

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St Joseph's RC Primary School**

Maida Vale/London

LEA area: City of Westminster

Unique reference number: 101133

Headteacher: Daniel McDonald

Lead inspector: David Speakman

Dates of inspection: 20 to 23 June 2005

Inspection number: 267836

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: 3 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 326

School address: Lanark Road  
Maida Vale  
London  
Postcode: W9 1DF

Telephone number: 020 72863518  
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Priscilla Sharp

Date of previous inspection: 26 April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This larger than average sized voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serves the local area, which is socially advantaged. The proportion of pupils entitled to claim a free school meal is below the national average. It is a very popular school and is highly oversubscribed, with long waiting lists for each year group. A below average proportion of pupils joins or leaves during the school year. Pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with about a third of the pupils classed as White British. About half of the pupils have English as an additional language and are supported through external funding. About a sixth of them are at the early stages of learning the English language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below average and a very low proportion has a statement of special educational need. Special educational needs include moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems, speech or communication difficulties and other medical conditions. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. The school is situated in an area which is part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ) and has a strong and supportive relationship with the local community that provides financial and other support.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20086	David Speakman	Lead inspector	Science Personal, social and health education and citizenship Special educational needs English as an additional language
9577	Elaine Parrish	Lay inspector	
31334	Barbara Atcheson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History
32136	Lesley Brookes	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Music Physical education
22556	Eifion Morgan	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **outstanding** school. Pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is below average and, because of excellent teaching overall, exceptional levels of inclusion, an impressive ethos and leadership and management of the highest quality, pupils make very rapid progress and attain very high standards in English, mathematics and science and generally well above and above average standards in other subjects by the age of eleven. The quality of education is excellent and the school is extremely successful in encouraging its pupils to develop exemplary attitudes towards learning and to behave exceptionally well. The school gives excellent value for money.

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

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher and other key staff, together with the very good work of the governing body, have been instrumental in maintaining a first class quality of education.
- The very high quality teaching stimulates pupils at all levels of attainment to make rapid progress overall.
- Pupils' extremely positive attitudes and outstandingly good behaviour, and the excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, combine to create an exceptional learning environment and school ethos.
- The achievement of higher attaining infant pupils in writing in English and across the curriculum, and in mathematics is not as good as the rest of the group.
- The quality of learning opportunities, enriched through excellent community links, is excellent overall, but there are areas of provision for their personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHE&C) that are not of the same high standard.
- Because of the very good levels of care shown for all pupils, they develop into extremely secure and confident learners.
- Parents give the school an exceptional level of support in educating their children.

There has been a very good level of improvement since the previous inspection in 1999. Standards and achievement reported at that time have both improved. Virtually all aspects of the school's provision have improved with many now being judged to be excellent.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

*A\* means the school ranks in the top 5% of all schools*

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

Achievement is **excellent**. Children start in the Foundation Stage with below average attainment overall, particularly in the English language skills of the high proportion of children at the early stages of learning English. They achieve very well, with most of them meeting the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception and a significant number exceeding them. In Years 1 and 2, pupils also achieve very well overall. Attainment in speaking and listening and reading is well above average, but in writing it is above

average overall because fewer higher attaining pupils reach the higher levels. The situation is similar in mathematics and standards are above average. Attainment in science, physical education and music is well above average and above average in history and information and communication technology (ICT). Test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 have been consistently very high in English, and in mathematics and science until 2004 when they were well above average. Inspection evidence supports a judgement of very high standards in all three core subjects. The achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is excellent. Standards are well above average in physical education, music and history and above average in ICT. Overall, pupils' application of the core skills of literacy and numeracy are very good in other subjects and their use of ICT skills is good.

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

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **excellent**. The quality of teaching and learning is **excellent** overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and excellent in Years 3 to 6. In many lessons in Years 3 to 6, pupils receive specialist teaching by the subject leaders. This exposes pupils to accurate knowledge and a depth of understanding and leads to very high quality learning and encourages a mature and sensible approach to their work. The school maintains a high ratio of teachers to the number of pupils in each year group, with two teachers assigned to each year of about 40 pupils. This ensures pupils at all levels of attainment and whatever their learning needs work in appropriate groupings within class and with high quality support. Teachers have exceptionally high expectations of standards and how pupils should behave. Because there are excellent relationships between pupils and their teachers, pupils respond extremely well to these expectations and this promotes a highly effective ethos for learning throughout the school.

The quality and range of learning opportunities is very good for children in the Foundation Stage and, because of the exceptional range of extra-curricular and other activities, the curriculum is excellent for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Teachers' skills and experience meet the needs of the curriculum extremely well and there is a satisfactory number of teaching assistants to support them. The school shows very good levels of care for its pupils. The relationship between the school and parents and with the community is excellent.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management is **excellent** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and he draws an exceptionally high level of expertise and support from other staff with leadership responsibility. Governance of the school is very good. There is an extremely clear vision for the development of the school that is shared by the headteacher, governors and staff in their relentless drive for excellence. This has been instrumental in the very good improvement in many areas since the previous inspection and in maintaining the very high standards. Management is excellent. Statutory requirements are met fully.

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

Parents have extremely positive views of the school. Those at the meeting and who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed very high levels of satisfaction with all areas of the school's provision and outcomes. Pupils really enjoy being in school. They like all adults working in the school and the friendliness of other pupils.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- ensure that higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve as well as their peers in writing in English and across the curriculum, and in mathematics;
- improve provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship so that it is as good as the rest of the curriculum.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are **very high** at the end of Year 6. Achievement is **very good** in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and **excellent** in Years 3 to 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage and, starting from a below average base, attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception, with a significant number exceeding them.
- Achievement in English is good in Years 1 and 2 and excellent in Years 3 to 6. The writing of higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 is not good enough.
- Achievement in mathematics is good in Years 1 and 2 but higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils. Achievement is excellent between Years 3 and 6.
- Pupils' exceptionally good skills in investigative and experimental science support very good achievement.
- The exceptionally good range of activities provided in physical education enables pupils to achieve very well.
- Pupils achieve very well in music and the quality of performance is particularly good.

#### Commentary

##### Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.4 (17.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.9 (15.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.7 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Results for pupils at the end of Year 2 in the National Curriculum tests for reading have been maintained at levels well above average when compared with all schools nationally and with those schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to claim a free school meal. In both writing and mathematics in 2004 these were average. Although the proportion of pupils that achieved the nationally expected level was high in both subjects, the higher attaining pupils did not achieve as well and fewer achieved the higher level 3 than the national average, especially in writing. Inspection evidence confirms there has been some recovery of standards this year, with those in writing and mathematics now being above average, but in reading attainment remains well above average. This supports inspection findings of above average standards in both mathematics and writing and well above average in speaking and listening and reading. There is a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, with a sixth at an early stage of acquiring English. It is therefore understandable that standards are not as high at Year 2, particularly in writing, and the school does very well to achieve above average results.

## Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.0 (30.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	30.4 (30.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.9 (31.8)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. This situation by the end of Year 6 is very impressive. Since 2002, results of the National Curriculum tests have been consistently very high (in the top 5 per cent) when compared with all schools nationally in English, mathematics and science. The picture is identical when compared with similar schools. Even more impressive is the value added data, which shows consistently well above average and very high levels of achievement in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 each year since 2001. The very good work done in Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 supports this excellent achievement because as the high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language acquire fluency they make greater progress and this is bound to make results at the end of Year 6 look more impressive. The trend at Key Stage 2 has been to maintain very high standards year on year. This is consistent with the inspection findings, with very high attainment in each of the three core subjects - English, mathematics and science. This represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection.
3. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. They start from a below average baseline and achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning, with a significant number of children exceeding them. The school places a great emphasis on children's communication skills, particularly speaking and listening in the nursery. These are then developed very effectively in reception and secure communication, language and literacy skills provide a very good basis for very effective learning across the board in subsequent years.
4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and make very good gains in their learning relative to their prior attainment. They make very good progress because of the very good support given by teachers and teaching assistants in class and the very good quality individual education plans devised by the special needs coordinator in conjunction with teachers. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well in acquiring English language skills because teachers in the early years of the school<sup>1</sup> put a great emphasis on very effectively developing pupils' vocabulary and speaking and listening communication skills. Once they have gained sufficient competence in English, they achieve very well in other subjects.
5. Achievement in science is very good. Pupils acquire very good skills in investigation and use these extremely effectively to build an excellent knowledge and understanding of science by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve very well in both physical education and in music because of the very good curriculum and high quality teaching in both subjects. Standards throughout the school are well above average. Achievement in history and ICT is good.

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<sup>1</sup> Early years of schooling refer to the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.

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

Pupils have **excellent** attitudes to school and behave **exceptionally well**. The school makes **excellent** provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides pupils with a stimulating environment, free from tension and harassment and conducive to learning and the achievement of high standards.
- Very good opportunities to take on responsibility help pupils to become mature and sensible.
- The school very successfully develops in pupils self-confidence and a desire to learn.
- The school's approach to pupils' personal development promotes their extremely positive attitudes.
- There are very good procedures in place to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and punctually.

## **Commentary**

6. Pupils are self-assured and confident. They show a high degree of self-discipline both in classrooms and when moving about the school unsupervised. Relationships are excellent, both between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school. The school exudes a calm atmosphere where all are valued and respected. Pupils are appreciative of each other's talents and are keen to celebrate the excellent individual and group performances, such as the music performances during morning assembly. In discussion, pupils indicated the pleasure they get from coming to school and the way they look forward to returning to their school after the holidays. They talk of their excitement of meeting up with their friends again and their enjoyment in learning. Pupils, particularly older ones, take initiative and work independently. In small group work, pupils are appreciative of each other's contribution and feel able to seek advice when necessary. Teachers, however, encourage pupils to be self-reliant and to tackle problems for themselves.
7. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development and enables them to play a full part in the school community. Although there is no school council yet, the school does listen carefully to pupils' views in an informal way and pupils know their views are valued. Teachers respect pupils and value their contributions and this plays an important part in developing their self-confidence and feelings of self-worth. Pupils accept and look for ways to take responsibility and the school provides many instances, such as responsible duties to help the extremely smooth running of the school, where they can do this. Pupils' contribution to the school and outside community is recognised and celebrated. Pupils have excellent opportunities to learn and to reinforce social conventions through participation in sports and games, through meeting visitors to the school and through school visits, including residential visits. Pupils say they are fully involved in the life of the school and the discussions they have both formally in lessons and informally with their teachers provide them with suitable opportunities to make their views known. The school has plans to extend this through the formation of a school council next year.
8. The school's excellent provision for pupils' moral development ensures that pupils have a well established framework of moral values which regulate their personal behaviour – patterns of behaviour not promoted through the fear of punishment or based on

rewards. Pupils of all ages are able to distinguish between right and wrong and have the confidence to act accordingly. A notable feature is the older pupils' ability to think through the consequences of their own and others' actions. Older pupils show the maturity to discuss moral dilemmas and express their views on ethical issues. Teachers are very good role models and pupils benefit from their clear advice and the respect they show each pupil. School rules are minimal, positive and invariably adhered to and lead to a caring, supportive community where individual contributions are valued and respected. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour make a very good contribution to the excellent school ethos. Behaviour in class and at break times is excellent. There have been no exclusions from school in the year prior to the inspection. The school is free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment. This was confirmed in discussion with pupils who spoke of the importance of their Christian beliefs and values in providing them with an underlying framework for their behaviour. Such discussions also confirmed that the school's efforts to promote good race relationships are fully realised in practice.

9. Excellent provision for pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through the strong Catholic and Christian ethos that pervades all aspects of school life and provides pupils with values, principles and beliefs which underpin their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour. In discussion, older pupils indicated a deep understanding of their own beliefs and a sense of empathy with others, encompassing concern and compassion for all, whatever their faith or beliefs. Pupils have an appreciation of the intangible and spoke of the beauty of nature, the wonder and delight experienced through music and their love of God. Acts of collective worship are an integral part of developing pupils' attitudes and values that guide and motivate them and very successfully develop their sense of identity, self-worth and their whole personality. The teaching also gives them opportunities to explore hidden meanings and to reflect on their own experiences. Individual pupils' specific gifts and talents, such as their exceptional musical and sporting talents, are appreciated by all.
  
10. The school's excellent provision for pupils' cultural development is based on opportunities for pupils to explore their own and other cultural traditions, beliefs and values. In this, the school has been outstandingly successful since the last inspection. Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of influences that shape their own cultural heritage, are appreciative of cultural diversity and accord dignity to other cultures, thereby challenging racism. The school provides very good opportunities to raise pupils' cultural awareness through visits, visitors and within lessons by their study of world faiths in religions education lessons. Consequently, all pupils accept and respect cultural diversity.
  
11. The school has developed rigorous procedures to ensure that very good attendance is maintained throughout the school. Attendance figures compare very favourably when compared with the national average.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/2004 (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.6	School data:	0.0
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 **excellent**. Teaching is **excellent**. The curriculum is **excellent** and benefits from **excellent** opportunities for enrichment. The school provides **very good** levels of care, guidance and support for its pupils. Its links with parents and the community are **excellent** and **very good** with other schools.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **excellent** overall. It is **very good** for children in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and excellent in Years 3 to 6. Assessment procedures are **very good** and used very well in planning.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist teaching provides pupils with access to high quality learning in many subjects, particularly in Years 4 to 6.
- Planning is of a very high quality and pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to use, apply and consolidate their learning.
- Speaking, listening and reading receive more focus than writing in the early years.
- Pupils respond very well to their teachers' exceptionally high expectations.
- Teachers ensure that all pupils have equal access to all learning opportunities.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils and the encouragement and support for pupils to do well are very effective.
- Assessment procedures are very good and assessment information is used very well to plan challenging activities for pupils at all levels of attainment to ensure that they all move on very well in their learning.

### Commentary

12. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be good at all stages of the school. It is now very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and excellent for pupils in Years 3 to 6, especially where teachers teach to their specialist strengths. This generally happens mostly in Years 4 to 6, where subject leaders work in classes other than their own and lead lessons, supported by other teachers. This means that there is an excellent level of expert adult support across a wide range of subjects, including science, music and physical education. The high level of adult support also means that pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language, receive highly focused support within the classroom. The school has an exceptionally high level of commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils and ensuring that all have full and equal access to all learning opportunities. However, the writing skills of the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not sufficiently developed. Teachers focus on developing secure communication skills and secretarial elements of writing for the higher attaining pupils do not receive the same attention at this early stage of learning. This has limited the number of higher attaining pupils doing as well as they could at the end of Year 2. The school has recognised this weakness and teachers have paid greater attention this year. Test results have improved this year as a result.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
10 (20%)	24 (49%)	12 (25%)	3 (6%)	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.*

