

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OUR LADY OF HARTLEY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hartley, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118863

Headteacher: John Studley

Lead inspector: David Speakman

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 267450

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: 216

School address: Stack Lane  
Hartley  
Longfield  
Kent

Postcode: DA3 8BL

Telephone number: 01474 706385

Fax number: 01474 709757

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of John McGarr  
governors:

Date of previous 26<sup>th</sup> April 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized voluntary aided Catholic primary school serves the local area, which socio-economically is advantaged. Fewer pupils than average join or leave during the school year. The majority of pupils are classed as White British, with about 10 per cent coming from ethnic minority backgrounds. None are at the early stages of learning the English language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average and none of the pupils has a Statement of Special Educational Need. Special educational needs are typical and include specific, moderate and severe learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems, speech or communication difficulties, hearing and autism. Attainment on entry to the reception is average. The school achieved the Investors in People award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20086	David Speakman	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education & citizenship French Pupils with English as an additional language
9880	Anthony Comer	Lay inspector	
18498	Denise Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Music Special educational needs Foundation Stage <sup>1</sup>
22704	Garry Williams	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Inspections Limited  
102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
GL53 7JX

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also include: knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. Not only does the school enable pupils to achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science, but it also provides a very rich curriculum that enables them to attain well in other subjects whilst developing very positive attitudes and forming very good relationships with each other and staff. Pupils' attainment on entry is average and, because of good teaching, very high levels of inclusion, a very good ethos and very good leadership, pupils achieve well overall. The school shows a good level of care for all pupils and gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership is very good. The headteacher leads a highly dedicated and committed team of staff and governors that works hard towards pupils' good achievement and the welfare of all.
- Teaching is good with many very good features. As a result, attainment is well above national expectations. However, the listening skills of infant pupils are weaker than other aspects of their language development.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal development promotes their very good attitudes towards school and work and their very good behaviour, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in the upper school.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good and very effectively promote pupils' interest in learning.
- Management is good. There is a very clear vision of the needs of the school, but the school improvement plan is for the current year only.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Because of the school's high level of commitment to inclusion for all, the academic and personal needs of all pupils are met very well.
- The school's good partnerships with parents and the community support pupils' learning well.
- The early stages of learning in French are not structured well enough.

The level of improvement since the previous inspection is good. Since its last inspection in 1999 the school has improved from a good school to being a very good one. Well above average standards in English, mathematics, science and above average in information and communication technology (ICT) have been maintained. The quality of the curriculum is better. Very good levels of leadership have been maintained and the governance of the school has improved. The school has responded well to issues raised in the previous inspection and these have been met fully.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Science	A	A	A*	A*
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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*

*A\* indicates the school ranks in the top 5% in that category*

Achievement is **good**. Children start in the Foundation Stage with average attainment, achieve well and exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and attainment remains above average. In the junior classes, all pupils achieve well and very well in Years 4, 5 and 6 and attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average. Standards in ICT and French are above those nationally expected.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attitudes towards school and learning and their behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **good**, with many very good features. However, there is some variation in the quality across the school. It is good in reception, satisfactory in infant classes and very good in the juniors, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. A high proportion of teaching and learning in Year 6 is excellent. Teachers use assessment data very well to plan work that matches pupils' individual learning needs accurately. They know their pupils very well and use this knowledge very effectively to plan challenging and interesting activities that engage pupils' interest. Pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn in lessons and this, combined with very supportive encouragement to do their best, gives pupils good levels of confidence in their own ability to tackle new work. Teachers mostly have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, but occasionally the noise level in infant classes is not addressed quickly enough and this affects pupils' ability to listen accurately. Teaching assistants provide valuable support and are effective when working with groups of pupils. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers ensure that all pupils have very good opportunities to be fully included in all learning activities. Lessons usually move on at a brisk pace and pupils produce very good amounts of work.

The curriculum is very good. The school provides a very rich range and quality of learning opportunities. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly those linked with the arts and sport. The level of teachers and teaching assistants and other resources is good. The school shows good levels of care for its pupils. The relationships between the school and its parents and the community are very good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He has a very clear vision of the needs of the school, securely rooted in very effective school self-evaluation. He is supported very effectively in this work by other senior staff with leadership responsibility. The governors provide highly valued challenge and support and contribute very well to the work of the school. Management systems are good. Those for financial management are very good but strategic plans, particularly in relation to planned curriculum development, are in the short term and are satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents are happy with the school and the quality of education it provides. They like the caring nature of the school and feel that the staff work hard to help their children achieve well. They say their children like school and that behaviour is good. They express high levels of confidence in the leadership of the school. Pupils have a high opinion of the school and are very happy to be there.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- establish greater levels of consistency in teaching across the school and manage the noise levels to improve younger pupils' listening skills;
- long term strategic planning, with specific reference to curriculum development;
- progression in the learning of French.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are **above average** at the end of Year 2 and **well above** by Year 6. Overall, achievement is **very good** for all groups of pupils.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and, starting from an average baseline, achieve well and exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning.
- Overall achievement in the infant classes is satisfactory. Attainment remains above average by the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics and science, although pupils' listening skills are weaker than other areas of their language development.
- Attainment is well above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well.
- Language and literacy and ICT skills in other subjects are very good. Numeracy is good across the curriculum.
- Standards in all other subjects inspected fully are good.

#### Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to reception is average, although a significant number are below that in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development. Children achieve well in all areas of learning and very well in their personal, social and emotional development. Consequently, they are set to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning and attain standards that are well above those nationally expected in their personal, social and emotional development.
2. In the last three years, results for pupils at the end of Year 2 in the National Curriculum tests have mainly been well above the national average when compared with schools nationally and above average with similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that this year standards are above average and pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in the infant classes. There is a weakness in pupils' listening skills and this limits their achievement overall.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.9 (17.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.4 (15.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.3 (18.3)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. The situation by Year 6 is better, with very high and well above average results in English, mathematics and science being maintained over the last few years. In 2004,

well above average results in English and mathematics were maintained, but fell to average in science. The school analysed reasons for the dip and has addressed these effectively. Inspection evidence confirms that currently attainment in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 is well above average.

