

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Epsom

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125205

Headteacher: Theresa Kenefick

Lead inspector: Brenda Spencer

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 267832

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: 5 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 250  
School address: Rosebank  
West Street  
Epsom  
Surrey  
Postcode: KT18 7RT  
Telephone number: (01372) 727 850  
Fax number: (01372) 725 609  
Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Kevin Rourke  
Date of previous inspection: June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Joseph's is an average-sized, Catholic primary school in Epsom for pupils aged five to 11 years. Attainment on entry is average and socio-economic background is above average. There are 250 pupils attending full time: 136 boys and 114 girls. Five pupils left and 10 pupils joined the school last year outside the normal times of transfer. This is below the national rate of turbulence. About half of pupils are White British. The majority of remaining pupils are of other White heritage, together with a very small number of pupils representing almost every other racial group. There are 11 pupils at an early stage of learning English and most speak Tagalog, Malayalam, or French Creole. Thirty-two pupils have special educational needs, with two having statements of special need. This is about the national average. These special needs are predominantly related to specific learning, social, emotional and behavioural and speech or communication difficulties, and autism. The school gained the Schools Achievement Award in 2002. Investors in People was awarded in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                 |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 20451                          | Brenda Spencer  | Lead inspector | Foundation Stage<br>Science  |
| 9537                           | Caroline Marden | Lay inspector  |  |
| 28200                          | Paul Stevens    | Team inspector | Mathematics<br>Information and communication technology<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>Music<br>Physical education<br>Special educational needs |
| 3574                           | Kawaljit Singh  | Team inspector | English<br>English as an additional language<br>Geography<br>History   |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary is a very good school.** The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Pupils are cared for very well. Extensive efforts are made to ensure pupils from a range of ethnic and social groups and those with differing academic needs achieve well. Leadership and management are very good overall. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent.
- From average starting points, pupils reach high standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils reach high standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and information and communication technology by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils achieve very well overall because of the efforts to meet the differing needs of all pupils.
- Teaching is inspiring and consequently, learning is very good. High quality teaching and learning occur frequently in junior classes.
- Analysis of data and planning for improvement are perceptive and very successful.
- Enrichment of the curriculum through extra-curricular activities and theme days is excellent.
- The excellent provision for spiritual, moral and social development contributes to pupils' enormous enthusiasm for school, their sense of responsibility and excellent relationships.
- There is no specialist leader of the Foundation Stage.
- Science lessons in the infants are not consistently challenging for higher-attaining pupils.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 is excellent. All the key issues have been addressed very well; for example, provision for pupils with English as an additional language is now very good. The experience of the youngest children in the school was previously very bleak. They now have a good start to their education. Every important aspect of the school is improved: standards, achievement, curriculum, health and safety, academic guidance, pupils' attitudes and the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have a much stronger understanding of how to improve provision.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2002        | 2003 | 2004 | 2004            |
| English   | B           | B    | A    | A               |
| mathematics   | B           | A    | A    | A*              |
| science   | A           | A    | A    | A               |

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

**The pupils' achievement is very good overall.** It is very good in English, speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology in Years 2 and 6. Achievement in science is satisfactory in Year 2 and very good in Year 6. Building from average starting points, pupils in the current Year 2 reach standards which are well above average in speaking and listening and reading, mathematics and information and communication technology. Standards are above average in writing and average in science. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are well above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Pupils' test results for mathematics in 2004 were in the top five per cent of all schools. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well. Their needs are carefully identified and skilfully supported in lessons by the use of visual material and the specific emphasis placed on developing vocabulary.

The vast majority of children in Reception achieve well and are on track to reach most of the goals for their learning. They are likely to exceed them for attitudes to learning, their social and emotional development and knowledge of number. However, although children are taught well, some are unlikely to meet the goals for writing. Reception children achieve well both in the single- and mixed-age range classes.

**Pupils' personal qualities are excellent.** They enjoy responsibility. Relationships, behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Their spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. Cultural development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education and teaching and learning are very good overall.** Teaching is very good in junior classes and good overall in the infant and Reception classes. Common to all subjects, but especially in junior classes, teaching is characterised by high expectations of intellect and behaviour, encouragement and effective use of resources. Consequently, pupils are eager to learn. They enjoy challenging work and excel at working together to solve problems. On the very rare occasions when achievement is only satisfactory, for example in infant science, expectations are not demanding enough for higher-attaining pupils.

The curriculum enthuses pupils very well by its breadth. The excellent enrichment, through theme days, extra-curricular activities and visits, ensures pupils anticipate their lessons with pleasure. Pupils are cared for very well and receive very good academic guidance. Very good links with parents and those with other schools and the community have a positive effect on learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The excellent leadership of the headteacher, combined with the efforts of a very strong senior management team and also subject leaders, has been highly effective in improving the school. Analysis of data, both to identify where best to seek improvement and to evaluate the outcomes, is exemplary. However, there is no leader of the Foundation Stage providing specialist guidance on improving provision. Governance is very good. The governing body has a very strong strategic influence and prepares the school very well for the significant changes it faces in the number and nature of its pupils. It ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents and pupils are extremely proud of their school. Parents hold in high regard how happy their children are at school, the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and the leadership of the school. They would like clearer information on their children's progress. Pupils find lessons stimulating, other pupils friendly and staff respectful and helpful with their work.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- appoint a specialist leader of the Foundation Stage; and
- ensure the needs of higher-attaining pupils are consistently met in science in the infants.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievement is very good overall. It is good in Reception and Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.

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

- Pupils' skills, and knowledge and understanding of core subjects are very good because of the quality of the curriculum, teaching, subject leadership and the use of assessment data.
- The quality of teaching and the very good use made of assessment for planning ensure pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language achieve very well.
- Lessons in science in Year 2 are not demanding enough for higher-attaining pupils, resulting in only satisfactory achievement and standards.