13. Planning is of an exceptionally high quality. Subject leaders provide all teachers with comprehensive planning documents which outline lessons and activities for all lessons. These ensure that pupils build their skills, knowledge and understanding within a carefully prepared and very well considered framework. Teachers use these very effectively and carefully evaluate and assess both strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance so that they are able to provide extra support if an activity proves to be difficult.
14. The school has improved its systems for assessing pupils' academic progress since the last inspection and they are particularly good in English, mathematics and science. Teachers link their judgements well with National Curriculum levels. Targets are used well to focus pupils' attention on what they need to do to improve their work. The use of assessment to plan the next stage of the children's learning is very good in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 6, very good use is made of the analysis of national test results to highlight strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Tracking of individual pupils has been developed and is having a positive impact. There are strengths in the ways in which pupils receive feedback on how they are doing or what they need to do to improve. This is because marking shows a consistently high standard across all classes, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers do their utmost to raise the self-esteem and self-confidence of pupils in their comments on their work and take opportunities to indicate to pupils how they might improve their learning. Teachers' ongoing assessment of pupil progress during lessons is generally astute and effective. Pupils are not always sufficiently involved in appraising their work themselves, though. However, the school is already aware of this and has plans to develop opportunities and pupils' skills.
15. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and based on mutual respect. Consequently pupils readily accept teachers' exceptionally high expectations of them and work hard to do their very best. As a result, learning takes place within a busy and productive environment, conducive to high quality learning and exceptionally high standards. This is reflected in the high quality of the presentation of pupils' work in all subjects.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides an **excellent** programme of learning experiences for all pupils. Enrichment of the curriculum is also **excellent**. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The rich and varied programme of learning opportunities captures pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- The school further supports pupils' learning through an exceptionally strong extra-curricular programme.
- Although satisfactory, the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is not as strong as other curricular provision.
- Staff are highly qualified and expertly placed in school to teach to their strengths.

## **Commentary**

16. The school provides its pupils with an excellent curriculum. It is extremely broad, very well balanced and highly innovative, and effectively implements both the national literacy and numeracy strategies. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are given appropriate amounts of time and subjects are very well interlinked without losing their discrete identity. The curriculum is rigorously evaluated and carefully managed to take account of new developments and to improve its relevance and enjoyment for pupils. Overall, this ensures that pupils recognise the interconnection between subjects and successfully promotes very high standards of achievement.
17. The curriculum is exceptionally inclusive, providing all pupils with equality of access and opportunity and taking very good account of pupils' different educational needs. The school caters very well for both talented and gifted pupils, as well as those with learning difficulties. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and complies with the Code of Practice. The day-to-day support for pupils with special educational needs is very good, especially for English and mathematics, and so pupils are able to access the curriculum equally as well as other groups of pupils and make very good progress. Because attention is given to promoting pupils' communication skills from an early age, those pupils with English as an additional language soon find themselves in a position to access the full curriculum.
18. The curriculum provides satisfactorily for pupils' personal, social and health education. Appropriate policies are in place, they are regularly revised and have been recently approved. The curriculum includes opportunities for sensitive issues such as personal relationships to be developed and this is facilitated by the excellent relationships evident in classrooms and the way pupils feel able to confide in their teachers. Aspects such as sex and relationships and drugs awareness education are also incorporated into the curriculum and overall pupils have a mature attitude to personal, social and health education. However, the school does not have a scheme of work to underpin its personal, social and health education provision.
19. The school goes to exceptional lengths to exploit every opportunity that is available locally to enrich the curriculum with a wide range of additional activities from cricket to horse riding, from table tennis to playing music with professional musicians. Such opportunities mean that the school is particularly successful in inter-school sporting competitions and all pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, respond positively and achieve very well. Pupils across the school can pursue their interests at a wide variety of well-attended after-school clubs. The school's firm commitment to inclusion ensures that all pupils receive equal opportunities to take part in a broad, rich range of experiences of exceptional quality. For example, pupils learn cricketing skills from professional cricketers at Lords and all Year 4 pupils receive 12 riding lessons in Hyde Park. Equally, all pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 take part in residential school journeys, which not only support the curriculum but also enhance pupils' personal development.
20. Staffing levels throughout the school are high, with two qualified teachers in each class. A key feature of the school is the way that teachers are encouraged to teach to their particular strengths. This means, for example, that the physical education and science subject leaders teach in many classes throughout the school. Learning resources are of good quality, with particular strengths in reading material throughout the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. The school provides **very good** support, advice and guidance to pupils. The extent to which it involves pupils in its work and development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good efforts the school makes to guide and support pupils ensure that they enjoy school and make very good progress.
- Excellent relationships between pupils and adults mean that pupils are always well supported.
- Pupils feel valued and know their views matter, but procedures to receive these views are currently informal.

### **Commentary**

21. The way that all pupils are cared for in this very happy school is a significant strength. The good findings of the last inspection report have been further improved. There are very good welfare procedures in place, which have children's very best interests at heart and ensure that everyone is safe. Teachers and support staff are very good role models: they are unfailingly kind and work together well to nurture their pupils and to protect them from harm. Pupils learn from their good example by supporting each other in class and looking out for one another in the playground.

22. Pupils could not wait to tell inspectors how good their teachers are and how well they support them. (One child confided that the headteacher was his best friend.) Relationships between adults and pupils are both warm and highly respectful. Teachers make every possible effort to get to know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well so that each child receives the help it needs. Such very good support from teachers means that pupils leave the school in Year 6 as mature and independent learners. The arrangements for the assessment and identification of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers, teaching assistants and the special needs co-ordinator understand the needs of their pupils very well. The targets on individual education plans are specific and highly relevant to pupils' learning needs. Pupils are aware of their individual targets and the monitoring and support towards achieving them are very good. Liaison with outside agencies and external support staff is very good which also ensures that pupils make very good progress.

23. Teachers clearly value pupils' opinions and a school council is being developed. In lessons, pupils are always encouraged to express their thoughts and they do this very well because they know their opinions will be taken seriously. The school takes great care to acknowledge pupils' achievements, particularly when they have made efforts and tried hard. Pupils told inspectors how much they liked their system of rewards and how these encourage them to work well and do their best.

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

The school has outstanding relationships with parents and the partnership between home and school is **excellent**. Links with the community are also **excellent**. There are **very good** links with partner institutions.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**



- Parents give outstanding support to the school and are extremely proud of its achievements.
- The school goes out of its way to ensure that parents are fully involved in their children's learning.
- Links with the community make an exceptional contribution to pupils' achievements and to the enrichment of the life of the school.

## **Commentary**

24. Parents feel an exceptionally strong sense of partnership, which is based on their complete trust and confidence in the school. At the parents' meeting and in discussions during the inspection, parents could not praise the school highly enough. They wholeheartedly support all the school's endeavours, whether this is by ensuring their children attend school punctually and regularly, by supporting their children's learning at home or by helping to raise valuable funding for the rebuilding programme. Many extra-curricular activities, such as horse riding, would not be able to function without parents' continued support in arranging transport and accompanying children on outside activities. The very active parents' association works tirelessly to organise a programme of social and fundraising events to support the school and this also cements the excellent relationships between home and school. Parents know their school is very popular and over-subscribed and they value their own child's place very highly.

25. The headteacher and his staff show excellent commitment to working in partnership with parents by involving them fully in every aspect of their children's learning. Communications between home and school are excellent, with regular newsletters and very well written annual reports. Staff go out of their way to extend a warm welcome to parents and parents report that teachers are very approachable. Improvement since the previous inspection in establishing links with parents has been very good. Staff are readily available to talk to parents by appointment and many will go that extra mile to listen sensitively to any concerns and find solutions to any problems. Parents' views are welcomed and their opinions are taken into account to bring about improvements. The recent numeracy workshops were set up following a consultation evening when parents asked for help in supporting their children's learning at home. Liaison with parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are aware of the point of contact in the school and are given the opportunity to share in the targets of the individual education plans.

