety officer who ensures regular safety audits are undertaken and any issues are quickly addressed. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for the many school visits and also specialist teaching activities such as PE.

31. Child protection procedures are secure and all staff know the co-ordinator and responsible governor. The school has good relationships with other agencies such as social services and education welfare. Teachers and teaching assistants have a very good knowledge of the pupils in their care. Pupils feel confident of approaching any adults in school if they are not feeling well or are worried about anything. All staff have benefited from First Aid awareness training this academic year.
32. Teachers and teaching assistants assess pupils very regularly. From the time children enter the Foundation Stage, their achievements are regularly monitored and the school is able to measure the progress made by every pupil very well. This ensures pupils who do not make the progress expected or have some special need are quickly identified and where necessary have their own individual education plans. Pupils for whom English is not their first language are also well supported by the school. From the time they arrive, they are assessed and provided with extra support as necessary. This enables such pupils to integrate quickly and they have few problems coping with school life.
33. The school values the opinions of pupils and consults them wherever appropriate. The school has sought pupils' opinions through questionnaires and there is also an active school council which represents the views of the children. In the classroom, pupils' opinions are always valued, and as a result, they are always eager to contribute to lessons and answer any questions. Pupils are also regularly involved in setting and reviewing their own targets. All pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities within the classroom, such as putting out and clearing away equipment or giving out registers. As pupils progress through the school, they may also take on more responsible roles, such as House Captains or Peer Mediators. Sharing important responsibilities helps improve pupils' confidence and self-esteem and ensures that by the age of 11, they are well prepared for secondary school.
34. Induction arrangements for pupils arriving new to the school are good. However, the school has yet to fully address the problems that can result for some children new to the Foundation class. These children arrive from many different feeder nurseries and more could be done to ensure both the children and their parents are better prepared for starting at Holy Cross. The school has already recognised this and has started to address the issue within the school development plan by initiatives such as home visits for the new Reception intake.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Parents' views are taken seriously and form part of the school's development planning.
- The very good relationships between parents and staff at the school.
- The good links with other schools, enabling best practice to be shared.

### **Commentary**

35. The school has improved the links with the parents of the children who attend even above the high standards reported at the last inspection. Parents are very confident in the school's ability to provide the best possible education for their children.



36. Parents have no problem in discussing any concerns with staff at the school and they confirm that the school responds very positively to any issues they raise. The very good relationships between school staff and the parents are very evident when parents come to school to deliver or collect their children. Good use is also made of the telephone and home /school books to exchange information with the school.
37. Parents are aware of the work their children are doing in school as they receive curriculum information at the start of the school term. The school operates an open door policy, which enables parents to raise any concerns, including issues relating to the progress their children may be making. All parents have the opportunity to discuss any problems at the scheduled termly open evening. Parents of children who have special educational needs have the opportunity to attend additional meetings to discuss their child's individual education plan (IEP). The quality of the annual reports parents receive about their children's progress is high.
38. Parents are confident the school is well run and they have an input about the education their children receive. The school consults with parents on a regular basis and a questionnaire had been recently used to provide input to the school's development plan. This included the development of a school web site that is being increasingly used by parents for information about the school including its curricular provision. Parents benefit from the annual workshops in literacy and numeracy that are held at the school. The school has an active Parent Teacher and Friends Association that organises social and fundraising activities.
39. The school is outward looking and uses the local and wider community well. Visitors to the school include the fire service, police, the librarian, the parish priest and other faith groups. The Music Zone provides opportunities for pupils to take part in clubs and enjoyable performances. The school makes full use of its location, enabling pupils to benefit from trips to such places as the Museum, Art Gallery, Plymouth College of Art and Design, the University, Library, Cinema and Theatre Royal. The school also participates in a number of community events, including Harvest Festival, carol singing at a number of venues around the city and Lord Mayor's Day.
40. The school benefits from very good links with other schools. Sporting events held against other schools include football, netball, cricket, tag-rugby, kwik cricket, cross country, inter-school athletics and the Junior Ten Tors. Holy Cross is able to work with other schools looking at shared issues such as 'Working with Support Staff' as part of the Plymouth Network Learning Community. Local secondary schools offer challenge days for Year 5 pupils and the arts at Holy Cross benefit from links with a specialist status secondary school. The school welcomes visiting teachers who contribute to raising standards on specific topics such as literacy. Staff from Holy Cross also visit neighbouring schools to share best practice. Mechanisms for the transfer of pupils to secondary school are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governance of the school is excellent.
- The headteacher is instrumental in creating a collegiate and team approach with all stakeholders in developing the excellent school improvement plan.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- The school's excellent ethos is open, inclusive and values every member of the school community.