#### **Commentary**

1. Most children enter school with average starting points in communication and mathematical skills. They achieve well and by the end of Reception, the vast majority of the current intake are on track to reach the expected goals in their learning. Exceptions are for goals in attitudes to learning, social and emotional development and knowledge of number, which children are likely to exceed. Some children are unlikely to reach the goals in writing by the end of the year. The improvement in the standards and achievement of Reception pupils since the last inspection is associated with improved quality of teaching. This arises from the hard work of staff and substantial investment in resources and staff training.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004***

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 17.3 (17.6)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| writing       | 15.7 (17.3)    | 14.6 (14.6)      |
| mathematics   | 19.1 (18.5)    | 16.2 (16.3)      |

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

2. In Year 2 overall, pupils reached standards in the 2004 national tests that were well above the national average in reading, above average in writing and very high in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was in the top five per cent of schools for mathematics and high for reading and writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels was above the national average for reading and in line with the average for writing and mathematics. This reflected the proportion of recently-arrived pupils with little English. Compared to similar schools, standards were above average in reading. They were average in writing and very high in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in science, judged by teacher assessment, was average. The proportion of those reaching higher levels in science was well above average. The trend in the school's results was above the

national trend. Test results have improved significantly since the last inspection; however, the previous cohort had a high proportion of special needs.

3. Pupils in the current Year 2 reach standards that are well above average in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and information and communication technology. Standards are above average in writing and average in science. Overall, they have achieved very well. However, higher attaining pupils have the capability to achieve more in science.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004**

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 29.1 (27.5)    | 26.9 (26.8)      |
| mathematics   | 29.5 (28.6)    | 27.0 (26.8)      |
| science       | 30.9 (31.2)    | 28.6 (28.6)      |

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

4. In Year 6, pupils reached standards in the 2004 national tests that were well above the national average in English and science and were very high in mathematics. Compared to schools with similar results at the end of Year 2, standards were well above average in English and science, and were very high for mathematics. The trend in the school's results was below the national trend. However, this trend is improving. Since the last inspection, compared to similar schools, test results remain impressive. The value added from Year 2 to Year 6 in 2004 measured by national tests was in the top five per cent of schools.
5. Pupils in the current Year 6 reach standards which are well above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Their very good achievements reflect the very good and sometimes excellent teaching in junior classes. Subject leaders use the analysis of assessment data very effectively to highlight aspects of learning which need to be addressed to raise standards.
6. Sampling of work, limited observations of lessons and discussions with pupils suggest that standards in geography and design and technology are average by the end of Years 2 and 6. They are likely to be above average in history and art and design by the end of Years 2 and 6 and above average in music by the end of Year 2. The current Year 6 is likely to reach average standards in music. No secure judgements could be made about standards in physical education. These subjects were not a main focus of the inspection.
7. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The school has taken very good steps to address differences in the attainment of boys and girls in national tests in English, reading and writing through the purchase of interesting books and by examining the curriculum to ensure boys are enthused by their activities. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve very well because of the very good teaching and close support from learning assistants. Their individual plans make clear to pupils their targets for learning. The school has excellent systems of analysing all performance data, but the number of pupils in each ethnic category is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions. With very good support from their teachers and teacher assistants, from Reception onwards, ethnic minority pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress indicates that pupils who join the school with very little or no English make very good progress. As pupils spend more time in

the school, the gap in standards with their English-speaking peers narrows. Those who spend three to four years in the school manage to reach nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6.

8. Pupils' achievement is very good overall. It is very good in English, mathematics and information and communication technology across the school and in science in the juniors. The quality of teaching and the engaging curriculum are significant factors. Points for improvement - for example, increasing staff's subject knowledge in information and communication technology and improving pupils' attainment in shape, space and measures and also in writing - have all been addressed very well. These are strengths in the provision and consequently pupils' achievement has improved. Whilst the needs of lower- and middle-attaining pupils in Year 2 are met well in science, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Consequently, achievement in science in infants is satisfactory overall. The influence of the co-ordinator for science is significant in junior classes but it is not as substantial in the infants. Children in Reception Year do well. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection, resulting from a radical overhaul of the curriculum, investment in resources and substantial staff development. At present, monitoring and evaluation of the provision are carried out by subject leaders. They do not have the specialist Foundation Stage knowledge to guide the school towards very good or excellent provision and achievement.

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

Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and learning. As pupils grow older, their behaviour improves and by the end of Year 6 it is excellent. Their attendance is very good. Pupils' personal, spiritual, social and moral development is excellent and their cultural development is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent provision for personal development leads to outstanding relationships.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. This reflects the emphasis placed on it by the school.
- The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and it is very good for cultural development.
- The Catholic ethos pervades the whole school and pupils show great interest in school life.
- Pupils have high levels of attendance.

### **Commentary**

9. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are confident and have high self-esteem. In lessons, they play an active role; they concentrate and persevere with their work and enjoy learning. They are keen to answer questions and offer to explain their work. They also fully participate in the clubs on offer to all pupils. Pupils are enterprising and take responsibility seriously. They walk to school to achieve the 'Golden Boot Award' and perform their duties as monitors and prefects superbly. The pupils' personal development is helping them gain mature attitudes to learning and, consequently, how to take more independent responsibility for their own progress.
10. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language show the same very good attitudes as the other pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants have a very close rapport with pupils and this develops their self-confidence and willingness to learn. The school works hard to develop pupils' self-esteem.
11. Behaviour of older pupils is excellent. Younger pupils behave very well and their behaviour improves as they grow older. Pupils from all ethnic groups play very well together.

Interviewed pupils felt that there was little bullying in the school and that if it did occur, teachers would deal with it effectively. School records show that on rare occasions when allegations of bullying or racist name-calling are made, they are thoroughly investigated and action is taken. There have been no exclusions for many years. The excellent relationships between pupils contribute to their achievement as they work very well together.

12. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. The Catholic ethos pervades the whole school. The strong links with the adjacent church and school assemblies give pupils opportunities to celebrate their faith. They learn the meaning of reflection and reverence, when they walk in quietly with folded hands for assembly, to worship as a whole-school community. Lighting a candle creates a reflective ethos. Opportunities for spiritual development are provided in all areas of the curriculum. For example, in science, a parent wrote of her daughter's delight when she covered her hands in hand cream and tried to pick up some jelly.
13. Pupils' moral and social development is excellent. Pupils work very well in groups and pairs from Year 1. In all school situations, pupils are not only confident but also caring for others. Pupils care for those who are less fortunate than themselves and have collected money for a number of charities. They regularly raise funds to buy playground equipment. The school council, clubs, paired work in classes, trips and residential visits all help pupils to improve their social skills and as a result, relationships in the school are excellent. The staff insist that pupils treat other people with consideration and this has developed an atmosphere of trust between adults and pupils. Class discussion and 'Circle Time' provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn to take time in expressing their views.
14. The school very successfully promotes pupils' cultural development and multi-cultural awareness. In art and design pupils study the work of famous artists such as Van Gogh. Pupils have many opportunities to listen to music and learn dance from a variety of cultures, such as the 'gumboot' dance from Africa. This results in very good racial harmony. Parents from different cultures come into school to talk about their life experiences. In the teaching of geography, art and design, history and literacy, pupils learn to respect and value the cultures of other countries and communities.
15. Since the previous inspection, the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved from very good to excellent and, as a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent.