26. The energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher and his staff have encouraged outstanding links with the local community. The school prides itself on its knowledge of the locality and capitalises extremely well on local expertise and resources to improve pupils' learning. These have a powerful impact not only on the progress pupils make but also on their continued enjoyment of school through the provision of additional resources and facilities. The number and range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils through excellent links with the local community are second to none. They include cricket coaching at Lords, professional tuition in table tennis, music with the BBC string quartet and visits from English National Opera and English National Ballet. There are exceptionally strong links with the local parish and the priest is a frequent visitor. The school is also motivated to let the community use its facilities. For instance, having recently been awarded a lottery grant to provide an AstroTurf in the playground, the school is committed to opening up the playground after school hours for local community use. The school works very well with neighbouring Catholic primary and secondary schools. These links work well to ensure smooth transition into secondary school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **excellent** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent** and other key members of staff give **excellent** support. Governance is **very good**. Management systems are **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher's outstanding clarity of vision and sense of purpose and the very highly effective influence of key members of staff on the school's work stem from a strong ambition to maintain the very highest of standards.
- The deputy head provides an excellent role model for the rest of the staff.
- The work of the highly experienced, well qualified leadership team has an exceptional impact on standards.
- Consistently rigorous self-evaluation is used very efficiently to improve standards and provision.
- The school has an extremely high commitment to the inclusion of all pupils.
- The governing body has ambitions to take the school well beyond what would be expected of a normal primary school.

### **Commentary**

24. The headteacher provides extremely strong and purposeful leadership. His primary concern is the well-being and achievement of all pupils in the school, whatever their age, ability or background. He works extremely hard in a very wide range of areas to achieve this and has developed an organisation and built a team of highly competent professionals to create a school in which all pupils feel at ease, achieve very high standards and experience an excellent quality education. The parents and even the youngest of pupils endorse this. He knows every one of his pupils and their families by name. He makes a point of stopping to talk to even the youngest of pupils and, as he does, the caring ethos that he works so hard to maintain shines through. The headteacher works hard to develop leadership at all levels within the school. He is also influential beyond the school, mentoring headteachers for the local authority and organising conferences for local Catholic schools. His style is confident and well informed because he makes it his business to keep abreast of new developments.

25. The precise nature of the school's self-evaluation shows the extent of the headteacher's clarity of vision for the future improvement of the school. He has very clear ideas of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and where the school needs to move forward. Furthermore, the vision of improvement and development is backed up by clear plans of how this should be achieved. These focus not only on academic achievement but also on the personal development of all pupils and their ability to develop secure learning skills for life.

26. The deputy headteacher provides an outstanding example of good practice both in his teaching, the number of responsibilities he carries and the proficient way in which he discharges them. The senior management team is powerful in the promotion of high standards. All members are highly qualified with a wealth of experience and an array of skills which have an exceptional impact on the quality of education provided and in supporting the headteacher in the school's constant advancement.

27. Inclusion is an integral part of the shared vision of the headteacher, staff and governors. It is a very strong feature which is central to the work of the school and underpins the whole school ethos. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages

and leads the provision very well. She supports teachers and teaching assistants well to ensure that there is very good support for pupils in their work and also their social development. She has established good links with outside agencies and other schools. Provision for those pupils with English as an additional language is managed very well, with good emphasis on developing communication skill as early as possible so that these pupils are able to access the curriculum fully.

28. The school has developed excellent management systems. The headteacher and senior management team, together with the governing body, monitor performance data and review patterns very thoroughly. They use the information gained in a highly effective way to track pupils and decide upon priorities for improvement. The school is very well staffed, with a very stable mix of more established and younger staff. The innovative decision to allocate two teachers to each year group has been a prime factor in maintaining very high standards by the end of Year 6 as it allows the school to direct high quality teaching to a focus group of pupils who are in need of further support or extension. Performance management has been used in a highly successfully way to bring about improvement. There is a strong tradition of rewarding good performance. All leaders are trained, shadowing an experienced member of staff. Newly qualified teachers and new staff are matched to a very experienced mentor from the leadership team. This gives them a very good start to their teaching career and to providing good quality teaching through using the knowledge they gain.

29. Excellent financial management by both the governing body and senior management helps the school to achieve its priorities of funding two teachers per class and keeping a stable highly qualified staff. The school makes the best use of all the funding it receives. The headteacher has a deserved reputation for finding funds from outside the budget sources and this is part of the success of the school's provision. Management of the school's budget is excellent. The school administrative assistants are highly supportive in the day-to-day running of the school. The school improvement plan is produced alongside the school's financial plan in consultation with all staff and governors. The use of best value principles, evaluation and review are central to management and the use of resources and impacts on the excellent value for money given by the school.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	981,976	Balance from previous year	-2,270
Total expenditure	978,799	Balance carried forward to the next	907
Expenditure per pupil	3,002.45		

30. Governance is very good. It would be easy for a governing body to be complacent with such a strong headteacher and senior management team, but they are not. They play a very proactive role which complements the leadership and management of the headteacher and is instrumental in maintaining the provision of a high quality of education. Members of the governing body have significant and relevant professional qualifications and experience which they have brought into play. They show strong feelings and commitment for their association with the school, complementing the excellent leadership of the headteacher through their effective challenge and support. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are fully met. It has a significant role in shaping the vision and direction of the school and is fully involved in

and informed about school development planning, monitoring its implementation through consultation and feedback. The governing body is fully aware of what assessment information and data mean and uses them effectively in establishing priorities and school improvement planning. It is committed to inclusion and promoting a way of life through faith. All governors are fully aware of the needs, challenges and demands of the community they serve. They constantly seek ways in which they can improve the school and are ambitious to take it well beyond what would be expected of a normal primary school.

## **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 **very good**.

31. The pupils in the nursery and reception classes receive a very good start to their education. Teaching is of a consistently high standard with good and very good lessons seen during the inspection. Very good planning and assessment systems contribute to the effectiveness of these early years of education. Planning reflects closely how activities link to the developmental and learning goals. Assessment throughout the Foundation Stage is of a very good standard and paints an effective picture of the skills and development of each child. All classes use the Foundation Stage Profile, supplemented by observations, and examples of work are kept for each child, together with photographs of achievements and activities. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is led and managed very well by an experienced practitioner who has a clear vision of how practice in the Foundation Stage can be improved even further. Good liaison between the nursery and reception classes exists and most children in the nursery progress to the school's reception classes.
32. At the time of the inspection, staff and children were coping well with the impact of the building works at the school. The nursery's outdoor area has been reduced by two thirds and the reception classes have a conventional school playground, rather than a dedicated outdoor play area. The school's new Early Years area, currently under construction, will enable all the classes to be together with their own dedicated outdoor play area.
33. When they enter the nursery, children's overall attainment is assessed as being below average, with the high incidence of children who are at a very early stage of learning to speak English being a significant contributory factor. By the time children move into the reception classes overall attainment is in line with expectations for their age. By the time they move into Year 1, most children will have achieved the expected goals in all six areas of learning and many will have exceeded them. A significant proportion will already be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. This indicates that pupils make very good progress overall during their time in the nursery and reception.

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

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

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

- Children have excellent relationships with adults and other children and these help them soon to become confident learners.
- In response to adults' extremely high expectations and high levels of encouragement, children behave extremely very well for their age.
- Children's concentration is promoted and developed very well and they concentrate on tasks for long periods of time.