### **COMMENTARY**

41. The quality of leadership and management is very good overall. The school is very well managed and governance is excellent. The headteacher gives exceptionally clear leadership

and is given good support by the hardworking and committed staff. The headteacher is a consultant leader in Plymouth and shares his very good practice with a number of schools in the area. A number of the staff are fairly new to the school and are very well supported within their new roles so that they and the pupils can develop their very good skills in learning and teaching.

42. The headteacher has, with the active participation of every member of the school community, identified appropriate areas for progress for the school and has initiated the creation of a very clear and comprehensive school improvement plan. This detailed, but working, document is driving the school forward in its relentless aim to drive up standards, exemplified by the various written annotations that have already appeared on it. Monitoring the success of items in the plan is already well under way, using the leadership team of teachers, the admin staff and governors efficiently.
43. The governors are very much involved in the strategic development of the school, acting as both critical friends, recognising strengths and weaknesses, and in seeking to proclaim and address the issues. This lies in the monitoring which is carried out through searching questions being asked on the headteacher's report and through first-hand knowledge of specific governors, who each have a responsibility for an area of the curriculum, staffing or building. All governors are committed to a strong Catholic ethos and to the inclusion of all pupils. Through a range of well-planned and focused visits, the governors are developing a first rate understanding of the needs of the school.
44. The school is very well managed overall. Recent changes in the leadership and senior management teams are bedding down and are involving all staff in decision making and in developing their subjects through well-informed training and discussions. Staff who are new to management roles are well supported. There are very good procedures to induct and support new staff into the school, and the school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training.
45. The school is excellent at analysing performance data and establishing from it areas for development. For example, it has already established the levels of challenge for more-able pupils as an area for development and has put in place procedures to address this. Finances are managed very efficiently; the governors monitor spending plans rigorously. The office is very well managed and the focal point of the school, where the needs of the children and their families are well-known, and supported with good humour and efficiency, so relieving the headteacher and other staff of many of the routine day-to-day management responsibilities. The school ensures that good value is gained from all spending decisions. Although the school has been carrying forward a higher than usual sum each year, there are clear plans for the spending of these funds and they are reducing.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	470,781
Total expenditure	476,467
Expenditure per pupil	2,258

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30,943
Balance carried forward to the next year	31,065

46. The headteacher, with the support of the governors, is very involved in developing leadership and school improvement skills within the city and uses this expertise to develop his own and those of others within the school, so that improvements in teaching and learning benefit from his expertise. This additional resource is used to extend the professional expertise of all staff within the school thus developing both expertise and resources. Taking into account all relevant factors, the school is giving very good value for money.

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

At the time of the last report, teaching in the reception class was unsatisfactory; the children of reception age were admitted over three terms. All children are now admitted at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. Many are very young and have limited experience of nursery or playgroups. They enter school with attainment similar to that found nationally. School records show that these pupils make at least good progress during their Reception Year.

The newly-appointed co-ordinator is developing the Foundation Stage curriculum to accommodate the resources to teaching and learning in the Reception classroom. Teaching is now good overall, but it is still the case that too few demands are being made on some children so they are not all yet achieving as well as they could. This is especially the case for the more able. There are some good systems for developing the children's social awareness. The children are beginning to recognise the routines of the classroom and appreciate the need to conform and work alongside each other. Almost all children are likely to reach or exceed the expectations for their age by the end of the year.

There are insufficient constructive opportunities for children to consolidate learning in all areas of the curriculum. When they are selecting activities, these are not always relevant to the learning objectives, particularly in English and mathematics.

Since the time of the last inspection, the accommodation is much improved. Staff are beginning to enhance and develop the opportunities for a wider range of imaginative areas and independent learning activities. However, there is insufficient relevant equipment and structured play activities to enhance children's learning experiences. The lack of sufficient stimuli, both inside and outside, limits the overall opportunities for children to build and develop their creative and physical skills. The outdoor area does not give the children sufficient opportunities to explore a wider environment as part of their learning, particularly related to their physical development.

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

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

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

- Relationships between staff and children are good.
- Good systems are in place to settle children into school.
- The children are not given enough opportunities to explore and initiate their own learning.