4. Pupils' overall achievement in the junior classes is good but, due to teaching of a consistently high standard, it is very good in Years 4, 5 and 6. There has been some significant disruption to staffing in Year 3 since the beginning of this school year, but teachers have managed to maintain satisfactory achievement so far and the situation is now more stable. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They make good progress in their work and are successful in meeting the targets on their very good individual education plans. Those few pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and perform well in the higher sets for English.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.1 (28.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.3 (29.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.8 (30.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. Standards in English by Year 2 are above average in speaking, reading and writing, but there are weaknesses in younger pupils' ability to listen accurately and with sustained attention. Pupils do not always listen carefully enough to others or to the teacher at times. Neither do they listen with sufficient understanding. This means that they do not always fully comprehend what is asked for. Pupils write at length, to a good standard in terms of grammar and presentation, but do not answer accurately enough the questions asked. Standards in all aspects of language and literacy are well above average by Year 6. This means that pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and well in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' achievement in Years 4, 5 and 6 is very good.
6. Standards in mathematics are above average by Year 2 and well above by Year 6. Achievement is good overall. It is satisfactory in the infant years and pupils work confidently and competently with numbers and practise their computation skills daily. They are developing good mental strategies, but just occasionally their lively and often noisy behaviour has a negative impact on the quality of their learning. Achievement is good for older pupils, especially in the upper junior classes where it is very good. The difference in achievement is linked to the very good, and often excellent, teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6, to the very high expectations in these classes and to more mature attitudes to mathematics and work. Setting in the junior classes is also having a positive impact on higher attaining pupils' achievement in particular.
7. By Year 6, pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of the nature of science, but have developed very good skills in experimenting and investigating. A recent dip in standards was connected with pupils moving in from other schools and this school not promoting the investigative and problem solving elements of science. This has now been dealt with effectively and current standards have recovered. By Year 2, pupils have a good scientific knowledge and understanding and have achieved satisfactorily. Pupils achieve well in the junior classes and, by the time they reach

Year 6, pupils have very good knowledge and understanding of science and very good levels of skill in planning and carrying out experiments and in working collaboratively.

8. From a very early age, pupils are taught basic computer skills and become familiar with the keyboard, using the mouse and a good range of programs in different subjects. The secure start and consequent use of computers in a wide range of applications enable pupils to achieve well and attain above average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards in physical education are above those nationally expected by Year 6 and achievement is good for pupils throughout the school. The school has evidence to show good standards in all the elements of the National Curriculum for physical education.
9. Standards of literacy and numeracy seen in other subjects are very good. However, the listening skills of some younger pupils in the infant classes impact on their progress. There are a good number of planned opportunities to discuss and write in a wide range of subjects. ICT is used well by teachers and pupils to enrich work through research and the presentation of work in a good number of subjects across the curriculum, including English, science and work in topics. Planned opportunities for using mathematics to support work in other subjects is good and meaningful opportunities, such as measuring in science, are well planned.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Personal development is **very good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent attitudes and behaviour of a significant majority of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are a major strength.
- The very good opportunities for collaborative work result in very good social, moral and personal development.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very high levels of personal, social and emotional development.
- Positive behaviour and attitudes are fostered through highly effective management systems in Years 3 to 6.
- Strategies to manage behaviour, and particularly noise levels and listening skills, are less successful in Years 1 and 2.
- Unexplained absence is not followed up on a daily basis by telephone.

### **Commentary**

10. Pupils at the upper end of the school have excellent attitudes to their work. They behave in an exemplary manner both in class and around the school. They show very high levels of maturity and responsibility in all that they do. Excellent attitudes were seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were developing their writing based on 'The Tempest'. They showed high levels of enthusiasm and spirituality as they explored the natural sounds of thunder using percussion. Pupils in Year 6 show similar attitudes in many of their lessons and always feel that their contributions are valued. Pupils with special educational needs are very keen to do well and make a meaningful contribution in lessons. Those with English as an additional language are confident and have very positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils behave very well. This has been maintained since the last inspection. There have been no exclusions during the last school year.

11. Examples of very good collaboration between pupils were seen in many activities, fostering very good social and moral awareness. Pupils work very well together and help each other with care and enjoyment. They show very good understanding of right and wrong and have very positive moral attitudes. The high levels of co-operation and collaboration in a Year 6 English lesson exemplified this and had a very positive impact on standards.
12. Children in the Foundation Stage behave very well in their lessons and achieve very high levels of personal, social and emotional awareness. They are polite and helpful and always keen to please their teachers. They show very good independence in learning and are confident to try new things.
13. Some very good behaviour management strategies are evident, particularly in junior classes. Pupils are aware of these and work hard to achieve positive feedback and rewards. This results in the very high quality of personal development that is seen in these classes. In infant classes, this is less evident. Too few strategies are used to keep pupils focused or on task at all times. Because of this, pupils do not always listen as well as they should and noise levels are often too high. This sometimes reduces the quality of learning and achievement overall in these classes.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good overall. Their social and moral awareness is very effectively fostered so that they know how to behave, help others and support the community. During the inspection, pupils were delivering parcels of harvest goods to old people in their local area. Spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils have many opportunities to develop awareness of other cultures as part of their community links. Spirituality within the curriculum is evident in many lessons and is particularly strong in English, humanities and the arts.
15. Attendance has been maintained at a level above the national average since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence has improved during the past school year and is now below the national average, but unexplained absence is not investigated by telephone on a daily basis. Most pupils arrive punctually at school and lessons begin on time.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.9	School data:	0.2
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **good** with many very good features. The assessment of pupils' achievement is **good** and assessment information is used **very effectively** to ensure good achievement and high standards. The curriculum is **very good** and benefits from **very good** opportunities for enrichment. The school provides **good** levels of care, guidance and support for its pupils. It has **good** links with parents, the community and other schools.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. They are **good** for children in the Foundation Stage and **satisfactory** for pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3. Teaching and learning are **very good** in Years 4, 5 and 6. Assessment procedures are **good** and used **very well** in planning.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers of older pupils have exceptionally high expectations of their pupils, set highly challenging tasks and invariably expect high standards of behaviour in lessons.
- Not all teachers deal with noise in class effectively enough.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to plan stimulating lessons which promote pupils' interest and motivation well.
- Pupils are very effectively encouraged to do their best in all activities.
- Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and, combined with very good use of resources and a good variety of teaching methods, ensure pupils produce good amounts of work in lessons.
- Teaching assistants are very effectively deployed and provide valuable support, especially for pupils with special educational needs.
- All pupils are fully included in all learning opportunities, regardless of ability, gender or background. Teachers and teaching assistants are fully aware of inclusion issues.
- Planning is good and teachers use assessment data very well to ensure planned activities effectively meet all pupils' needs.