## Attendance

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 3.7 | School data          | 0.1 |
| 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.*

16. The already good level of pupil attendance has steadily risen over the last three years and is now very good. This is due to the school constantly reminding parents of the importance of good attendance and close monitoring of any absences. Punctuality of pupils is also very good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching, learning, the curriculum and the quality of care are all very good overall. Very good links with parents and those with other schools and the community have a positive effect on learning.

## Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Assessment procedures and their use to raise achievement are very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly three-quarters of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is very good or better.
- Teaching and learning are very good in English, mathematics and information and communication technology in Years 1 to 6 and in science in Years 3 to 6.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start because of good teaching.
- Teachers' expectations of higher-attaining pupils in science in Year 2 are not high enough.
- The very good development of pupils' vocabulary, rich opportunities for speaking and listening and the use of stimulating visual resources help pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language to achieve very well.
- Where the pace of lessons flags, teaching and learning are only satisfactory.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 4 (11%)   | 13 (35%)  | 14 (38%) | 6 (16%)      | 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. The quality of teaching and learning has much improved since the last inspection. The proportion of excellent and very good teaching has increased significantly and there is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching. Parents and pupils quite rightly hold the quality of teaching in high regard.
18. Teaching and learning in the junior classes are impressive. Teaching is never less than good in all subjects and very rarely less than very good or excellent in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Without exception, these lessons are characterised by excellent encouragement of pupils, very high expectations, excellent management of behaviour, and motivating teaching methods. Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong. For example, pupils revising fertilisation of flowering plants in Year 6 acted out being bees and plants and consolidated their understanding of the parts of the plant by dissecting a lily. It is unsurprising that the progress pupils made by Year 6 in 2004 was in the top five per cent of schools nationally. The very good lessons in the infant classes in English, mathematics and information and communication technology share these characteristics.
19. At the last inspection, 20 per cent of teaching in the Foundation Stage was unsatisfactory. This record is much improved. No teaching was less than satisfactory and the vast majority was good. The warmth of relationships and the respect adults show for children's views result in confident youngsters who are eager to share their ideas. This includes those who have learning difficulties or who are not fluent speakers of English. Practical activities feature strongly in the curriculum and support

children's developing understanding well. For example, when deciding which ramp would allow cars to move more freely, children were encouraged to feel the different textures of foam, carpet and wood before they made their suggestions. Teachers' observational assessment is used well to provide activities which challenge children; consequently, children in the Reception class and the Reception and Year 1 children in the mixed-age class all achieve well.

20. Very good teaching and support enable pupils with special educational needs to achieve very well within lessons. Teachers and their assistants ensure pupils are included in class discussions and follow-ups to group activities. As they make progress, the degree of support is reduced appropriately. Pupils are thoroughly assessed on entry to the school so that a programme can be devised to meet their needs, and their progress is carefully tracked.
21. Teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language is now very good. All staff have received in-service training and have good understanding of the needs of their bilingual pupils. Additional support is provided for half a day per week through a specialist teacher who withdraws pupils for intensive group tuition. In one Year 3 lesson, pupils were learning the use of imperative verbs. They used appropriate ingredients, and gave verbal and written instructions to their peers to make a 'silly sandwich'. The practical nature of the lesson resulted in pupils' very good achievement. However, as the pupils are withdrawn from the classroom, opportunities for class teachers to observe the specialist teaching are lost.
22. The well-trained teacher assistants support pupils very well. Pupils are given many opportunities to ask and answer questions in class lessons and talk and discuss work with their peers. Teachers use good questioning, and explain key vocabulary well. The use of the interactive board provides a strong visual element to lessons and as a result, pupils understand what they are required to learn. Teachers have positive attitudes towards diversity of languages in their classes and this adds significantly to their bilingual pupils' confidence.
23. Planning of lessons is most often very carefully tailored to meet the academic needs of pupils of different capability. Whilst lower and middle capability pupils make good progress, teachers' expectations of very capable pupils in some science lessons in Year 2 are not high enough. This results in these pupils making too little progress.
24. When the pace of lessons flags, teaching and its impact on learning are only satisfactory. This happens when time spent in preliminary discussion is excessive, or long explanations test pupils' interest. In physical education, this results in pupils cooling down and being unable to exercise effectively. In Reception classes, the sparkle and momentum of learning are lost when each activity is explained. It diminishes the children's personal development where they are capable of choosing and identifying for themselves the nature of some of the activities on offer in the classroom.
25. Overall, the systems for assessment of standards of attainment are very good. The analysis of all performance data and its use are excellent in English and mathematics and very good in science. Pupils' work is marked in detail, highlighting strengths and giving pointers for improvement. In addition, teachers regularly test pupils and keep portfolios of their work so that they have a very good basis upon which to plan to meet their needs. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and support is provided as and when required. One strong feature of assessment is pupils' self-assessment and developing peer assessments. This shows teachers what their pupils have

understood and what they are trying to learn. Systems for assessment are fully established in non-core subjects. Consequently, teachers have a good idea on how to improve provision or make changes to the curriculum.

## **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is very good overall; it is very good in Years 1-6 and is good in Reception. The range of extra activities outside of lessons is excellent. Accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is excellent enrichment of the curriculum.
- The highly innovative curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils.
- There are very good cross-curricular links.
- There is very good improvement in provision for young children.