#### **Commentary**

47. The children achieve well in this aspect of their development and teaching is good. Behaviour is good and the children are very willing to listen to and work with each other. However, there are too few opportunities for children to develop more independence and use their initiative. Teachers value children's ideas, leading to good self-esteem, but expectations for children to make appropriate choices are sometimes limited by the lack of interesting and different tasks available. They are eager to respond to any adult who works with them in a small group and enjoy the positive interaction between members of the group. They share their ideas and equipment well whilst developing a good sense of self-worth. The children in the Reception class are eager and confident speakers. They are anxious to share their news and add their

views to a discussion. They make relevant comments and are able to retell a familiar story and enter into the spirit of 'Going on a bear hunt' with alacrity, so appreciating the finer points in the detail and humour in their choices of familiar stories and rhymes. Almost all children are likely to meet or exceed the expectations for their age by the end of the year.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy using words and talk with some confidence.
- Children get pleasure from listening to stories and share with enthusiasm a good range of action songs and rhymes.

### **Commentary**

48. Teaching is satisfactory. The teacher is well organised and supported well by the classroom assistant and other adults. Lessons are varied and the emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills pervades all areas of the curriculum. However, some sessions are not sufficiently focused on developing reading and writing skills where children do not have enough opportunity to practise their writing patterns or letter sounds freely. They are not sufficiently supported in their role-play activities and are not extended or motivated by other activities and experiences to consolidate and use their new skills. The lack of opportunity to use their knowledge is unsatisfactory. Worksheets are limiting children's enthusiasm and restricting the opportunities to use their skills in other contexts.
49. Children are beginning to copy their name and are beginning to use patterns to form letters well. There are too few opportunities for children to use a variety of writing tools and so they do not make sufficient progress in this area of learning. They are beginning to make good progress in recognising letter sounds and blends but sounds are taught in isolation and regular patterns of sounds are not fully incorporated as a significant part of lessons. This limits their word-building skills.
50. Assessments are developing and are noting, informally, the progress children are making. Baseline tests are due to be undertaken and there are clear processes so that progress over time can be carefully measured by the time children leave Reception. Almost all of the class are likely to reach the expectations for their age group in this area of learning by the end of the school year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are learning to count well.
- Teaching is good.
- Activities are well focused on developing number skills.

### **Commentary**

51. When children enter school, there is a broad range of attainment in this area of learning. The children make good progress and relish being able to count confidently to five and recognise some numbers to ten. A good range of activities supports the learning and classroom

assistants work well with the children. The clear link with the Three Bears story gives rise to a very good range of mathematical language where children describe the big bear as “huge” and matched the “biggest” bowl at his place; the boys are very happy to decide the tallest girl should be Daddy Bear.

52. The children, at the beginning of the lesson, are very anxious to make sure that the puppet is familiar with what they are expected to learn, thus recognising their own learning objective. The very good use of the puppet engages and focuses the children on the key words of “longer, shorter”. They enter into the activity with enthusiasm, sharing the wide range of equipment well with each other as they construct towers or thread beads that are longer or shorter than each other’s. The more-able children are able to count fluently to ten and discriminate between the colours and patterns. The lesson is fluent and children make good progress. They are confident when giving responses and posing the questions for the puppet which enable teachers to measure how much they have learnt. Teaching is good overall because lessons are well planned, engage children and good use is made of resources, including the adult classroom support, which is very good and enables children who are dual language learners to play a full part in the lesson. The tasks within the lessons are good: however, there are insufficient activities for children to explore independently to consolidate their learning at other times outside the lesson.
53. Children are achieving well and are in line to reach or exceed the expectations for their age group by the end of the school year. They are able to identify simple two-dimensional shapes and are beginning to count and recognise numbers to ten and beyond at this stage of the school year.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are introduced to a good variety of sensory experiences.
- They are well aware of their own faith traditions within the Catholic ethos of the school.
- They share a delight in exploring new situations and experiences.
- The more-able pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging tasks.