### Commentary

16. Since the previous inspection, there has been an improvement in the overall quality of teaching and learning. Although teaching was judged to be good then, there is now a greater proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching. However, there is some variation between classes and teaching and learning are strongest in reception and for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, where the best teaching was seen. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. There has been some disruption to staffing since the beginning of term in Year 3, but teachers have managed to maintain a satisfactory level of provision in this class. The situation is now more settled. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported in lessons and receive good guidance and help from learning support assistants, particularly in literacy lessons. This helps them to achieve well. Teachers are fully aware of pupils with English as an additional language and provide for these pupils well and effectively support their good learning.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (15%)	11 (33%)	13 (39%)	4 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

17. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have exceptionally high expectations of their pupils and this is reflected in their encouragement of high standards of behaviour and the setting of challenging and stimulating tasks. Their management of pupils is very good and teachers consistently encourage pupils to contribute, but do not

compromise their insistence that other pupils listen attentively so they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Teachers recognise and comment on those pupils who are co-operating and others soon follow the example and quickly settle, at the change of activity, for example. This establishes very good attitudes and behaviour in lessons so teachers are able to take an expressive approach to teaching, as seen in literacy lessons in Years 5 and 6, in the confidence that pupils will respond positively and not take advantage of a lively presentation. This further adds to the quality of learning through raising pupils' enjoyment in lessons. In lessons that were still judged to be satisfactory, management of the noise created by pupils was a sometimes weakness and the pupils' lively and often noisy behaviour impacted on the quality of their learning. This also affects the quality and accuracy of pupils' written or spoken response, as pupils do not always listen with sufficient concentration or understanding nor answer accurately what is asked.

18. Assessment is good. The school has developed effective, manageable systems to assess all pupils' progress regularly. Teachers use the information very effectively and, as a result, know their pupils very well and understand what different groups of pupils need to learn next. They keep thorough records of pupils' progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. The results of assessments are used very well to inform staff about how their teaching and the overall curriculum may need to be adapted, as well as to identify which pupils have particular talents or need extra support. Pupils have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their work and what they need to do to improve because they are regularly set relevant individual and group targets.
19. Teachers know their subjects well and use their knowledge effectively to plan enjoyable activities and lessons which promote pupils' interest and motivate them well. Teaching methods are varied and capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils in Year 6 very effectively explored the characters in 'The Tempest' and thought in depth about what the characters' actions in the play said about their personalities. Although this task was challenging, they were expertly guided through the discussion by the teacher and were continuously and very effectively encouraged to do their best. They responded well and high standards were achieved in a short time. Other lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and, combined with very good use of resources, ensure pupils produce good amounts of high quality work. This was seen in a Year 4 ICT lesson in which pupils presented their history work on Henry VIII to a very high standard, using sophisticated skills of importing their own photographs into their work using a publishing program.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a **very good** curriculum which meets the needs of all its pupils and requirements of the National Curriculum. There are **very good** opportunities for pupils to enrich their experiences through well planned visits and visitors and a very wide range of clubs and activities. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is rich, varied and well balanced.
- The very good and well planned links between subjects make learning more interesting and relevant for all pupils.

- A well planned and very wide range of clubs, visits and visitors greatly enhances the learning opportunities.
- There is a very strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils have access to the full range of learning opportunities.
- The accommodation and outside environment are good and support the delivery of the curriculum well.
- The allocation of teaching assistants and their impact on learning is good.

## **Commentary**

20. The curriculum is very good and effectively meets the needs of all pupils and fully meets National Curriculum requirements. It includes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage are good and prepare children well for the later stages of their education. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.
21. Curriculum planning is very good and teachers use cross-curricular links very effectively to enhance pupils' learning in a good range of subjects. The curriculum has been influenced by a creativity approach, which encompasses cross-curricular links based on a theme, such as 'Water' and Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' and 'Romeo and Juliet'. Many cross-curricular links have been established, such as designing invitations, drawing and painting the balcony scene, making masks for the ball and writing letters on simulated old parchment promoting art, design, literacy skills and design and technology. The school has introduced French into the curriculum and, although there are concerns about the Year 3 curriculum, it is well planned and well delivered overall.
22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school ensures that these pupils are identified quickly so that a modified curriculum is made available with an appropriate attention given to the learning needs of pupils at all levels of attainment. All pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans highlighting individual strengths, needs and agreed targets. These are regularly reviewed to reflect progress made. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, have access to the same curriculum as others. This is a major feature of the school's approach to being inclusive. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are met very well both in English and other lessons.
23. The curriculum is very well supported by a very broad range of well planned visits and visitors from which pupils benefit greatly. Extra-curricular activities in the arts and sport are very good and underpinned by the rich and varied residential programme. The school makes very good use of visiting artists and theatre groups as well as visits to the theatre.
24. This is a very inclusive school and all staff are fully committed to making sure that all pupils have equal access to the opportunities on offer. This is reflected in the curriculum planning and in the very positive relationships that are fostered and developed across the school. There are a good number of teachers and well trained teaching assistants to deliver the curriculum effectively. Resources are plentiful and of a good quality to support the delivery of the curriculum effectively.