## Commentary

34. The children quickly develop their confidence and establish good relationships with one another, their class teachers and the classroom assistants. The very good quality of the general ethos and environment, together with effective teamwork and supportive relationships, contributes to the strength of this area of learning. Children feel comfortable in school and this, together with their enthusiasm for school, helps them become confident and effective learners. In the nursery these young children receive extremely high levels of encouragement and recognise the adults' exceptionally high and clear expectations of their behaviour. They soon develop exemplary behaviour for children of their age and this is developed further in reception. There is a calm and purposeful learning environment in which children show high levels of consideration of other children. All the adults capture children's interest effectively and promote concentration by the good use of resources. These strategies, together with suitably planned activities, ensure that children's involvement is fostered and maintained very well. High expectations of the children's attitudes and behaviour are supported by very good teaching in all classes. All the children receive plenty of praise and encouragement. This is effective in building up their self-esteem and confidence. They cope well with their personal needs such as changing for physical education with little adult intervention. All children achieve very well and, by the time they leave the reception classes, the vast majority of children are likely to have exceeded the expectations for their age.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The focus on speaking and listening skills promotes rapid progress, especially in the nursery.
- Early reading skills are encouraged effectively and children develop an early love of reading.
- Very effective focus on developing speaking and listening skills, especially in the nursery, enables those who are at the early stages of learning English soon to have the English language skills to access the full Foundation Stage curriculum.

## Commentary

35. Many high quality opportunities are provided for children to extend their speaking and listening skills through all areas of learning. When they enter the nursery, a significant proportion of the children are at an early stage of learning English. The consistently planned focus and support for developing and establishing all children's speaking and listening in the nursery means that, by the time they enter reception, most are confident speakers, are keen to talk about their interests and activities and listen with good levels of concentration. Those children whose mother tongue is not English and are at the early stages of learning English soon develop a good vocabulary and understanding of spoken English. This means that they are soon able to access the full Foundation Stage curriculum across all areas of learning. Reading skills are developing well and, by the end of reception, a high proportion of the children are fluent readers. Many children in the nursery are beginning to read simple words and, through the very good level of teaching, pupils are very effectively encouraged to develop a very high level of interest and enjoyment from books and reading. The children enjoy listening to stories and, when sharing big books in class lessons, are impatient to read to the end of the story. Children learn early writing skills in the nursery and this establishes a good foundation to develop these further in reception. Here older children's writing skills are developed well and they can write at least two or more sentences unaided. Good use is made of classroom computers to support children's early reading and writing skills. Most children are at least on track to achieve the expected goals. The very good standard of teaching means that children achieve very well and it is likely that more than half of them will be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum as they move into Year 1.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers focus on developing children's mathematical vocabulary from an early age so children are able to learn very effectively in this area of learning.
- Very effective learning opportunities ensure that children learn to count and calculate with confidence.
- There are good links between mathematical development and other areas of learning that enable children to use, apply and consolidate their emerging numeracy skills.

### **Commentary**

36. Due to very good teaching, most children are achieving very well in their early understanding of number, shape and measure. Very good joint planning between the nursery and reception staff ensures that children's mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically developed, taking careful note to ensure each individual child has the necessary English language skills to learn effectively about mathematics. In the nursery the more able children are encouraged to move quickly through learning early counting skills. They successfully match counters to numbers from zero to ten and, in the reception classes, early mathematical learning is very effectively built on and developed across a wide range of mathematics, including time and order, with younger reception pupils showing good understanding of how familiar events fit into the structure of the day. Older pupils develop this into the early stages of telling time using clocks. Staff use games and activities very effectively to support number work and children are very enthusiastic about their lessons. In all the classes, the well-planned use of a range of resources captures and holds children's interest very effectively. Their use of mathematical vocabulary is developing very well. Children of all abilities and all backgrounds, especially those who are at the early stages of learning English, are exposed to the language of maths in a wide variety of learning opportunities, including role play, playing games with adults and other children and in more formal teaching situations. Children are making very good progress and many are likely to be working within the National Curriculum levels by the end of their time in reception.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have very good opportunities to explore and learn about their world in the classroom, outdoors and further afield.

### **Commentary**

37. Teaching and learning are consistently very good. As a result, children achieve very well in this area of learning because they have plenty of opportunities to experience a wide range of activities to extend their early knowledge and understanding of science, technology, history and geography. The children are interested in all activities presented to them and make very good gains in their learning. They quickly learn to use computers and understand the use of computer peripherals. They develop good control of the mouse and understand that it is used for them to communicate with and control the computer. All the classes in the Foundation Stage have regular sessions in the school's computer suite and use commercial 'paint' packages to draw pictures, which they display with pride. This also supports their creative development well. The children learn a lot about their world by observing, handling and discussing a variety of objects featured in the excellent quality displays in their classes. Displays engage children's attention very well because they are often interactive, they are interesting and relevant

to current learning and teachers focus interesting discussions on exhibits, drawing children's attention to their importance. Teachers take every opportunity to make learning interesting, meaningful and fun. Children have visited the current building site created by the extension. Children proudly wore hard hats and, in the nursery, built their own 'classroom' from bricks and sand, pipes and hoses, reflecting very well what they saw going on outside. Adults use questioning well to extend the children's vocabulary and the use of relevant language to explain their thoughts and ideas and to encourage children to think about their world is very effective. Local walks and trips further afield, for example to the Science Museum, contribute very well to children's scientific knowledge and understanding and enable them to build early observation skills. Activities are planned very well to support and extend learning and children are on course to exceed the expected levels in this area by the end of their year in reception.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the nursery have very good opportunities to develop their physical skills on a range of large exercise equipment.
- They are developing their expertise in the use of pencils, scissors and other small tools at a very early in the Foundation Stage of their schooling.

### **Commentary**

38. Children in the nursery have almost continuous access to a fenced outdoor area adjacent to their classroom. It is in frequent use and is well resourced, despite current limitations of space, and these young children improve their physical skills very well on equipment such as tricycles and other large scale outdoor equipment, including climbing frames. Children in the reception classes have a conventional school playground, accessible from their classrooms, and they currently do not have opportunities that are as good as those of children in the nursery to develop physical capability. However, teachers work hard to overcome these limitations. While outdoor space is limited because of building work, children are taken regularly to a local recreation ground where they can swing, slide and climb and improve their physical skills well. The outdoor area incorporated in the new Foundation Stage block will address any current deficiencies. Indoor activities include gymnastics, dance and drama. Planned physical education sessions are used to develop children's skills and co-ordination and very good use is made of the timetabled sessions in the school hall. Teaching and learning in this curriculum area are very good and children are on course to exceed the expected goals by the end of reception. Fine motor movements are developed very effectively through the use of pencils, brushes, scissors and a range of small construction apparatus. Children have very good opportunities to manipulate a range of small equipment with dexterity. The children were seen using woodwork tools safely and enjoyed hammering nails into wood as they constructed models and a group of reception class children learned basic food technology skills and scientific knowledge and understanding when they made teddy bear biscuits, mixing, sieving and rolling with enthusiasm and skill. Teachers pay full attention to the safety of children whilst involved in these activities.



## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Easy access to a very wide range of resources for creative work promotes freedom, independence and creativity.
- The children's musical ability is fostered and developed exceptionally well.
- Children have plenty of opportunities for imaginative play.

### **Commentary**

39. Children have a very good range of opportunities to develop their creativity. Planning of this area is carefully thought out, giving children a broad range of experiences. Very good teaching is matched by children's learning and the children use a wide variety of tools and materials to create all sorts of different images. Displayed work illustrates many different techniques and media including collage, mask-making, colour mixing and the creation of home-made musical instruments. They learn to sing a number of songs and rhymes and are given opportunities to listen to music as well as playing percussion instruments and creating their own songs. They benefit from music lessons led by a specialist teacher and an excellent lesson was observed in which they explored paper sounds, used notation to represent the sounds and performed simple sequences. They have very good opportunities for role play and are currently enjoying sessions in the 'baby crèche' as well as very vocal and excited play in 'the bear's cave'. Due to expert teaching they achieve very well and attain standards well above expectations for their age by the time they leave reception.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High quality leadership and management provide teachers with very good levels of support and advice.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall and often excellent in Years 3 to 6, inspiring pupils to make very good progress.
- The curriculum is very well organised and very well designed to promote high achievement.
- Very good use of assessment information enables pupils' achievement to be very effectively monitored.
- The writing skills of the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not sufficiently developed.