## **Commentary**

26. Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with English as an additional language has improved greatly and is now good for the Foundation Stage and very good for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
27. The school has been extremely successful in creating a curriculum that is interesting and fun which does not compromise on seeking high standards. It provides pupils with a very broad range of experiences and activities covering all areas of the National Curriculum and the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage, and fulfils statutory requirements. Staff have been prepared to develop innovative ways of organising the school day so that many extra after-school clubs could be offered. The range of these clubs, including those at lunchtime, is exceptional and ranges from fairy tale club through art clubs to sport. There are clubs for pupils of all ages every evening after school. Pupils value these clubs, with many attending them – some pupils attend a club every day of the week. They also find lessons fun and are incredibly enthusiastic about the ‘special days’ such as science day and Irish day. In fact, even when pressed, pupils could not think of a boring lesson.
28. The very strong cross-curricular links result in key skills such as literacy, numeracy and computer skills being practised in a wide range of subjects so that these skills are constantly being improved. Pupils also learn how knowledge and skills learned in one subject can be transferred to another.
29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. It includes a wide range of high quality resources. Pupils have full access to the school’s very good curriculum. They fully participate in the wide variety of clubs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive a broad and balanced curriculum. The school provides a curriculum that reflects other cultures positively. Pupils are given good opportunities to gain confidence about their own and other cultures through assemblies, celebrations such as Philippine and Spanish days, history, geography, music and art. Pupils of all ethnic backgrounds work and play well together. Friendships across cultures are well established and racial harmony is very good.
30. The programme for personal, social and health education is very good and is underpinned by the school ethos of care and respect based on the Catholic faith. It is taught in discrete lessons as part of the Catholic Education for Personal Relationships

programme as well as in other subjects. For example, the need for hygiene when handling food is well covered in science. Appropriate attention is given to raising awareness of the effects of drug misuse, and sex education is provided in line with Catholic beliefs.

31. The school is well resourced and there is a high level of teaching and support staff who are very effectively deployed in Years 1 to 6. Staffing levels in Reception are adequate, but recruitment difficulties mean there is not one teaching assistant working in Reception but several providing coverage. This means staff have to work very hard to provide consistency in approach. The accommodation is good, well cared for and provides a bright stimulating learning environment.

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

The school takes very good care of its pupils. It provides very good support and guidance to pupils and involves them very well in the life of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Different groups of pupils achieve very well because of the support they receive.
- There are very good procedures to ensure pupils' opinions are acted upon.
- The school very effectively ensures that pupils are in a safe environment.

### **Commentary**

32. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Risk assessments are now regularly carried out and any issues identified quickly remedied. In addition, the needs of pupils with English as an additional language are very well identified and met.
33. The school carries out comprehensive risk assessments for school trips and there are termly health and safety inspections. The school routinely carries out analyses of pupil accidents (the overwhelming majority being minor bumps and bruises). It is meticulous in sending out letters to inform parents about head bumps, even in the most minor cases. Child protection procedures are securely in place with staff having a very good understanding of them. The school is currently working towards obtaining the 'Healthy Schools Award', and actively encourages healthy eating habits.
34. Assessment procedures to track pupils' progress are very comprehensive. The data is carefully analysed to check the progress of pupils of different abilities and those with English as an additional language. Where underachievement is apparent, extra support, for example early literacy support, is provided. The school takes into account any personal and social difficulties that are being experienced by pupils with special educational needs.
35. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who belong to different ethnic backgrounds are very well cared for and are an integral part of the school community. Progress and achievement are very well recorded and very good support is provided within lessons and in withdrawal groups. Any racist name-calling, if it occurs, is recorded and the issues are dealt with professionally.
36. Pupils who join the school, either in Reception or further up the school, quickly become part of the school community. Pupils who have recently joined said they found it easy to make friends and preferred this school to their last one. The parents of children who joined the Reception class this year feel the induction procedures worked very well. The close links with the local Catholic secondary school contribute to good transfer arrangements. Pupils who transfer to other schools in the local area have the opportunity to spend time in their chosen school in the summer term before they join.



37. The school council is a very effective channel for pupils to bring their ideas to the attention of the school management. In response to the school council's request, the school has introduced pupil referees for lunchtime football. Out of its own funds, the council has provided red and yellow warning cards for the referees to use. The school also uses an annual questionnaire to seek pupils' views on their experience of school. In addition, questionnaires are used to find out how well specific aspects of the curriculum are working. Most recently, pupils were asked to fill in feedback sheets on the success of the science day. The results of this have been analysed and as a result, the school will invite more scientists to visit the next event.

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

The partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community and other schools are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are excellent links with the parish.
- Parents are consulted very well.
- There is very good involvement of parents from different ethnic groups.
- There is insufficient information about pupils' progress in their annual reports.

### **Commentary**

38. The school has maintained its strong links with parents and local schools since the last inspection and there are increasing numbers of parents who are choosing to send their children to the school.
39. Newsletters and other letters keep parents well informed about school events. These include specific information about what their children will be studying. Information gained about pupils' attainment and progress, through the parent consultation evenings and annual reports, is good overall. Annual reports give good information about what pupils know and can do in English, mathematics and science; this is not always the case in other subjects and the rate of pupils' progress over the year is not often explicitly stated. In addition, parents of pupils in Year 6 receive useful progress reports in the autumn term showing the pupils' National Curriculum levels and giving advice on how they could improve these.
40. Parents are very involved with the school through helping pupils use the computers and hearing them read. The school values this support enormously and provides induction programmes to enable parents to help most effectively and to appreciate the importance of confidentiality. Parents raise money to buy items such as computer equipment and large play equipment. In addition, they help with school maintenance projects. The school is very keen that families from all ethnic groups should be active members of the school community. To encourage this, the school held a Philippino and Irish day and asked parents to come and help. All the Philippino families were involved in organising the day, which is recognised by the whole school community as being very enjoyable and a great success.
41. The parents of pupils with special educational needs work very well with teachers and their assistants both by supporting their children at home and by fully participating in reviews of their progress in school. Teachers liaise regularly with parents to exchange information on how well the pupils are achieving.
42. The school makes every effort to involve parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language in all school activities. The annual celebrations are very well attended and provide very good opportunities for parents to listen to music and song, observe dance and taste food

from different cultures. Currently, there are no parents who need help in translations or interpretations in their own languages.