25. The playgrounds and playing fields are large, giving pupils plenty of space during the playtimes as well as for outdoor sports lessons and competitions. The adventure apparatus is a valued asset to the playground and is used to support and develop team building. The school buildings are sufficiently large to allow space for pupils to work freely and the new building housing the library and new staffroom provides extra accommodation of benefit to both pupils and staff. Classrooms are maintained in a good state of decoration and repair and designed to a high standard. The environment of the school is a pleasant place for staff to work and pupils to learn.

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

The care shown for pupils is **good**. The support, advice and guidance that pupils receive about their achievements and their personal development are **good**. The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- General day-to-day care and welfare of pupils is very good overall.
- Pupils have very positive views about their school.

### **Commentary**

26. Policies and procedures for child protection and for promoting the general welfare of pupils are very good and have been maintained since the last inspection. All staff know pupils and their families very well and cater for their needs effectively. All pupils have very trusting relationships with one or more adults in the school and adults provide good role models for the pupils.
27. The advice, support and guidance that pupils receive throughout their time at school are good. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is good and supports pupils' personal development well. Arrangements for the induction of pupils into the school and their transfer to the next phase of their education are satisfactory overall. The school council, reformed this year, provides effective pupil consultation and good opportunities for them to have a growing impact on the development of the school.

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

The school's links with parents, with the local community and with other schools and colleges are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The support that parents provide for school activities is very good.
- Pupils' reports omit some useful information about their attainment and progress.

### **Commentary**

28. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire or who attended the parents' meeting have very positive views of what the school provides and achieves.

29. The general information that parents receive through meetings, newsletters, notice boards, the school website and reports is good overall. Newsletters are regular, informative and celebrate the achievements and successes of both the school and the pupils. However, although pupil reports are satisfactory, there is no comparative information about pupils' progress and attainment with others of the same age locally or nationally. Neither are there any learning targets or strategies for improvement.
30. The school makes very successful efforts to encourage parental involvement in the life of the school and in their children's education, as shown in the level of support in classrooms and for school events such as the Harvest assembly. There is a supportive school association and a committed group of parent governors. Through a system of 'communication slips' as well as through formal and informal dialogue, parents have good opportunities for regular exchange with the school. Any concerns or complaints that parents have are dealt with effectively.
31. The school's links with the local community are good overall, particularly with the local parish and church groups, as well as with some other local ethnic and religious groups. Links with the local homes for the elderly, whose attendance at the Harvest assembly was impressive, are very good. Links with other schools, particularly through the Longfield Consortium of Schools and the Dartford Cluster, are effective and provide benefits for pupils and staff as well as for the whole school. Currently, there are no active links with the business community. The school has effective links with local secondary schools and arrangements for the transfer of pupils are satisfactory.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the headteacher and of key staff is **very good**. Governance of the school is **very good**. Management is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership team at the school is very good and has a very positive impact on raising achievement.
- The leadership roles of curriculum leaders are very well established.
- The governing body is very conscientious about its work and supports the school very well.
- Strategic planning for the long-term future of the school, particularly in relation to the curriculum, is not fully in place.
- Finances are well managed and help the school to achieve its priorities.

### **Commentary**

32. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, together as a team, is very good and is a major strength of the school. They have a very clear vision and sense of purpose and very high aspirations for the school. Because of this, there is a very good ethos in which pupils thrive. The drive to raise standards and to ensure that pupils are happy and secure in their work is uppermost in the actions taken by the school. This is exemplified by the very good procedures for performance management which ensure that key targets are linked to whole-school improvements.

The recent focus on improving standards in writing, which included staff training and targets, shows that the school is committed to high achievement.

33. The leadership of the curriculum leaders, particularly in English, mathematics, science and ICT, is very good and provides very high levels of support and guidance for staff and pupils. As part of a very effective team, they work very well together to ensure that provision and standards remain high. There is a clear commitment among the whole staff team to ensure that the school is successful and maintains its high levels of achievement. There is a weakness in the co-ordination of French. This has a negative impact on the subject's development across Years 3 to 6. Leadership of special educational needs is very good. Pupils are effectively monitored so that their progress is checked carefully as they move through the school.
34. The governing body is very clear about its role and responsibility and has a very good awareness of the school's strengths. Governors contribute very effectively to the shaping of future developments. They are rightly aware that the current development plan does not allow strategically for the long-term future of the school, particularly in relation to curriculum planning. This has an impact on the leadership roles of non-core<sup>2</sup> subject leaders who are unclear about the emphasis and focus that can be placed on their subjects. Plans are in place to improve this in the near future and a longer-term development plan is rightly the subject of current debate.

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

<b><i>Income and expenditure (£)</i></b>		<b><i>Balances (£)</i></b>	
Total income	545,902	Balance from previous year	37,557
Total expenditure	524,303	Balance carried forward to the next	21,599
Expenditure per pupil	2,461		

35. Finances are very well managed on a day-to-day basis and in the longer term are carefully allocated to projects, particularly in relation to the school premises, although not fully to the curriculum. Management overall is good with strengths in the monitoring of performance data, reviewing patterns and taking action. The school regularly reviews its own performance and good efforts are made to recruit a successful staff team.

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<sup>2</sup> Non-core subjects – National Curriculum subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. Provision in the Foundation Stage of learning for children in the reception class is **good**, with some very good features, and has improved since the previous inspection. On entry to reception, the attainment of the majority of children is average overall, although the attainment of a significant number is below in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.
37. During their reception year, children make good progress in all areas and very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Consequently, most children are on track to exceed the early learning goals for children of this age in all areas by the end of their reception year. They are expected to achieve well above the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development. Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement. Leadership is good, with particular strengths in assessment, which is very good. Staff provide very good role models for children and, consequently, behaviour and children's attitudes to their work are very good. The reception teacher is new to this school and has made a very good start in her role, ensuring good improvements in the curriculum and in the quality of provision. The accommodation and resources are good, but the lack of a covered area outside restricts outdoor activities, particularly for physical development, in wet weather.