### **Commentary**

54. Children are achieving well at this stage of the school year. They are eager to explore new equipment and the interesting classroom environment. Children have a wide range of learning experiences in this area of learning. Many of the experiences are linked through a common theme based on stories about bears. Children of all capabilities increase their vocabulary when they observe different textures as they walk around the school as well as recognising the difference between describing and using alternative words for rough and smooth and old and new parts of the building. Classroom support assistants are very good in assisting children to extend their ideas, using gentle encouragement to develop ideas and vocabulary. The children are fully conversant with using their senses to describe different scenarios. Children experience tasting sessions and porridge tasting stimulated much discussion as children describe its texture as “gooey, stretchy, and sticky”.
55. The children are very aware and have frequent opportunities to experience Bible stories and recognise how they should treat each other with respect. Children’s computer skills are developing well within the classroom and demonstrate their obvious enjoyment at completing the puzzle by using the mouse carefully and recognising important keyboard features.

56. Because of overall good teaching, almost all children are achieving well and they are likely to reach or exceed the expectations for their age group in this area of learning by the end of the school year.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Within the limited resources children use the equipment well, but further work remains to be done to improve the outdoor play provision.
- Classroom support is well focused in ensuring children use the limited opportunities well.

### **Commentary**

57. Provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory and the range of equipment and activities provided limits the opportunities for physical development. However, overall good teaching makes good use of the limited opportunities, which are planned well so that children can use the equipment within very limited confines. The children are eager to extend these opportunities but they are constrained because there are limited times when they can explore the outdoor environment. The lack of a theme or direction precludes any planned development by the teacher and does not extend the higher-attaining children to use the area as part of a learning experience.
58. Children use a selection of simple tools and small equipment to develop their fine manipulative skills well. They are given good opportunities throughout the day to develop their pencil, painting and cutting skills in addition to using puzzles and a range of manipulative and construction toys.
59. Almost all children are likely to meet the expectations for this area of learning by the end of the year.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

60. There were no opportunities to observe any lessons where the children could explore any creative ideas. It is therefore not possible to make judgements about provision, teaching and learning or children's standards or achievement in this area of learning.
61. From the displays and work around the reception area, children use a variety of different media, paint and textures linked to the theme. Opportunities are presented for children to take part in role-play. Good use is made of the percussion resources to develop rhythms and counting skills. Children are taught the skills to draw and paint self-portraits, which are used well to develop observational skills and in recognising each other. They use glue to make collages and create models. Good provision is made for children who are dual language learners and those who are lower attainers, who are included in all activities and who particularly enjoy action rhymes and singing.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve very well across the school.
- The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils whose first language is not English is very good.
- Standards in reading are well above the national averages in Year 6.
- The school monitors and evaluates its provision in English continuously and effectively.

### **Commentary**

62. Pupils enter the school with variable standards of attainment in communication, language and literacy. As a result of good teaching, all make good progress and recent results in national tests are likely to be well above average by the end of Year 6. Achievement is very good overall. Boys do not achieve as well as girls but, because of the strategies put in place by the school the difference between them is narrowing. The school tracks the progress of individual pupils and provides effective support for those identified as not making satisfactory progress. The school's very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, those whose first language is not English and ethnic minority pupils ensures not only that all pupils have access to the curriculum but that individual learning needs are addressed. Higher-attaining pupils also achieve very well.
63. Pupils' above average attainment in reading by Year 6 has been maintained since the last inspection. The programme for guided reading is effective and pupils are introduced to a wide range of stimulating literature appropriate to the range of capabilities in the class. In discussion, pupils understood the term genre, demonstrated enthusiasm for a variety of children's writers and read fluently and with good comprehension from some challenging texts.
64. The school recognises that pupils' attainment in writing, although good, continues to be an area for development and has put strategies in place for improving individual pupils' competencies in this area. One to one support through 'writing conferencing', although costly in terms of adult input, is already having a noticeable impact on pupils' attainment. It provides a constant review of pupils' individual progress towards specific targets and also increases pupil interest, motivation and understanding of how they can improve their work.
65. Attainment in Year 2 is currently broadly average and likely to be above national averages by the end of the year. Hearing pupils read and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the current Year 2 have come up from Year 1 with less well-established basic skills than the previous Year 2. This is particularly evident in pupils' handwriting, use of punctuation and vocabulary development. Evidence from the current Year 3's work while in Year 2 indicates that pupils made good progress through very effective teaching. The class teacher is already aware of specific areas for development and there is already positive linking of pupils' reading and writing development and an emphasis on widening pupils' vocabulary. Overall, provision and standards have improved since the last inspection.
66. Teaching is good overall. Good planning ensures there are high expectations and challenge which engages pupils in learning. As a result of good teaching, pupils behave very well and this ensures they make better than average progress. Pupils use information and communication technology well for word processing, presentation and research.
67. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and has a clear overview of the quality of teaching and learning in the school. There is very effective teamwork amongst the teachers and other staff. This helps to provide stability and consistently challenging work even during periods of staff change. Assessment data is analysed and used very effectively to set targets for pupils. This creates a lively, thoughtful and challenging climate in which pupils learn with confidence. Collaborative learning is encouraged, new routines are quickly assimilated and pupils work well even when not directly supervised.