43. The school regularly seeks parents' views on whether they are satisfied with what the school provides or about suggested changes in practices within the school. The results of these surveys show the vast majority of parents are very pleased with what the school provides. In response to a recent survey of parents whose children had just joined Reception, the school is introducing a formal consultation with the teacher in the first term.
44. The school enthusiastically supported the building of the church on part of its land, and the parish and the school work very closely together. Many pupils and their families attend the school-led masses held on Sundays in the church. The church supports the school in the teaching of religious education and in celebrating Christian festivals. Pupils have benefited from the close association with a local bookshop and pupils from Year 6 have visited the shop to choose books for the school library. Links with a local theatre have given pupils the opportunity to perform in professional productions.
45. Links with a local Catholic secondary school have enabled the computers to be used more effectively as the school provides St Joseph's with technical support. A long association with a local nursery for pupils with special educational needs benefits pupils from both schools. Year 6 pupils enjoy working with the children and are developing their personal skills at the same time.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good overall. Leadership of the headteacher is excellent and of other key staff is very good. Management is very effective and the governing body fulfils its role very well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Incisive leadership of the headteacher results in an excellent climate for learning and very high standards.
- There are excellent procedures for gaining and using self-evaluation information.
- Very good leadership by key staff promotes very good achievement.
- Very supportive governors are fully involved in forward planning.
- There is excellent forward planning.

### **Commentary**

46. Staff and governors are fully committed to continuous improvement in the school. This has resulted in excellent improvement in all aspects of the work of the school since the last inspection.
47. The headteacher has very successfully promoted very high aspirations in relation to academic achievement and personal development that are securely rooted in the Catholic faith. Forward planning is exceptionally good, with views from all members of the community reflected in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). In particular, the 'Futures Day' that included governors and staff led to a vision for 2015 that is both ambitious and grounded in reality.
48. The excellent analysis of school performance data and extensive self evaluation (including teaching and learning) of provision in the school by senior managers informs the priorities of the SIP. The action the school takes to deal with issues is very effective so that weaknesses become strengths. For example, pupils'

understanding of shape and space within mathematics was not as strong as the other areas, so the school focused on the teaching of this. Now pupils achieve very well in this area. Whilst relentlessly promoting the highest academic achievements, the headteacher has also led changes that have made learning fun for pupils and given them a huge range of extra-curricular activities.

49. Governors are very supportive of the school, and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. When appointing staff, they endeavour to only appoint high quality teachers who will fit in with the ethos of the school.
50. Overall, subject leaders provide very good leadership of their subjects. It is excellent in mathematics and information and communication technology. However, in some cases the leadership of subjects in the infant years is not quite so strong as in the junior years. There is no overall leader of the Foundation Stage with specialist knowledge to continue the quest for improvement. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very good leadership and management so that everyone works as a team for the benefit of the pupils. The governor with special responsibility for special educational needs provides good support to the school. The co-ordinator has ensured that learning support assistants are well trained with regard to specific needs such as autism. She monitors classroom teaching and pupils' work so that she can feed back ideas to teachers. The leadership and management of the English as an additional language service are very good. All pupils are assessed and their stages of language acquisition are determined and recorded, and their progress is tracked rigorously and monitored against targets. The school's analyses of performance data and its use are excellent. The information is used very well for planning to meet individual needs and to provide additional support where required.
51. The Catholic ethos is central to the mission of the school and is reflected in the attention given to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. The school has recognised that the pupil profile is changing, with more pupils with English as an additional language joining the school. It has adjusted its provision accordingly so that these pupils achieve on a par with other pupils. Performance management procedures strongly support pupils' achievement, and teachers' targets reflect the priorities of the SIP. Staff development is carefully tailored to meet the needs of the school as well as those of individual members of staff. Teachers enjoy working at the school and the school provides very good support to newly-qualified teachers, enabling them to teach effectively.
52. Financial management is very good, with principles of best value being used to very good effect. The school and governors have planned very carefully for the predicted increase in pupil numbers. It has very sensibly held money in reserve to fund extra classes as they come on line. The school has analysed baptism figures from the parish very closely over a number of years and so is in a position to make very good predictions about the numbers of pupils expected in future years. Within the high carry-forward from last year, only £57,621 of it was not already committed. The expected carry-forward at the end of this year is around £64,000, of which £40,000 is already committed, leaving a contingency fund of £24,000. Due to prudent budgeting, the school is able to fund their decision to cover teachers' planning and preparation time with qualified teachers for the coming year. The school provides very good value for money.

## **Financial information**

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 809,413 |
| Total expenditure          | 785,457 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 3,430   |

| Balances (£)                             |         |
|--|---------|
| Balance from previous year               | 83,613  |
| Balance carried forward to the next year | 107,569 |

53. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and the commitment and quality of the staff mean that the school is well placed to improve. The current accommodation will limit the organisation of the school if pupil numbers increase as expected.

## **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 good overall. At the time of the last inspection, there were serious weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. Children's achievement was barely satisfactory overall and was inadequate in personal and social, mathematical and physical development. There was no immediate access to a safe outside area. This bleak picture is much improved.

There is currently no leader of the Foundation Stage. However, the school has invested significantly in staff development, resources and improving the accommodation. Subject co-ordinators keep the provision under review, but the lack of specialist leadership makes it difficult to improve provision further.

Staffing is adequate to provide the required children : adult ratio. Recruitment difficulties have led to there being a number of different teaching assistants, which is not ideal for planning and assessment, or for developing consistent provision. Staff work very hard to overcome these difficulties and assess and plan very well. Consequently, all children achieve well, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Arrangements for settling new children are very good. Attainment on entry is average.

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

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

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

- Relationships are very warm and supportive so children feel valued and are confident.
- Children are helpful to one another and are keen to behave well.

#### **Commentary**

54. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. The warmth of relationships and the respect adults show for children's views make all feel valued and confident to try new activities. Children have lots of opportunities to work and play together; for example, a group of boys prepared a pasta bake in the home corner. Children's social development is supported by the very good example of adults' teamwork. They develop good concentration skills because their activities are interesting and practical. Occasionally, whole-group sessions are over-long and this takes the sparkle out of learning. The school values its cultural diversity and gives children very good opportunities to learn about one another. The Philippino focus was particularly appreciated. These children should exceed the goals for their learning by the end of the Reception Year.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

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

- Children are given good opportunities to discuss their ideas and develop their vocabulary.
- Reading skills are taught systematically and stories are explored in interesting ways.
- Assessment is thorough and used well to plan appropriate learning.