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships in the class are very good because of the high quality role models of staff.
- Very good opportunities to develop independence in learning are offered during child-initiated activities.

#### Commentary

38. Teaching in personal, social and emotional development is very good and children achieve very well so that they are expected to achieve well above the early learning goals by the end of reception. Staff respect children and provide very good examples of how to behave. This creates trust and very good social interactions. The very good opportunities for independent choice during child-initiated activity times lead to very good personal autonomy and high quality social opportunities. Consequently, children achieve very well and are busy and happy in school.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Phonic skills are taught very well, leading to very good achievement in early reading skills.

- The range of learning activities for this area is very good and promotes high levels of interest and enthusiasm.
- Occasionally, children are not given enough choice in their tasks and this inhibits their learning.

### **Commentary**

39. Teaching is good and children achieve well. On entry to the reception class, literacy skills are in line with expected levels, although a significant minority are below these. Because of good teaching and support, children achieve well so that the majority are on track to exceed the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. The very good focus on the teaching of phonics promotes confidence and joy in reading. Children benefit from the very good and varied approach to this aspect of their learning and many build words and write simple phrases. The very wide range of activities provided ensures that all aspects of this area of learning are very well provided for. Children are excited by the good quality resources and the opportunity to make their own 'books' from an early stage. Just occasionally, tasks are over-prescribed. This inhibits choice so that children do not always have enough autonomy in their learning or enough time to complete their task.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well in counting activities.
- Very good use is made of real resources to foster understanding.
- Sometimes, the organisation of lessons is too prescriptive and does not allow children time to explore for themselves.

### **Commentary**

40. On entry to reception, the attainment of most children is in line with expected levels in mathematics. A few are below that level. Children achieve very well in counting activities. This is due to good teaching in mathematical development and to the regular daily counting as part of many other activities. The majority is in line to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Good practical sessions enable children to practise and improve their skills so that many can already count to 10 and beyond. Most are on track to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year, although a minority will not. Very good use is made of real resources to help children develop their understanding of number concepts. In one such session, a parent brought her baby to class so that children could see the difference in size between themselves and the baby, promoting very valuable experiences. Occasionally, the organisation of mathematics lessons is too formal and does not allow children time and opportunities to explore resources for themselves or complete their investigations. This is because they are moved on too quickly to another activity. Consequently, learning is reduced at these times.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good questioning helps children to think carefully about their tasks and helps to contribute well to language skills.
- The good practical approaches allow children to find answers and solve simple problems.
- The range of resources is sometimes too limited to extend understanding further.

### **Commentary**

41. Teaching is good and children make good gains in learning in this area so that most are expected to exceed the goals by the end of the reception year. They achieve well. A major feature in the success of lessons is the good questioning by adults which extends children's knowledge and helps them to think carefully about their work. This also encourages them to talk about their ideas and improve their language skills. Some good practical approaches are used so that children have many opportunities to use their senses to investigate and to find things out. Because of this, they were able to order their family trees accurately and showed good awareness of oldest and youngest. However, there are not always sufficient resources used to consolidate learning and extend children's understanding further. Consequently, once tasks are completed, children do not always have enough to do.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy physical activities.
- Very good use is made of the school hall to extend children's use of space and improve their skills.
- There is no outdoor covered area so that physical skills during wet weather are limited.

### **Commentary**

42. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching seen in a hall session. Consequently, children achieve well and exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. They show good understanding of the importance of exercise. They enjoy physical activities and show very good awareness of the needs of others as they share resources and work well together. They have fun on the outdoor toys. They used the space in the hall well to extend their skills and showed very good creativity in movement as they moved to a dance tape linked to fireworks. The lack of an outdoor covered area inhibits children's opportunities in wet weather so that there are times when physical activities are limited. However, provision in this area has improved significantly since the last inspection.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good range of activities promotes good creative and artistic skills.
- Resources are used well to develop children's talents.

### **Commentary**

43. Teaching in creative development is good, leading to good achievement so most children are on track to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They benefit from a good range of resources and, particularly during child-initiated activities, have many opportunities to take responsibility for preparing their own resources, mixing paint, using glue and scissors and developing their creative talents. Daily singing, linked to a wide range of other areas of learning, shows that children achieve well in their creative learning. They sing sweetly and in tune, with high levels of enjoyment.

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

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and by the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in all aspects of language and literacy.
- Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and is limited by pupils' weaker listening skills.
- Very good assessment systems are in place and they are used very well to focus work effectively and to support well above average standards.
- Teaching and learning is good overall. However, there is variation in the quality. Some teaching is very good and excellent, whilst teachers of pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not address the level of noise quickly enough.
- Very good leadership and management have ensured high standards have been maintained and other areas such as curriculum and assessment have improved.

### **Commentary**

44. The majority of pupils enter Year 1 having exceeded national expectations by the end of the reception. National test results in 2003 at the end of Year 2 show standards in reading and writing to be well above the national average for all schools and above for similar schools. At the end of Year 6 standards were well above the national average and above those of similar schools. Results for 2004 are similar to previous years and high standards have been maintained and established over recent years. In lessons seen, standards are above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2. Although standards in writing, reading and speaking are of a good quality, standards in listening are not as good. This affects the quality and accuracy of pupils' written and spoken response, as pupils do not always answer accurately what is asked. Standards in all aspects of English are well above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is currently satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and is good in the junior classes, and very good Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to good support. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well in developing their skills as they have a secure command of the English language.