### **Language and Literacy across the curriculum**

68. Literacy is well developed in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in history, pupils use their writing skills to write narrative accounts of the experiences of evacuees. Equally, other subjects are used well as a focus for work within the literacy hour and make a positive contribution to the continued focus on pupils' writing skills. Word processing skills are developed in ICT.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good progress made since the last inspection.
- Systems of assessment are excellent and are used constructively to provide the plans for the next stage of learning for different groups of pupils.
- The pupils' achievement is very good throughout the school.
- The above average standard of the pupils' number work.

### **Commentary**

69. The pupils make very good progress from average attainment on entry to the school to reach well above average attainment by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils are above national averages. Any differences between boys and girls change from year to year and overall there is no significant difference in their attainment.
70. Teaching is good overall with very good aspects. The pace of lessons is very good and pupils react well to the good teaching which permeates throughout the school. Lessons are very well planned and meet the needs of all pupils, including those who are dual language learners, minority ethnic pupils, have special educational needs and who are gifted and talented. Teaching assistants are focused on the needs of the pupils they are supporting. They are clearly directed by the planning which ensures they recognise both content and resources which help to make certain these pupils acquire a good mathematical vocabulary which they use with confidence. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were very confident and mature in their reasoning about the number facts surrounding '36', giving many examples of  $36 \times 10$ , 100 or 1,000 and defining the square root of 36. Pupils' behaviour is very good because they are involved in the lesson and are very clear about how they can make progress. Their work is marked very well and individual discussion provides very clear guidance. A key feature of this good teaching is the acquisition by pupils of a rich mathematical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 2 discuss easily the different axis on a block graph and classify by colour their sweets in order to compare the numbers of different colours in comparable tubes.
71. More-able pupils are achieving very well and good levels of challenge are offered to these pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6. For example, in one lesson, even the mental work at the start of the lesson contained differentiated work, which challenged pupils at all levels. This was a test of their knowledge and the speed and recall of their knowledge of complex number facts. Lessons are well structured, and the more able are expected to work with decimals. The less able were well supported by the teacher and learning support assistant in working with less demanding, but still challenging, multiplication facts. Assessment is used very well to set challenging targets based on pupils' prior attainment.
72. Strengths in the subject include pupils' number work. Their use of vocabulary, when defining specific properties and measurements of regular and irregular shapes when they interrogate the facts, is both speedy and accurate.



73. The pupils in Year 5 are confident with their multiplication skills. They use a calculator effectively to check complex calculations when solving difficult number problems. Competence is developed through the teacher encouraging class discussion so pupils refine how they are to solve mathematical problems through, for example, the use of interim calculations. Through supported discussion, pupils are successful and build confidence in developing mathematical concepts.
74. Coverage in all areas of the curriculum is thorough, as the planning of the National Numeracy Strategy is followed, but adapted to the individual and group needs. Staff training has been good and teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject. A significant contribution to this confidence is the benefit gained from the links with local schools and the sharing of good practice. The joint meetings of subject leaders and teachers to share planning have had a good impact on pupils' achievement.
75. Systems of assessment are very thorough and are used well to measure the progress of the pupils from year to year. The results of assessments are recorded in a way that enables teachers to know exactly what each pupil has learnt and understood so that they can meet their needs in the future. Targets are clearly focused on each and every pupil so that individual progress is tracked throughout the pupils' time in school. Pupils are very aware of what they need to achieve to make the progress expected of them because their work is well marked with clear guidance given.
76. The newly-appointed subject leader understands the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has a clear vision of what needs to be done in order to improve, for example, the resources and to raise standards even further by refining and improving the already very good practice which is in place throughout the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and standards have improved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

77. Mathematics is well used in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, tables and graphs are used in science to record results. Pupils use their skills of measuring in design and technology, geography and in the production of time lines in different periods of history.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **good**.

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

- Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are above average for the pupils' age and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' ability to carry out independent investigations is above average.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory but are not rigorous enough to plan work that is clearly based on pupils' prior attainment.