### **Commentary**

40. Standards in English are very good overall. The national test results for 2004 indicate that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was well above average in reading and average in writing, in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools. However, whilst the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 2 in writing is well

above average, the overall results in writing were adversely affected by the comparatively few pupils who achieved the higher level 3. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is very good in speaking, listening and reading, and satisfactory in writing. The current inspection confirms that standards in reading and speaking and listening are well above average and in writing are now above average, with attainment at the end of Year 2 being well above average overall. The national test results for 2004 indicate that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was very high when compared with all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools. The current inspection indicates that these very high standards have been maintained at the end of Year 6. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language, achieve very well.

41. Pupils of all ages have excellent speaking and listening skills. All pupils listen attentively to their teachers and respond appropriately. Older pupils express themselves clearly and at length, using a well-developed vocabulary. Pupils have very good opportunities to speak independently to the class and to develop their own ideas in different contexts. Pupils of all ages, when engaged in discussion, listen and take note of what others say and their responses are well considered. Older pupils, in particular, are sensitive to other pupils' views and their comments and responses show consideration of these views.
42. Pupils at all ages have very good reading skills and are confident readers. By the end of Year 2 pupils read a variety of texts and have a very good understanding of what they read. Most pupils read fluently and with good expression and the more able pupils can recall vividly stories they have read. By the end of Year 6 virtually all pupils are competent in using higher order reading skills such as identifying key features in texts and selecting relevant phrases and sentences to support their views. More able pupils understand the hidden meaning in stories and poems and use evidence very well to support their views.
43. Pupils' writing, by the end of Year 2, is often imaginative and well constructed, but the 'secretarial' writing skills<sup>2</sup> of the more able pupils are not sufficiently developed. At this age greater emphasis is paid to developing speaking and listening and reading skills, providing a secure basis on which to build excellent language and literacy skills in later years. By the end of Year 6 pupils have very good writing skills. They produce varied and interesting writing with precise use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Words are used very imaginatively and for maximum impact on the reader.
44. Assessment procedures are very good and used very effectively to monitor pupils' progress and to identify pupils who would benefit from the extra learning support strategies used by the school. This has made a significant contribution to maintaining the high standards of literacy and to ensuring pupils' very good progress.
45. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good with some excellent teaching for older pupils. Lessons are stimulating and challenging occasions supported by excellent selections of prose and poetry. Teaching is very effective in maintaining pupils' interest and motivation. Pupils are often engrossed in their work and this supports their very good level of achievement. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and this brings lessons alive. A notable and positive feature of lessons is the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and

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<sup>2</sup> This refers to legible handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

between pupils and their teacher. Together with the judicious use of praise by teachers, this raises pupils' self-esteem and engenders a belief that their responses are valued and respected. Teachers engage all pupils in lesson discussions and this ensures equality of opportunity for all. Teachers, in Years 3 to 6 in particular, have very high expectations of their pupils and in their comments make it plain that only work of the highest quality is acceptable. Teachers' expectations are very well met. Teachers' marking, both formal and informal, is perceptive and well directed at raising standards. It takes into account teachers' very good knowledge of pupils' ability and prior attainment.

46. The very good progress pupils make and the maintenance of high standards are substantially brought about by the subject leader's very good leadership and management. Through the advice and guidance given, teachers have a very good understanding of how language and literacy skills are to be developed very effectively. Teachers benefit from an excellent scheme of work that underpins planning and which is carefully monitored, ensuring a step-by-step approach in pupils' learning and a progressive curriculum. Discussion between teachers and the subject leader ensures that pupils with special educational needs receive very good support. The level of improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

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

47. In general pupils' use of their language and literacy skills are very good. In some instances pupils' handwriting and presentational skills detract from the overall high standards in Year 2 but, in the main, specific language skills, such as research and writing skills, have a significant and positive impact on standards. This is particularly noticeable in Years 3 to 6 in subjects such as history and geography where very effective cross-curricular links are evident.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent quality of teaching and learning in Years 4, 5 and 6 leads to very high standards at the end of Year 6.
- Higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not achieve as well as some other pupils in the key stage.
- The excellent leadership and management of the subject leader empowers other staff and has a positive impact on raising standards.
- A high ratio of teachers with secure knowledge and understanding is instrumental in maintaining the very good provision in mathematics.
- Information from the analysis of tests and very good assessment is used effectively in planning for learning.

### **Commentary**

48. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards above average. At the end of Year 2 results in the 2004 national tests show that standards in mathematics are average when compared with all schools. The percentage of pupils gaining the nationally expected level 2 and above was very high when compared with the national average and that of similar

schools but the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level 3 was in line with the national average. There has been some recovery in standards this year and the outcome of assessment is likely to be above average. This is consistent with inspection evidence, which shows that pupils have maintained a good level of achievement in Years 1 and 2, but that some higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as the whole group. In tests again this year all pupils are expected to reach the national average level, which is very high when compared with all schools. However, the proportion expected to attain the higher level is only in line with the national average. The school has identified this weakness and planned staff development that is now focused on tackling this aspect of learning. Results in the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 6 show standards were very high when compared with all schools and similar schools. This is consistent with inspection evidence and shows an excellent level of achievement from Year 2 to Year 6.

49. Pupils are grouped by ability within their class, using the school's effective analysis of data. This, together with the innovative decision to allocate two teachers to each year group, has been a prime factor in maintaining high standards. It allows the school to direct high quality teaching to focus groups in need of further support or extension. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2, very good in Year 3 and excellent in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has a strong focus on developing language and literacy in mathematics and in some activities higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. The subject leader has proven skills in teaching numeracy and, as a result of her guidance and support, all teachers have developed secure subject knowledge and understanding which they apply accurately and perceptively to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Where teaching is excellent, pupils are excited by their work. They are so engrossed that they ignore the noise of builders and the heat of a summer's day. Very difficult ideas are taught in a highly effective way. Pupils find the work constantly challenging. Learning is secure because teachers communicate ideas clearly. Resources, especially interactive whiteboards, are used very effectively to present a clear image of new areas of learning. Relationships are very good and pupils enjoy mathematics. Teaching assistants are well deployed and support pupils well.
50. Overall there is a very good coverage of the curriculum for mathematics. A strong aspect is calculation, giving pupils the tools to use in mathematics. The subject leader is developing mathematics further to promote enjoyment of mathematics. She has begun by giving weekly mathematical challenges in the corridor and in the newsletter. Homework consolidates learning well. Marking is consistently very good and it encourages improvement.
51. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The subject leader has a clear understanding of the strengths in the subject and areas for further development, including addressing the weakness in the achievement of higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2. She is an excellent practitioner and leads by example, giving highly effective support where it is needed in order to raise standards. She has had the opportunity to monitor teaching through lesson observation, analysing the quality of pupils' work and talking to the teachers about their concerns. The school has very good systems for assessing pupils' progress and teachers use it well to plan further work and to identify those pupils who will need extra help. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52. Teachers plan effectively to enable pupils to make good use of their mathematical skills across the curriculum and link work well with ICT and geography. In science, pupils consolidate the use of measure in science and see the reason for interpreting graphs, for example. Standards in mathematics in other subjects are very good.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching arrangements place the subject leader in a very strong position to monitor standards and achievement carefully.
- Scientific enquiry and learning through investigation are expertly planned for and pupils learn to set up and carry out experiments from an early age.
- Lessons are practical, interesting and fun so pupils are extremely enthusiastic and learn extremely well.
- Assessment is very good and used very effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in standards so pupils' achievement is very effectively tracked through the school.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards in science at the end of Year 6 have been consistently very high (in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally since 2002) and, when compared with similar schools, have ranked in the same top 5 per cent. Assessment data taken from the National Curriculum tests also shows that pupils' achievement between Years 2 and 6 is very good each year. This shows that the school is very successfully maintaining a trend of very high standards and achievement. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 also show that pupils achieve well above average standards with all pupils reaching the nationally expected level 2 and a good proportion the higher level 3. Inspection evidence confirms that these very high standards have been maintained again this year with standards at the end of Year 2 being well above average and at the end of Year 6 very high. All pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Those with special educational needs achieve very well, with school assessment data showing that all of these pupils regularly attain the nationally expected level by the end of Year 6. Similarly, higher attaining pupils show good levels of achievement, with about three-quarters of pupils achieving the higher level each year. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were well above average. The proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected levels at the end of both Years 2 and 6 is similar now to then, but the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels has increased. This means that attainment is now better than at the time of the previous inspection.