### **Commentary**

55. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is good. Assessment of children's skills is very good and this information is used very well to provide teaching and activities tailored to children's range of ability. Discussion underpins reading and writing activities, and staff work hard to help children to become articulate and broaden their vocabulary. The use of puppets to tell stories and to act out stories is very effective. The practical nature of activities helps the children with English as an additional language to learn English very well. Knowledge of letter sounds and the links with writing and reading develop well; however, the input does not fully exploit the links with other learning, for example by learning sounds which are likely to be needed in reading and writing that week. There are opportunities for writing in role-play but these could be enriched to good effect. Children are on track to meet the goals for their learning in most aspects except writing by the end of the Reception Year. Many are likely to exceed the goals for speaking and listening.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Games, rhymes and songs are used well to reinforce counting forwards and backwards.

### **Commentary**

56. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. Singing "One, Two, Buckle my Shoe", and counting the number of jumps when doing brain gym all reinforce children's counting skills. Higher-attaining pupils learn to count forwards and backwards in twos by singing "Sizzling Sausages". Understanding is rooted in real experiences, for example by using children or the billy goats in the familiar story to provide examples of big, bigger and biggest. Role-play in the market includes using a till, weighing scales and organising money and credit cards. Teachers support lower-attaining children well by focusing questions appropriately and picking up on errors sensitively and using them as a teaching point. Children develop a good knowledge of shape. Most children are on track to meet the goals for their learning, except in number which they are likely to exceed.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are encouraged effectively to draw conclusions from their investigations.
- Class lessons in the ICT suite do not maximise the development of technology skills.

- Sense of past is understood well by comparing artefacts.

### **Commentary**

57. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is good. For example, in deciding how to move a vehicle along a wooden plank without pushing it, questions were used well to help children think. More capable children were extended by considering the effect the surface would have on how far a vehicle would travel. Links with other learning are exploited well, for example by designing a bridge for the Billy Goats Gruff out of building blocks or making a boat out of a range of materials. Sometimes the potential of these activities is diminished by adults giving solutions rather than helping children to explore the problems. Information and communication technology is focused on the ICT suite and this does not allow teachers to develop skills with small groups in the classroom. This particularly disadvantages children who need more support. Most children are on track to meet the goals for their learning by the end of the Reception Year.

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

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

- The immediate access to an outside area is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- Children use a range of tools to develop their fine muscle control.
- The pace of whole-class lessons in physical development sometimes flags.

### **Commentary**

58. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is satisfactory. Access to outside learning is regular and much improved. This enables children to engage in large and expansive movements, for example when feeling the wind, using plastic bag kites. Such experiences are more meaningful than covering the weather in a daily ritual at the beginning of the day. Plans to replace the donated plastic equipment are welcome. Lessons in physical development in the hall are slow to start and their pace flags, leaving children with little time to be active. Children use a satisfactory range of tools, including scissors, pastry cutters, rolling pins, wax crayons and paintbrushes. This supports the development of fine muscle control satisfactorily. Most children are on track to reach the goals for their learning by the end of Reception Year.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

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

- Staff encourage children to explore stories and characterisation well by playing with puppets.
- Opportunities for children to develop self-expression in artistic activities are too few.

### **Commentary**

59. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is satisfactory. Children have good opportunities to explore ideas raised in stories, for example, acting out the relationships of the Troll and Billy Goats Gruff, using puppets. The outside is used well in dance to explore this in large movements. Children rehearse their own experiences in role-play, for example following the example of the school kitchen in preparing and cooking fresh food. Art activities such as drawing with wax crayons and painting are available. Sometimes these lack inspiration and do not extend children's self-expression, for example by encouraging them to mix their own colours. Most children are on track to reach the goals for their learning by the end of Reception Year.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above the national average for Years 3-6. Standards in reading are well above average and for writing are above average for Year 2.
- Pupils' achievement is very good as a result of very good teaching.
- Analysis of data and its use are excellent.
- Strategies to improve standards in writing for Year 2 boys are effective.
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages the subject very well.

#### **Commentary**

60. In National Curriculum tests in 2004, Year 6 pupils' results were well above the national average and those of similar schools. Standards of the current cohort are similarly well above average. Year 2 pupils' results, in 2004 tests in reading, were well above average and were above average in writing. When compared with similar schools, the results were above average in reading but average in writing. This is partly because children joined the school speaking little English. In addition, boys did not perform as well as girls. The school identified this as a whole-school priority and has implemented effective strategies. Currently, there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Despite having below average starting points in writing and average in reading when children start school, the standards of the current cohort in Year 2 are well above average in reading, and speaking and listening, and above average in writing.
61. Pupils achieve very well. Pupils who have special education needs are very well supported, and achieve very well in relation to targets set in their individual education plans. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are highly motivated and achieve very well.
62. Standards in speaking and listening skills are well above the expected levels throughout the school. Many structured opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss work, for example in pairs, and to ask and answer questions in class lessons that are successful in improving speaking and listening skills. In an excellent lesson, pupils explained confidently and eloquently what they had seen while travelling in an imaginary spacecraft. Pupils are given opportunities for public speaking in assemblies, annual 'poetry recitals' and in school productions. Pupils are confident and have good



vocabulary and language skills when they discuss their work. Those who are new to English make very good progress.