45. Pupils' work is closely monitored, using very effective assessment procedures. These are used very effectively to track pupils' progress, set targets, reorganise setting and groupings and to identify any whole school strengths or weaknesses. All aspects of English - reading, spelling and writing - are assessed. Assessment is also ongoing and pupils' individual or group performance is assessed at the end of lessons. Teachers' very good knowledge of the pupils' achievement informs both staff and pupils where there are areas for development and how well each pupil is doing.
46. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are satisfactory in classes for infant pupils, whose achievement is satisfactory, and very good in the junior classes, especially in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is very good or excellent. The variation in the quality of teaching is reflected the quality of pupils' learning and their resulting achievement. The most significant variation in teaching is in teachers' expectations of pupils' approach to learning and in the management of noise levels within lessons. In the infant classes, too little management of the noise levels in class affects the concentration levels and impacts on pupils' understanding. Combined with the weakness in their listening skills, this contributes to pupils' lower level of understanding and attainment. In classes for older pupils behaviour management is very good and exceptionally high expectations of learning are made clear. Teachers' very enthusiastic approaches to teaching draw pupils in and raise their interest and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers create a very effective learning ethos in which high expectations and the valuing of pupils' contributions are evident. Pupils consequently feel confident and keen to contribute.
47. Where teaching is very good, there is a high level of challenge, the pace of lessons is very effective, learning is enjoyable and all pupils achieve highly. Overall there is good coverage of the curriculum for English and part of the good achievement in English is due to the effective promotion of language development in other subjects. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy literacy lessons. Teaching assistants are well deployed and support pupils well throughout lessons.
48. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader works very effectively and through thorough and rigorous evaluation of all aspects of standards and provision has a very a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. This is used very well to identify areas for further development and plan very effective strategies for improvement. As a result, the English curriculum is very good, with a strong emphasis on developing a creative approach to learning. It is a rich and interesting curriculum which includes a strong emphasis on creativity and literature, such as poetry and the plays of William Shakespeare, and makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

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

49. The development of language and literacy skills is very well promoted throughout the curriculum and pupils use these skills very well in other subjects. The school's focus on maintaining high standards in all aspects of English is supported through a wide range of other subjects, where there are planned opportunities to develop speaking and listening, reading and writing skills by writing in a style appropriate to the subject and encouraging discussion. Very good standards in speaking, reading and writing support the good and very good attainment in other subjects.

## French

Provision in French is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All groups of pupils achieve well and standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The curriculum is not structured well enough to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding in the early stages of learning French.
- Opportunities to develop enjoyment and enthusiasm through a more practical approach for younger pupils are lacking.

### Commentary

50. The school has extended its curriculum well since the last inspection by the introduction of French for all pupils in Years 3 to 6. They follow a nationally recognised scheme for their age. Pupils build up their speaking and listening skills particularly well because they are attentive and very willing to use the language for themselves and standards are good. By Year 6 pupils have developed a good range of vocabulary including numbers, names of animals and a good variety of sentence forms, including greetings and questions, together with appropriate responses. Pupils are confident and most speak without hesitation. They have good opportunities to practise pronunciation of French and are developing good French accents. Lower attaining pupils hesitate over some sentences, but with good encouragement gain in confidence and speak out. Those pupils with English as an additional language make a full contribution in lessons.
51. Teaching and learning are good because the teachers mostly make sure that explanations are clear and that questions are tailored to suit pupils' ability. This means that everyone takes part. Earlier work is reinforced briskly at the start of each lesson and this effectively consolidates vocabulary and builds up flexibility and fluency in understanding. French is the normal language of the classroom, from simple instructions to words of praise and encouragement, which helps maintain a highly constructive atmosphere and makes full use of time. English is used sparingly and only when necessary to ensure understanding of more complex explanations and to illustrate aspects of the French way of life. This helps pupils see the language in its proper context.
52. There is no overall leadership and management of the subject or subject leader taking overall control of provision in French. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 plan together as do those in Years 3 and 4, but they do not liaise over planning. As a result, this leads to a lack of progression in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding through Years 3 to 6. Although the curriculum is satisfactory overall, the school's interpretation and planning need some attention. Learning is not currently progressively planned and younger pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to develop an enthusiasm for the subject through enjoying a more practical and enjoyable approach.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and is good in Years 3 to 6, leading to high standards.
- Teachers have very good skills in teaching all aspects of mathematics, leading to much focused lessons and high achievement.
- Setting for junior pupils is having a very positive impact on standards.
- Leadership and management are very good, ensuring that the subject has a high profile in the school.
- Numeracy skills are used well in many other areas of the curriculum, helping to consolidate skills.

## **Commentary**

53. The national comparative data for the 2004 tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 showed that standards in mathematics were above average. For pupils at the end of Year 6, the data showed that standards were well above average. This shows that very good standards have been maintained since the previous year. The data also shows that there was a slight dip in the achievement of higher attaining pupils in Year 2. The work seen during the inspection indicates that achievement is good overall and that pupils in Years 5 and 6 are achieving very well. The slight difference in achievement is linked to the very good, and often excellent, teaching for older pupils and to the very high expectations in these classes. Setting in junior classes is having a positive impact on the achievement of higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs in particular.
54. Pupils achieve well because they enjoy the subject and because activities are often practical and exciting. They benefit from high levels of support in lessons. In Year 2, for example, the teacher was able to divide pupils into three groups, each with an adult so that they received very good levels of individual support, enabling them to overcome any difficulties quickly and make good gains in learning. Similarly, in Years 3 and 4 the support of the ICT technician enables one group of pupils to work with him independently to devise spreadsheets while the teacher concentrated on supporting and improving the numeracy skills of the other pupils.
55. In Years 1 and 2, pupils work confidently and competently with numbers and practise their computation skills daily. They are developing good mental strategies, but just occasionally their lively and often noisy behaviour impacts on the quality of their learning. In Years 3 to 6, pupils show more mature attitudes to mathematics and work very hard to achieve their very high standards. Year 6 pupils, for example, showed high quality skills as they began to learn about the use and interpretation of co-ordinates in all four quadrants. They succeeded very well due to excellent, skilled teaching.
56. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers across the school have very good skills in mathematics and, in Years 3 to 6, these skills are often excellent. Lessons are very well planned, leading to very well managed learning. The major strengths in teaching are seen in Years 5 and 6, resulting in very good achievement. All teachers ask focused questions and extend pupils' mental and oral abilities through some very good practical experiences. These include high levels of pupil interaction and demonstration so that all pupils are aware

of what is expected of them. Assessment of pupils' achievements is very good, helping teachers to plan tasks that are very relevant to each group's abilities. Setting in the junior classes is a major factor in the very high standards that pupils achieve and is beginning to address the dip in the achievement of higher attaining pupils from last year's Year 2, now in the current Year 3.