54. There are a number of reasons why the pupils are able to maintain very good achievement. The subject leader provides an excellent level of leadership and management which directly supports the very good provision in this subject. He has excellent knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn science and excellent teaching skills. These are used to very good effect in team teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 where the subject leader teaches in collaboration with other teachers in each of these year groups and pupils' achievement in Years 4, 5 and 6 is excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall with only very good and excellent lessons being seen during the period of the inspection. Pupils are given excellent opportunities

to take part in scientific enquiry activities and to learn through investigation. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils became forensic scientists and used evidence to conduct an investigation using chemistry at a level well beyond that expected for pupils of their age.

55. The subject leader has planned a very rich and exciting curriculum that involves pupils at all levels of attainment in interesting and challenging activities. This is of a very high order and, as the plans extend to detailed medium term planning and support for teachers in their lesson, planning is exceptional. Lessons are practical, interesting and fun so pupils are extremely enthusiastic and learn extremely well. Planning arrangements ensure that pupils learn to set up and carry out experiments from an early age. Pupils' skills in making detailed observations are promoted very well and those in Years 1 and 2 very successfully sort and classify objects against set criteria. This type of activity provides a very good basis on which to build pupils' practical science skills.
56. The subject leader is in a very strong position to monitor standards and achievement carefully. Although he regularly leads lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6, if the other teacher is leading a lesson he is in a very good position to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The subject leader's teaching also provides a very good source of professional development for other staff able to observe this excellent role model. By teaching in the upper years the subject leader is also able to monitor pupils' achievement directly. Combined with very good assessment procedures that are used very effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in standards, pupils' achievement is very effectively tracked through the school. The subject leader also has opportunity to go into all other year groups to observe teaching and keep an eye on standards. In this way the subject leader is able to intervene if he notices that very high standards are not being maintained. The level of improvement since the previous inspection is good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The use of the computer suite is timetabled effectively to ensure access to all pupils.
- Interactive whiteboards are used to very good effect in classes to add interest and quality to learning opportunities.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, confident and knowledgeable.
- The subject is led very well by a competent co-ordinator.

### **Commentary**

57. Standards are above expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Improvements in the teaching of ICT and in the resources available have been good since the previous inspection. However, the current suite is cramped and can only be used effectively by small groups of pupils. This sometimes limits pupils' achievement, but this will soon be replaced when building is complete. Each classroom has at least one computer and regular use is made of the suite. Pupils have improved opportunities to use their skills across a good range of subjects including English and science. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards most effectively to support whole class teaching and the school is a designated centre of excellence for this aspect.

58. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards are rising. Pupils' achievement is also improving. They obviously enjoy their lessons in ICT and in the lessons observed most could do something new by the end of it. Pupils' word processing skills improve noticeably as they get older, although the younger pupils' keyboard skills are not as good as you would expect for their age and pupils sometimes have trouble locating letters and symbols. Pupils show more confidence in their use of ICT and produce reports for projects in other subjects, such as history, using text and graphics. They are introduced to an increasing variety of software. The pupils in junior classes have good routine computer skills. They know how to log on, find their way through the screen menus, identify the files they need and then work confidently with different programs. As they move through the junior classes their manipulation of text becomes more sophisticated and they combine pictures with text to make illustrated reports. They search the Internet with increasing precision for material for projects and cut, copy and change pictures to suit their layout. Pupils in the top junior classes are learning to handle and process information by creating and using databases and spreadsheets.
59. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The planning is very good and is adapted from the plans to suit each class or year. The majority of lessons are very good because teachers are familiar with the software and confident with using computers. When used, teaching assistants have good levels of knowledge and are well deployed to help anyone with a problem. Assessment is good and related closely to the learning objectives for lessons.
60. ICT is very well led and managed and at present satisfactorily resourced. Teachers use classroom interactive whiteboards very well to prepare pupils for their work in the suite, as the layout is not conducive to whole class teaching. The school is committed to improvement. The budget is well spent and there are clear plans for development which include a new ICT suite with twenty workstations and an interactive whiteboard for whole class teaching. The subject co-ordinator provides very good expertise, leadership and management and is a confident role model for other teachers. The school has the support of regular visits by teachers from a local secondary school. There are ICT clubs for infants and juniors and the subject also features in residential trips, all adding to pupils' achievement and the quality of provision.

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

61. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory, but developing well. Examples were seen in some lessons and in pupils' portfolios and workbooks. The new suite will overcome some of the difficulties currently experienced and have the potential to make a significant impact on standards and expertise throughout the curriculum.

### **HUMANITIES**

Religious education is subject to a Section 23 inspection.

62. History and geography are taught as separate subjects. Pupils' work in **geography** was sampled and it is therefore not possible to judge provision. However, two lessons were seen where the quality of teaching and learning in both was very good and all pupils achieved highly. Discussions took place with staff and work in pupils' books was also examined. This showed that pupils produce an outstanding volume of work of high quality. They take pride in the presentation of their work. There is a great depth of coverage and ICT is used effectively by pupils to undertake research. Evidence available shows that planning for the teaching of geography through the school is very good and takes appropriate account of national guidance. Teachers develop good links with other subjects such as art, design and technology, science and English. The subject leader is well informed and has a good overview of the subject.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Because of very good and sometimes excellent teaching, all pupils, regardless of their ability, achieve well and standards are well above those nationally expected by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers' enthusiasm and passion for the subject captivate the pupils.
- Very good use of literacy enhances the quality of pupils' work.
- Effective use of ICT enhances pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

63. At the end of Year 2 pupils attain standards that are above national expectations and pupils achieve well. At the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are well above national expectations and pupils again achieve well. Standards have improved since the last inspection, so improvement has been good. Pupils achieve well because teachers are enthusiastic and demonstrate a real passion for the subject and this captivates the pupils' interest.

64. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Pupils' work shows that the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. Learning is well planned to give the pupils a secure knowledge and understanding of people and events in the past and it is enhanced by the provision of good first-hand experiences. Evidence from pupils' work and lessons in Years 3, 4, 5, and 6 shows that the quality of teaching and learning is very good and sometimes excellent. Where teaching is excellent the total passion with which the lesson is delivered, together with the demand for high quality work, enables pupils to achieve highly. Teachers ensure that pupils apply the rules for speaking and listening, so that when it is used in a lesson it is of the highest quality. Before pupils begin a piece of writing they are reminded of the top tips for writing, ensuring that work is of the very highest quality. Where pupils are taught in a small focus group the high teacher:pupil ratio, combined with personal encouragement and very good direct teaching, ensures that all pupils try their hardest to produce their very best work. When asked to read out work they do so with confidence to the spontaneous applause of the others.