#### **Commentary**

78. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection when they were judged broadly average. Early indications show that in the 2004 national assessments, Year 6 pupils were well above national averages. This is a result of an increased emphasis on the use of investigation, which has led to increased pupil confidence to apply and consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills. In particular, there are increasing opportunities, particularly in Year 6, for pupils to devise and carry out investigations into questions they have raised for themselves. This was apparent in a very good Year 6 lesson where pupils investigated a range of factors that influenced how quickly various solids dissolved in a solvent.

79. Current standards are above levels expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 6. They are lower than the previous year because the current Year 2 and Year 6 are lower-attaining cohorts; however, they are achieving well. There is no significant difference overall between the attainment of boys and girls or ethnic groups. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well.
80. Teaching is good. All teachers plan and manage their classes well. They involve their pupils through challenging discussion and questioning, and give them opportunities to collaborate and carry out practical work. Lessons have good pace and all pupils are fully involved. The strength of the science teaching seen was teacher knowledge and ability to create opportunities for pupil discussion and give them opportunities to apply and consolidate their learning through practical work. This was evident in the Year 2 visit to the local museum. The pupils' enthusiasm to engage in the interactive displays, through the well-directed support of classroom assistants and helpers ensured pupils were fully engaged in learning about sound. This application and consolidation of learning was also evident in a Year 4 lesson that combined science with a design and technology project by comparing the forces involved through the effectiveness of different bridge designs.
81. Information and communication technology is being increasingly used in science, for example, using a data-logger to record temperature changes over time and researching information from the Internet. Some opportunities are not fully exploited, however, for example, the use of the word processor to record science work, the use of digital cameras and a multimedia program to present work done in science.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject manager has only been in post since September and has had little opportunity to review work or lessons. Overall, there are satisfactory assessment procedures. Whilst pupils' progress is monitored, assessment outcomes are not systematically used to plan work that is based securely on pupils' prior attainment. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with high standards and a significant improvement in pupils' investigation skills.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the last inspection, and meet national expectations for Year 2 and are above expectations in Year 6. Overall achievement is good, and very good at Key Stage 2.
- The use of information and communication technology to support other subjects in the curriculum is good.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but outcomes are not used sufficiently to plan work based on pupils' prior attainment.
- Accommodation is adequate; however, through innovative and imaginative provision, the school makes very good use of what is available.
- Very good pupil attitudes and behaviour.

### **Commentary**

83. There has been good improvement in ICT since the last inspection. In spite of expectations in ICT rising nationally, standards in Year 2 are in line with national expectations and by the end of Year 6, above national expectations. Good leadership and management have enabled the school to teach a good ICT curriculum even though the ICT suite has only eight computers. This has been done through use of teacher laptops linked to a projector in every classroom,

enabling whole-class teaching. Knowledgeable classroom assistants supervise pupils' individual work.

84. By the start of Year 2, pupils use a simple spreadsheet to record and graph class birthdays. By the start of Year 6, pupils already create Web pages, use the Internet to research information on World War II, word process much of their work, use spreadsheets to monitor changes in costings, and use sensors to record changing temperature, light and sound levels.
85. Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and very well organised to make the best use of the facilities available. Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a major contribution to the effective delivery of the curriculum in cramped accommodation. Teachers and classroom assistants are knowledgeable, challenging and encourage pupils' independence. This enables pupils to make good progress, apply and consolidate skills, and use ICT as a tool to support their learning.
86. Leadership of the subject is good. The school has made good progress. The school's action plan has identified the need for more accurate assessment to ensure pupils are challenged sufficiently through work that is securely based on their prior attainment.

### **The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum**

87. Teachers' use of laptops, linked to class projectors, is not only a good example to pupils but also emphasises ICT as a tool across the curriculum. This facility enables teachers to involve pupils in using computers in the vast majority of lessons and has been a significant aspect in understanding the value of ICT across the curriculum by Year 6 pupils in particular.

## **HUMANITIES**

88. **History** and **geography** are well established with an interesting and stimulating curriculum which makes very good use of the locality. Pupils are enabled to put their knowledge into context through a well-developed cross-curricular approach. Both subjects are used regularly as a focus for work in literacy and there are frequent opportunities for pupils to engage in detailed research. Literacy skills are well developed through pieces of extended writing. Use of the Internet for research also develops their ICT skills.
89. A wide variety of visits and visitors motivates pupils and gives additional relevance to lessons. Links with museums and other local facilities in the nearby city centre are invaluable in bringing the curriculum alive. A range of excellent displays, including one on Brunel's Saltash Bridge, celebrate the high quality of pupils' work.