57. Leadership in mathematics is very good and is having a very positive impact on provision for the subject and on standards. Very effective data analysis has helped to identify any weaker areas and has led to the setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 to keep standards high. This is proving successful for pupils of all abilities. The co-ordinator has a very clear overview of the provision and regularly monitors pupils' work to ensure improvements are maintained. She ensures that the subject has a very high profile in the school and, consequently, this helps to maintain satisfactorily the very good standards that pupils achieve and the very good provision since the previous inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

58. Numeracy skills are used well in other areas of the curriculum and this is helping to consolidate pupils' understanding. Year 2 pupils were seen gathering data to make a tally chart in science and presenting it as a block graph using ICT. In Year 3, pupils were observed measuring distances from a light source and measuring shadows accurately. Work in geography shows good use of numeracy as pupils plot co-ordinates and measure distances and temperatures. Examples of very good use of numeracy skills was seen in French in Years 5 and 6, where pupils were required to do some calculations using written French numbers to 30. Pupils had great fun with this activity and achieved well.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High quality teaching in Years 5 and 6 ensures that very effective learning takes place and pupils make very good progress.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards science and very good relationships are very effectively promoted through collaborative group work.
- Skills of investigation and scientific thinking are well developed.
- Leadership and management are very good and help maintain high standards.
- Assessment is very good. Data is carefully analysed to identify any areas of concern and provide support where needed.
- There are some inconsistencies in teaching and in the quality of marking with younger pupils.

### **Commentary**

59. In the most recent national tests, results at the end of Year 6 were average when compared with all schools nationally and well below average when compared with similar schools. The school recognises this and has carefully analysed and reflected why this should have occurred. The reasons suggested are a slightly lower ability year

group; lower attaining pupils entering the school at a late stage and this school did not sufficiently address the need to promote the more investigative and problem solving approach to science. Analysis of results and available data confirms the reasons for the 2004 dip. Inspection evidence indicates a recovery in standards and a return to standards with a very high percentage of pupils likely to achieve the nationally expected level and above, with a similar number as before achieving the higher level. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, achieve well, and very well in the upper juniors classes.

60. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing a good scientific knowledge and understanding across the whole science curriculum. They are learning how to use their senses to observe and perform simple investigations well. However, the noise level during the introductory and plenary sessions does limit their concentration and reduces the learning potential of a few pupils. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have very good knowledge and understanding in all areas of science. Pupils' very good achievement in Years 5 and 6 is due to the excellent teaching observed, particularly in the way teachers organise pupils and the opportunities for them to have a very broad range of practical experiences followed up by high quality discussion. Tasks are very searching, challenging pupils to thinking carefully about the outcomes of their work and what conclusions they are able to draw from their observations. Collaborative group work is of a very high quality, with all pupils working very effectively. Pupils listen carefully to what others say and make their own valuable contributions to the outcomes. The promotion and effective development of investigative skills are now strong features of the science curriculum.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with evidence of excellence in Years 5 and 6. It is satisfactory in the infant classes because the management of noise in lessons is not tight enough. The management of pupils is much better in the junior classes where teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond very positively, resulting in very good relationships and very positive attitudes to work. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and make learning challenging and interesting. Planning and preparation are of high quality and the considerable preparation to ensure success in organising the provision of a wide range of learning experiences interests, stimulates and motivates pupils and results in good and sometimes very good learning.
62. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and information is very carefully used to track and monitor areas of concern in order that they may be dealt with quickly. Marking is not always consistent in terms of indicating to pupils what needs to be improved. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and have been instrumental in maintaining high standards since the previous inspection and in identifying and dealing with any difficulties. The curriculum is very good, with very effective cross-curricular approaches planned. This includes the very effective use of ICT programs. Resources and accommodation are good and make a good contribution to the school's focus on practical and investigative work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good quality of teaching and learning enables pupils to achieve well and attain above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The leadership and management are very good and enable the school to develop and improve provision at a good pace.
- The curriculum is very good. ICT is used very well to support work in other subjects.
- Teachers make very good use of the good resources to support learning effectively.
- Although resources are good quality overall, they are not as good for teachers to demonstrate to whole class groups in lessons.

## **Commentary**

63. Pupils from all groups achieve well during their time in school. They attain standards in line with the national expectation at the end of Year 2 and above by Year 6. This is due to the good teaching in junior classes. (No teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection.) As pupils move through the school, they are given many opportunities to develop good computer skills. They work well independently and have good amounts of time using computers. This enables pupils to consolidate learning whilst developing new skills and practising those already learned. In Year 3, most pupils have a good understanding of a wide range of programs, enabling them to develop good basic computer skills. Later in the school they use these effectively to add quality to work in a wide range of other subjects. In history work based on Henry VIII, for example, Year 4 pupils used a publishing program with knowledge and confidence, learning very quickly how to import photographs from a storage file within the computer, insert them into their documents and then improve the whole presentation, showing awareness of the need for quality.
64. By Year 6, pupils have developed their skills well and their portfolios show a good coverage of the curriculum in terms of meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT and in the links with other subjects. They conduct research well, using specified websites, having already looked at and used numerous search engines. They competently find out information, read, select and make notes to use in their writing. The work of the majority of pupils is ahead of standards nationally expected.
65. Leadership and management are very good and this quality has been maintained since the previous inspection. ICT is well promoted throughout the school and it has a high profile. The subject leader knows the subject and development needs very well. There is an action plan and the next stages of development are clearly defined. Above average standards have been maintained since the previous inspection against more rigorous criteria and higher national expectations. Good standards are supported by good and effective procedures for the assessment of pupils' work. All pupils have their own individual computer-based files in which all their work is stored. This is good and supports assessment procedures and their good use. The curriculum is very good. All aspects of the National Curriculum are fully met and there are very good curriculum links with other subjects. ICT is used very well to support work in other subjects and to raise interest levels and consolidate computer skills at the same time. This is a very effective reciprocal arrangement. Resources are good, especially the laptops with the wireless links into the Internet. This adds value and efficiency to the learning. Resources for demonstration are not as good, but the school has plans to introduce and develop the use of interactive boards in classrooms. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

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

66. The development of ICT across the curriculum is very good. This ensures that pupils' computer skills are consolidated well and that work in other subjects is made more enjoyable through the use of ICT. Pupils learn word processing skills which link effectively to work in literacy. Good links have been established between the use of ICT and history and geography, for example for research and to present work to a high standard. There are some links to art through effective use of paint programs.