65. Pupils' work is assessed against national guidance. Teachers mark pupils' work for literacy as well as historical accuracy. Work is levelled and comments foster improvement and work that requires re-writing is re-written to a high standard. Currently there is no-one with the responsibility for subject leader in history.

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

66. Only two lessons in **art and design** were seen during the inspection and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement on provision. However, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with pupils indicate that standards are above average. By the end of Year 2, the standards of pupils' observational drawings are good. Their charcoal drawing of buildings shows good attention to detail as do their portraits using pencil and crayon. Pupils use a wide range of different materials which widens their experiences and development of skills well. By the end of Year 6 pupils have experimented with line, tone and shade and their imaginative paintings illustrate their good use of colour. Pupils



have good opportunities to work in three dimensions as was seen in a lesson in Year 3 when pupils' creative skills were developed very well.

67. Pupils in both key stages study the work of famous artists and produce their own work in the style of famous artists such as Mondrian in Year 2, whilst the study of French artists by Year 6 pupils is linked to their forthcoming visit to France. Pupils' artistic skills are used well in cross-curricular work and in their displays, such as in Year 2 to illustrate the story of the '*The owl that was afraid of the dark*'. In discussion pupils were enthusiastic about their artwork, describing vividly the activities they had undertaken and the visits they had made to art galleries. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The well-developed scheme of work effectively informs teachers' planning and the planning is routinely monitored. The subject leader advises and supports individual teachers and since the last inspection has improved the creative aspect of the subject.
68. No lessons in **design and technology** were seen during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision. However, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with them indicated that pupils' attainment is good and above national expectations. Work samples show that by the end of Year 2 pupils have used a good range of materials and have acquired appropriate design and making skills. Pupils plan their designs using annotated diagrams describing in detail their proposed models and artefacts. Pupils use their skills to join materials and to sew and weave and there are opportunities for pupils to evaluate their products. By the end of Year 6, pupils have worked with a broad range of materials, including work in food technology, textiles and resistant materials. Pupils plan carefully and give due attention to selecting materials for specific purposes, as when designing and making musical instruments. A good feature of the work is the emphasis on cross-curricular links, such as the work with 'buggies' in Year 6. In such instances pupils' knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits gained in science are used well. In another instance, the making of masks is linked to the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Discussion with pupils shows their enthusiasm for this work. The school's scheme of work is based on national guidance and provides teachers with a good basis on which to plan their work. Teachers' planning is regularly reviewed to ensure that the work is well matched to pupils' ability and prior attainment.

## Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school benefits from the work of a specialist teacher.
- Pupils benefit from a highly enriched music curriculum.

## Commentary

69. Pupils benefit from lessons led by a specialist music teacher who visits the school twice a week to take lessons in all classes and is supported effectively by the class teachers. Intensive, high quality teaching results in standards that are well above average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, as well as among children in the Foundation Stage. Pupils achieve very well. This demonstrates very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be satisfactory. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and events that significantly enrich the curriculum and support high standards. During the inspection a string quartet from the BBC Symphony

Orchestra visited the school to take part in an afternoon workshop with those pupils who had been identified as gifted and talented musicians. They were helped to compose their own variations on '*Twinkle, twinkle little star*' which they then performed for their parents. Music is a very strong feature in school and class assemblies and the subject is well resourced with instruments and with commercial music recordings. Peripatetic instrument teachers support pupils very well in learning a variety of instruments, including woodwind and strings.

70. Teaching is of a consistently high standard and many examples of excellent practice were observed. Inspirational and energetic teaching ensured that pupils were engrossed in their lessons and strove to do their very best. This was evident in the quality of performance.

71. The subject is led and managed very well by the specialist teacher, particularly as she is only in the school twice a week. Until this year the school followed its own music scheme, but is currently trialling a commercially produced scheme which gives support to those teachers who might be less confident in teaching the subject.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **excellent**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The high quality of learning opportunities ensures that pupils' achievement is very good.
- The opportunity for pupils to participate in an excellent range of sporting activities has a very positive impact on achievement.
- Teaching is consistently of high quality and, where teachers have specific expertise, teaching is excellent.
- The subject leader is committed to enabling all pupils to experience very high quality provision.

## **Commentary**

72. The school places high emphasis on physical education and a good amount of time is given to the subject. Pupils throughout the school enjoy taking part in a wide range of exciting activities and have positive attitudes to the subject.

73. Pupils' attainment in physical education is well above the nationally expected level at the end of both Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve very well from their different starting points. In lessons, pupils work well, taking advice from their teachers and striving to improve their performance. Most pupils have good awareness of space and in gymnastics and dance move with confidence at different levels and at different speeds around the room. Standards in swimming are good because of the intensive programme that is provided for Year 3 pupils and because of good specialist teaching at the pool.

74. With the involvement and support of local facilities such as tennis club coaches, horse-riding tuition, Lords Cricket Ground and professional standard facilities at Paddington recreational grounds, the school offers an exceptional range of curricular and extra-curricular activities throughout the year. At some time in their school career, all pupils have the opportunity to experience all sporting activity on offer. After-school activities are very well supported by the pupils, who understand the need for commitment by attending regularly. The involvement of pupils in extra-curricular activities, and

especially inter-school tournaments, has a very positive impact on their social and moral development as they learn how to co-operate with other members of a team or to accept gracefully the decision of the referee. The range of trophies and awards reflects the consistently very high standards achieved by the pupils in many different disciplines.

75. Teaching is excellent overall. In the main, teachers make good use of demonstration by pupils to illustrate examples of good practice and, where the best teaching occurs, pupils are encouraged to suggest ways in which their work might be improved. A consistent strength of teaching is the way in which teachers manage pupils' behaviour, using praise and encouragement well to boost pupils' self-confidence and setting clear routines and procedures for the pupils to follow. Good attention is paid to matters of health and safety and in gymnastics sessions pupils are closely supervised so that apparatus is set out without mishap. Very good attention is paid to warm-up routines so that pupils' muscles are properly prepared.
76. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. Physical education is led by the deputy headteacher who is an enthusiastic expert and believes passionately in the importance of physical education in the holistic development and achievement of each child. There has been very good curriculum development in recent years, leading to the whole-school implementation of a commercial scheme of work which gives very good support to non-specialists and which ensures that there are good levels of continuity in pupils' learning as they move through the school. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)**

Insufficient lessons were seen in personal, social and health education and so it is not possible to make judgements on provision.

77. There are a number of ways in which the school raises pupils' personal and social awareness. The school deals with issues such as bullying, how to treat each other, confidence building and health and hygiene through discussion in lessons and through visits or visitors to the school. In conjunction with the community the school provides drugs awareness and sex and relationships education. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of citizenship are fostered through increasing levels of responsibility as they move through the school and through visits by the community services so pupils have good opportunity to work directly with people from the wider community. Team building opportunities are provided through annual trips, especially the Year 5 outdoor activity trip. There are areas that could be usefully developed. Currently there are no regular timetabled slots for circle time, where pupils can talk about issues that are important to the school community or which may concern them personally. There is no school council through which the pupils are able to express formally their views about how they would like to see the school develop. However, there are informal procedures, such as discussion in class, through which the school seeks and values their opinions. There are arrangements in hand to start the more formal process of a school council in the next school year. The school is already working towards becoming a healthy school and has completed its initial survey.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	1
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>1</b>
Pupils' achievement	1
<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>1</b>
The quality of teaching	1
How well pupils learn	1
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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