63. Standards in reading are well above the national average throughout the school. Pupils' achievement is very good as a result of very good teaching. Pupils read fluently and understand the text well. They explain what they have read, and predict what is likely to happen in a story. By the end of Year 6, pupils interpret text very well and understand the subtleties and humour in the books. They discuss the work of different authors and explain their preference for a particular author. They skim and scan the text and make meaningful notes to retrieve information.
64. Pupils enjoyed going to the local shop to choose books for the school library that were boy-friendly and those that suited the reluctant readers. Parental support is very well enlisted through the system of pupils taking books home to practise their reading. The development of research skills is limited on site, as the number of books is small and dispersed in three libraries. However, pupils do visit the local library.
65. Standards of Year 2 pupils in writing are above average and achievement is very good. Pupils write for a range of purposes. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils demonstrated good use of punctuation and construction of sentences to answer questions about the story of 'Raja's Big Ears'. A scrutiny of pupils' work reflects the above average standards being attained. Pupils' spelling skills are good, their handwriting is legible, neat and joined and the work is well presented. The strategies to improve boys' writing skills through the use of boy-friendly reading books and topics for writing stories, such as adventure, detective, space and myths and legends, are having a positive impact on learning.
66. Year 6 pupils' standards in writing are well above average and they achieve very well. They write for a range of purposes, using, for example, narrative and descriptive writing. Their poems, biographies, letters, articles for newspapers, and non-chronological reports are of a high standard. Their handwriting skills are very good and most write neatly, clearly and legibly. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils were learning about adverbs and their use. They used some powerful adjectives and adverbs to make their writing interesting.
67. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and their demonstrations and explanations of tasks stimulate pupils' interest. Very good use of questions promotes pupils' thinking and maintains interest. Behaviour in lessons is often excellent and, as a result, the pace of lessons is very good. Teaching is often inspirational and highly motivates pupils. The pleasure on pupils' faces when they explain work indicates their enjoyment of learning. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs.
68. Teachers assess their pupils' work thoroughly and set appropriate targets. Very good marking of pupils' work tells them exactly what is good about their work and how they can further improve it. Pupils' progress is assessed, monitored and tracked thoroughly, and this information is used very well to plan work and provide additional support to meet individual needs.
69. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages the subject very well. She is a literacy lead teacher and supports colleagues through demonstration lessons and monitoring of planning, lessons and pupils' work. The information from monitoring is used very well to further improve standards. All performance data is rigorously analysed and used to improve standards.
70. The school's progress since the previous inspection is very good. The provision, pupils' standards and achievement, teaching and learning, and leadership and management have improved from good to very good.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

71. The provision for literacy across the curriculum is good. Computers are used well to draft text. Good use is made of literacy skills in mathematics, design and technology, science and history. However, pupils do less written work in geography compared to other subjects.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent subject leader's very thorough monitoring of teaching and learning promotes high standards.
- Very good teaching raises the achievement of all pupils by developing excellent attitudes to learning.

### Commentary

72. Overall, both seven- and 11-year-old pupils attained very high standards in the national tests for 2004 when compared with all schools nationally and with schools with a similar intake. However, lower-attaining seven-year-old pupils did not achieve as well as this. Consequently, the school has put in place a very supportive range of strategies focused on their needs. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was also only in line with the national average, partly because of the arrival of pupils in the middle of Year 2 who spoke no English. Measures taken to improve achievement have been successful. This is reflected in the standards seen during the inspection, which showed that all pupils in Year 2 achieve very well, whatever their capability. Overall, pupils attain well above average standards, both in Year 2 and Year 6. This represents very good achievement.
73. Most pupils in Year 2 are confident in handling number and money involving adding and subtracting to 100. They measure using small units such as grams and understand approximations. Pupils know the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and make block graphs of their findings from surveys of favourite ice-cream flavours, for example. They are beginning to work with simple fractions. Pupils are still developing their capacity to follow through investigations in an independent way. This is partly because opportunities to do so are limited, as they are for Year 6. However, most pupils in Year 6 also show a high degree of competence in number and money. They mentally multiply two-digit numbers and convert sterling to other currencies. They calculate the mean, median and mode of a group of numbers and measures, and find the perimeters and areas of compound shapes.
74. The quality of teaching is very good. Individual lessons vary from satisfactory to excellent. However, over time, many strengths in the teaching enable pupils to achieve very well. The school's inclusive policy ensures that this is true for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This results partly from strong support from learning support assistants. Teachers' high expectations of very capable pupils result in them also reaching an appropriate level of work. Teachers prepare their lessons meticulously and use a wide variety of resources to support both their teaching and pupils' learning. For example, in an excellent lesson

about perimeter and area in a Year 6 class, both the teacher and the pupils used the whiteboard to help the class learn. This was followed up with challenging problems and the expectation that pupils explain their reasoning. As in other lessons, some of the pupils used prepared programs on computers to develop their understanding. The degree of pupils' interest and their consequent keenness to learn was typical of the lessons observed. Teachers show pupils how to improve, partly through actively supporting them in their work and partly through helpful marking.

75. The subject co-ordinator provides excellent leadership and management. He has a very detailed knowledge of the strengths and points for development, both in the subject as a whole and in individual pupils' performance. This is because he works closely with his colleagues to evaluate the school's work very thoroughly and to track pupils throughout their primary career. A full bank of records of assessments informs teachers in their planning. The co-ordinator constantly seeks to make innovations with the objective of maintaining continuous improvement.
76. The subject has improved very well since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

77. Teachers make good use of mathematics in other subjects to enrich pupils' learning. In science, for example, pupils measured the average lengths of elastic bands when stretched by different masses. In technology, pupils referred to the percentages of fibre in food.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- The quality of teaching is very good in junior classes and pupils achieve very well.
- The curriculum builds pupils' investigative and experimental skills very well.
- Monitoring and evaluation of provision is stronger in the junior classes than in the infant classes.
- The higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 are not being stretched to their full potential.

#### **Commentary**

78. In 2004, results in annual assessments at the end of Year 2 show the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels was in line with the national average. It was well above average for the higher level. Standards in comparison with similar schools were below average for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level and well above average for the higher level. This reflects the number of pupils who joined the school in Year 2 unable to speak English. Pupils in the current Year 2 reach average standards overall and achieve satisfactorily. Those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language achieve well because of the appropriate support they receive. However, higher-attaining pupils are working below their capabilities.
79. The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected and higher levels in 2004 national tests, was well above average. Pupils also achieved well above average standards for schools with a similar intake, based on their attainment in national assessments at the age of seven. The standards of the current Year 6 are well above average and all groups of pupils achieve very well.

80. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good in the junior classes and satisfactory in the infant classes. Throughout the school, the strong emphasis on developing a rich scientific vocabulary, together with plentiful opportunities to talk about their work, enables pupils to express their ideas coherently and precisely. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Consequently, all pupils are eager to contribute to discussions, even those who have comparatively limited English. Behaviour is rarely less than very good and sometimes better. This provides a very good climate for learning in all classes. Pupils' experimental and investigative skills develop very well because the balance of the curriculum is predominantly practical. High expectations of pupils and teachers' excellent subject knowledge in Years 3 to 6 result in very good achievement. Planning takes excellent account of the needs of pupils of different capabilities, for example providing pupils with English as an additional language with strong visual material to enable them to participate in discussions about friction. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged with thought-provoking questions. Teaching methods are stimulating and employ strategies such as role-play when learning about fertilisation of flowering plants. Whilst pupils in Years 3 to 6 are often working at above and well above average levels, younger pupils often work at the expected level for their age. Work is specifically planned to meet the needs of lower-attaining pupils, for example when sorting materials by their properties. However, higher-attaining pupils are not stretched further, for example by considering why certain materials are suited to particular purposes.
81. The leadership and management of science, provided by a part-time teacher, is good overall. It is very good for Years 3 to 6, resulting in precise actions which have led to improved standards, achievement and provision since the last inspection. However, the overview of provision in the infant classes is less strong. The curriculum makes very good links with literacy and numeracy and research aspects of information and communication technology. However, pupils do not use ICT to collect data, for example on temperature, light or sound.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent subject leader ensures that very good human and physical resources support pupils' achievement.
- Teachers equip pupils with increasingly sophisticated ICT skills to increase their independence in developing and applying their own learning.

### **Commentary**

82. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is well above expectations. This represents very good achievement and indicates that the vast majority of pupils have well-developed ICT skills. Pupils in Year 2 prepare computers for themselves before using their word-processing skills, for example to retell the story of Red Riding Hood. They alter the font and style of script and delete mistakes. They make very well designed pictures in the style of Mondrian. Pupils in Year 6 use ICT to record their scientific findings graphically. They use the Internet in preparation for making their own multi-media presentations and create intricate tessellated patterns. Pupils develop skills at an early age. For example, Year 3 pupils send e-mails to one another.
83. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have highly developed subject knowledge which they use to promote the progressive development of ICT skills. Their lesson planning caters very well for the range of pupils' capabilities. They place lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs with more capable partners

so that all pupils are included and achieve very well. Learning support assistants work closely with pupils for whom English is an additional language in order to assist them in using commands on the screen. Pupils concentrate intently on what they are learning from an early age. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, all pupils learnt to create a square and a rectangle on the screen using the appropriate commands. They referred to what they had learnt when programming a floor robot. The more capable pupils wasted no time in using this new skill to create a variety of pictures independently, for example of a robot. This independence increases as pupils grow older, so that by Year 6 they show strong individuality in their work.

84. The subject leader provides excellent leadership and management. He has worked with the staff to create a very well equipped computer suite. Pupils also have access to a bank of laptops in order to develop their learning in other subjects. He thoroughly monitors teaching and learning and recognises that the school needs to develop a more sophisticated means of assessing pupils' attainment. He liaises closely with a local secondary school to provide additional technical and educational support. In-service training for both teachers and learning support assistants enhances the quality of provision.
85. There has been very good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

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

86. Teachers make very good use of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils use it to record their work, for example in design and technology when explaining their product. Year 4 'paint' in the style of Monet, and Year 4 design their own newspapers. Pupils use a program to compose their own music and Year 5 budget for an imaginary holiday.

### **HUMANITIES**

**Geography** and **History** were sampled.

87. Only one full lesson in each of the subjects was observed. A scrutiny of pupils' written work and their work on display indicates that standards in **history** are above average and in **geography** are in line with national averages. National Curriculum requirements are met. Visits and visitors enhance learning very well. No judgments on overall provision, teaching and learning and progress since the previous inspection are made.
88. In a Year 3 **history** lesson, teaching and learning were good and pupils were developing skills of interpretation of history by looking at the bias in the accounts given about Boudicca in two different sources. Teacher's planning was good, pupils knew what they were learning and the lesson linked well to previous learning. Good links were established with geography, information and communication technology, mathematics and literacy.
89. In **geography**, Year 5 were writing letters to express their opinions as to why the high street should or should not close to traffic. They wrote some persuasive arguments in favour of the need of pedestrians to shop in safety. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work from all the classes suggest that opportunities to write in geography are generally not as rich as in other subjects. Teaching and learning in the lesson were good because of the review of previous learning, good planning and the provision of support for pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

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

The inspection sampled four creative subjects: **art and design, design and technology, physical education and music.**

90. One lesson was seen in each of art and design, design and technology and physical education. This did not involve gaining sufficient evidence to make reliable judgements. Pupils' work and teachers' records were scrutinised and pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 were interviewed. In addition, the co-ordinators were interviewed.
91. In **art and design**, pupils use a wide range of media and their work suggests above average standards, exhibiting good manual control and individual ideas. By the time they reach Year 6, they have made colourful masks, sophisticated prints and dragon designs, and attractive fish in the style of Pointillism, for example. They use pencil very effectively to make still life pictures. In **music**, pupils' singing is in line with expectations, but the choir's singing is above expectations. Pupils have access to specialised teaching of a very wide range of orchestral and other instruments. Pupils cover the expected curriculum in **design and technology** and **physical education**. The special 'Technology Week' demonstrated that by Year 6, pupils can make well-decorated appliqué pots and working wheelbarrows. In the one observed lesson, teaching was very good and pupils attained standards in line with expectations. The teacher set pupils the challenging task of designing and making a board game linking countries and their capitals, using their scientific knowledge of circuitry. Pupils reach the expected standard in swimming by the end of Year 6. Co-ordinators provide good subject leadership and manage their subjects well. They ensure that a wide range of good quality resources is available to enhance learning.

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

92. The school's programme for personal, social and health education is very good. It is taught in conjunction with religious education in specific lessons as well as in other subjects. Strong emphasis is placed on pupils becoming good citizens and respecting the values of other cultures. This is particularly well supported during culture days. The school's Catholic ethos positively promotes pupils' self-esteem and care for each other.
93. Pupils are encouraged to develop a healthy life style by participating in one of the many clubs promoting physical activity and by making healthy choices for food at lunchtime. The school is currently working towards gaining the Healthy School Award.

## 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  | 1        |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 1        |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 2        |

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Pupils' achievement               | 2        |

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b> | <b>1</b> |
| Attendance  | 2        |
| Attitudes   | 1        |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                         | 1        |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development             | 1        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>           | <b>2</b> |
| The quality of teaching  | 2        |
| How well pupils learn  | 2        |
| The quality of assessment  | 2        |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs                      | 2        |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 1        |
| Accommodation and resources                                      | 3        |
| 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             | 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                  | 1        |
| The leadership of other key staff                  | 2        |
| 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).*