## HUMANITIES

67. **History** was not a focus of the inspection and consequently no judgement is being made about the quality of the provision. However, analysis of pupils' past work and of curriculum plans suggests that a good range of activities is in place and that the subject contributes well to the cultural awareness of pupils and effectively supports literacy skills. Some good examples of the teaching of historical skills are evident in pupils' work, showing good progress as pupils move through the school. Provision is well supported by the use of ICT.
68. Only one **geography** lesson was observed during the inspection so therefore no judgement is being made about the quality of the provision. In that lesson, pupils achieved very high standards due to some excellent teaching. They were able to plot the main mountain ranges of the world onto a world map and showed very high levels of awe and wonder as they watched a demonstration of a model volcano erupting. The very exciting resources and strategies used to teach them about the earth's crust and the way in which earthquakes develop led to high levels of interest and secure understanding. Planning indicates a rich and worthwhile range of activities and a very good contribution to spiritual and cultural development.
69. Religious education is the subject of a Section 23 inspection by the diocese.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. There was insufficient evidence to report fully on art and design, design and technology and music.
71. One lesson was observed in **design and technology** but portfolios of work, photographs and documents were analysed indicating that attainment is satisfactory. In the Year 1 design and technology lesson, the learning focused on food technology, with pupils making the house in the Hansel and Gretel story using biscuits, icing sugar, chocolate drops and coloured button sweets. Each house was decorated differently, showing good levels of pupils' creativity. Models were consistent with details in the story and in this activity there were good links with literacy, in which lessons they heard the story.
72. In **art and design**, pupils' previous work in the form of photographs and portfolios was sampled and good examples of cross-curricular work were recorded. A good example focused on links with literacy. Pupils painted the balcony scene from 'Romeo and Juliet', accurately capturing the mood of the play. Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural and multicultural knowledge and understanding. There is evidence of work based on the Egyptian and Australian cultures and paintings in the style of Monet. In the work analysed there was clear evidence of pupils working in a

range of media. Resources are good with accommodation offering generous space for the delivery of these activities.

73. No **music** lessons were seen during the inspection as music is taught by a specialist teacher on a day not included in the inspection period. No judgement is therefore made about the quality of provision or standards. Pupils across the school were observed during their singing and hymn practice. At these times, pupils sang sweetly, in tune and with a good sense of rhythm and pitch. Their singing skills were above those expected nationally for pupils of this age. Planning suggests that a good range of learning activities is in place and that music provides good enrichment of the curriculum, with some exciting additional activities linked to the local community.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve standards that are above those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Extra-curricular activities, including the residential visits, make a significant contribution to extending and complementing school-based activities.

## **Commentary**

74. Standards in physical education are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were satisfactory.
75. The school has a full curriculum and all the programmes of the National Curriculum are taught. Success in swimming is very high with all pupils achieving the 25 metre unaided swim, the nationally recommended standard. In dance and games, observed during the inspection, pupils perform well, acquiring good skills in movement, use of space, awareness of other pupils and ball handling. The quality of teaching is good and activities are designed well to encourage good physical skills used in many games. Learning and extra-curricular activities help pupils develop confidence, self-discipline and other personal qualities, such as dependency, as well as supporting each other. In matches and tournaments, pupils acquire a competitive edge, whilst retaining respect for opposing teams and each other. Inclusion is a strong feature in physical education. Teachers ensure that all pupils participate fully and in extra-curricular activities boys and girls participate together. Attendance at extra-curricular activities is good. Teachers consider the individual needs of pupils well and provide many opportunities for them to work in pairs, evaluate each other's performance and develop strong partnerships to promote social interaction. The management of pupil behaviour is good overall, although very occasionally there are circumstances when a very small minority of pupils do not pay full attention or abide by rules. Teachers use subject expertise, time and resources well, which contributes to the good standards being achieved.

76. The curriculum is very good and the extensive extra-curricular programme and residential visits enhance and complement the statutory curriculum. The opportunity for older pupils to attend a residential course not only provides opportunities for pupils to acquire new skills in activities such as canoeing and abseiling but also promotes personal development in forming mutually supportive relationships with each other. Resources are good and the leadership and management are effective. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection.

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

77. There is not enough evidence to report on this area fully.
78. Personal, social and health education is given a high priority in the school. It makes a very good contribution to establishing very good relationships between everyone in the school. Its success is reflected in pupils' very good attitudes to learning. The comprehensive scheme of work links well to other subjects. In the health programme, pupils receive lessons on sex education and drugs awareness and have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have. The Catholic ethos of the school underpins all its work and the importance placed on pupils' personal development.
79. Although no PSHE or 'Circle Time'<sup>3</sup> sessions were seen, discussion with pupils revealed that they contribute as responsible members of the school community. In 'Circle Time' sessions, pupils say they feel sufficiently at ease to be able to share their thoughts and concerns openly due to the sensitive questioning and response of the class teacher. The newly formed school council is providing good opportunities for pupils to be involved in the running of the school and developing their awareness of citizenship.

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<sup>3</sup> Discussion time in personal, social and health education in which pupils discuss personal issues informally, but within a structured framework.

## 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>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

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

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).*