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

### **Design and technology and Art and design**

90. Judgements on provision, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning are not possible. Few lessons were seen but pupils' enthusiasm and application are good. Lessons are well planned and focused on developing skills and techniques in order to develop pupils' awareness as they work towards the completion of projects linked to history and geography.
91. Pupils in Year 2 are very aware and eager to use their newly-acquired skills in Chinese design, using brush and black ink to experiment and develop their designs. They are supported carefully and strategically by the adults and are mature in their approach. They listen carefully to the well-focused directions and advice on how to improve their work.
92. Good teaching was focused on enabling Year 4 pupils to recognise how to use tensions and cohesion in constructing their replica bridges. Pupils are able to develop their own interpretations before making a design and using their mathematical and scientific knowledge

to construct a bridge. The end results are good and pupils have learnt and used a good range of different skills to complete the project.

93. There is much evidence around the school in both subjects, the results of previous projects and lessons. These showed good standards and the focus on teaching pupils to recognise and interpret the work of different artists is good. The planning for both subjects is based on national guidance and, where possible, good links occur between the subjects. Pupils' sketch-books are not yet fully utilised because much of pupils' work is linked clearly towards structured topics, often linked to other areas of the curriculum. There are very good links and pupils consolidate learning using art and design skills in many areas of the curriculum. In addition, pupils develop many useful and pertinent skills in designing and making various artefacts.
94. Pupils are acquainted with constructing original designs and using previously learnt techniques to produce high quality pieces of work. The pupils are able to discuss form and texture, how they mixed paints and used different media to achieve their results. A particularly good feature is the analysis pupils make of their own work and offering opinions on the quality and composition. Standards, particularly in art and design, are above national expectations, and the pupils' work is valued in the interesting and varied displays in the classrooms and around the school. The Art club is oversubscribed and attracts members from Years 3 to 6. Sketch designs are used very well to develop interesting pieces of work.

## **Music**

95. Music has maintained the high profile that it enjoyed at the time of the previous inspection. In particular, the standard of singing is high throughout the school and the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Music is a key element in the ethos of the school and pupils are enthusiastic. Three lessons were seen. All elements of the curriculum are covered and links are being established between music and other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in Year 5, pupils listen to Tudor music and study and perform Tudor dances.
96. Pupils are made aware of the variety of musical traditions and styles around the world and input from local initiatives widens opportunities for experimenting with a variety of instruments. Extra-curricular provision is good and there is a strong choir, samba club and guitar club. Pupils have regular opportunities for performing throughout the locality.

## **Physical education**

97. Only one lesson was seen. This was a very good Year 6 dance lesson where pupils were fully engaged in interpreting aspects of 'The Tempest', which they had been studying in literacy. The school's scheme of work shows all areas of the curriculum are appropriately covered and school records show that almost all pupils are able to swim 25 metres before leaving the school. The subject leader is new to the post, having been appointed from September. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. There is a focus on increasing provision, particularly in dance, and the school is investigating applying for the 'Active Mark' award. The school uses published schemes of work to ensure progress but is currently reviewing assessment procedures to ensure progression of knowledge, understanding and skills from year to year.
98. Accommodation is adequate. The hall is small, which restricts implementation of some areas of the curriculum, for example, gymnastic and dance particularly for older pupils. There is no field for games. The school, however, overcomes these difficulties well to ensure the curriculum is implemented in full. The school offers a well-supported range of extra-curricular activities, which include football, netball, tag-rugby, athletics, country dancing, hula, junior tennis, cricket, cross country and residential opportunities.

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

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

99. It makes a very significant contribution to pupils' overall very good attitudes. The programme strikes an appropriate balance between a structured approach and a more informal response to issues as they arise. The overall provision is enhanced by the school's very positive ethos and the foundations and principles of the programme permeate the whole curriculum. For example, residential visits make a valuable contribution not only to the academic curriculum but also pupils' social and moral development. Opportunities for collaborative working within lessons reinforce the responsibilities and benefits of working together within the community of the school. The school is actively involved in monitoring pupils' confidence and self-esteem as fundamental to effective learning.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</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	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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>2</b>
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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