

# INSPECTION REPORT

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

Uckfield

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114569

Headteacher: Dr Steve Austin

Lead inspector: Brenda Spencer

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Inspection number: 267938

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	205
School address:	New Town High Street Uckfield East Sussex
Postcode:	TN22 5DJ
Telephone number:	(01825) 762 032
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Simon Watts
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Philips is an average-sized primary school in Uckfield for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. Their socio-economic background is above average and attainment on entry is average. There are 199 pupils attending full time and 12 part time; 124 boys and 87 girls. Four pupils left and five pupils joined the school last year outside the normal times of transfer. Nearly all pupils are white British. The majority of remaining pupils is of other white heritage together with a very small number of pupils of mixed or Asian heritage. Whilst there are a few children who have English as an additional language, none are at an early stage of fluency. Thirty pupils have special educational needs, with two having statements of special need. This is below the national average. These special needs are predominantly related to specific learning and speech or communication difficulties. In 2003, the school gained the Sportsmark Gold Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20451	Brenda Spencer	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay inspector	
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28200	Paul Stevens	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Philip's Catholic Primary is a very good school.** The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The leadership and management of the school are also very good overall. All groups of pupils feel valued because of the significant steps taken to ensure they all flourish and achieve. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and consequently the school has improved significantly and consistently over ten years.
- The climate for learning is very good. Pupils are keen to learn and behave very well from an early age.
- Pupils reach high standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and maintain these high standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- The accommodation for the Reception class is having a negative impact on children's standards of physical development, their independence and opportunities to play.
- The quality of teaching is very good and high quality teaching is found in Reception, infant and junior classes. Consequently, pupils respond very well to their lessons.
- The sense of community is very strong. Pupils, parents, governing body and all staff work together very well to the benefit of the school and pupils' achievement.
- The care of pupils' emotional, academic and safety needs is very good.
- The record of attendance is very high. This contributes significantly to pupils' progress.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 is very good. All the key issues have been addressed very well, for example standards and achievement are significantly better in writing. Improvement in standards and achievement by the end of Year 6 in information and communication technology is excellent. Many other aspects of the provision have also improved: the quality of teaching, care and of the curriculum, and high standards have been maintained. Subject co-ordinators are more effective in improving standards and achievement.

### 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	C	B
science	A	A*	B	B

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

**The pupils' achievement is very good overall.** It is very good in English, speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6. Achievement is good in the infants and very good in the junior classes for information and communication technology. Building from above average starting points, the current Year 2 reach standards which are well above average in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are above average in information and communication technology. Pupils' test results in reading and writing were in the top five per cent of schools in 2004. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards which are well above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve

very well. The quality of support in lessons and the careful identification of their needs underpin their achievement.

The vast majority of children in Reception achieve well overall. However, achievement is very good in communication, language and literacy, most aspects of mathematical development and many aspects of personal, social and emotional development. They are likely to meet most of the goals for their learning. They are likely to exceed them for speaking and listening, number and social development. However, the limitations of the accommodation mean their control of large movement, such as throwing, and their independence skills are below expectations.

**Pupils' personal qualities are very good.** Pupils contribute to school life very well, for example by helping new children to settle well and supporting the summer fair. Racial harmony is excellent. Attitudes to learning, relationships and behaviour are very good. **Spiritual, moral, social and pupils' own cultural development is very good. Pupils' multicultural development is satisfactory.** Attendance is excellent and contributes significantly to pupils' achievement.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education and teaching and learning are very good.** Pupils' understanding is promoted through very good use of resources, challenging questions and very effective support of teaching assistants. On the few occasions when teaching is only satisfactory this relates to lack of challenge or behaviour management.

The curriculum is very good in infant and junior classes. It is good in Reception but is hampered by the accommodation. Provision for the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills is very strong. The enrichment of the curriculum through visits and clubs is very good for older pupils but is less rich for younger pupils. Pupils are cared for very well. Their academic progress is carefully tracked. There are very good links with parents and good links with the community which support pupils' learning well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher provides excellent leadership. His influence on school improvement has resulted in substantial improvement over ten years. A very effective senior management team and subject co-ordinators ably support this work. Governance is very good. Governors' work on monitoring the effect of the school improvement plan is exemplary. The governing body ensures all statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents and pupils value their school highly. Parents highlight how well young children settle into school, the quality of teaching and the behaviour of the pupils. They would like greater consultation and plans to address this are already in place. Pupils appreciate their lessons, the friendliness of other pupils and the emotional security offered by the adults they trust.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important thing the school should do to improve is:**

- Address the accommodation needs, including outside facilities, of Reception children.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is very good overall. It is good in Reception and very good in Years 1 to 6. Standards in all the core subjects are well above average by the end of Year 6. They are well above average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is very strong from Reception to Year 6.
- The quality of assessment of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and the care taken to provide for them mean these pupils achieve very well in common with their peers.
- Children in Reception do not reach the expected standards in some aspects of physical and personal development because of the accommodation and the restrictions placed on play and opportunities to be independent.

#### Commentary

1. Most children enter school with average starting points in communication and mathematical development. However, their ability to apply themselves to work is well above average. The children achieve well overall, but achievement is very good in communication, language and literacy, most aspects of mathematical development and many aspects of personal, social and emotional development. The vast majority of the current Reception class are on track to meet most of the nationally expected goals for their learning. Their speaking and listening and counting skills and social awareness are likely to go beyond the goals. However, the nature of the accommodation means children's ability to move with control and co-ordination is not developed strongly enough. In addition, concerns about not disturbing other pupils in the infant area place restrictions on play and independent learning. This has a consequent negative impact on important aspects of personal development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.5 (18.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	18.7 (17.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.0 (17.3)	16.2 (16.3)

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

2. In Year 2, pupils reached standards in the 2004 national tests that were in the top five per cent of schools in reading and writing and were well above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was in the top five per cent of schools in writing and was well above average in mathematics and reading. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels was in the top five per cent of schools for reading, writing and mathematics. Compared to similar schools, standards were well above average in reading and mathematics and were in the top five per cent of schools in writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in science, judged by teacher assessment, was in the top five per cent of schools. The proportion of those reaching higher levels in science was well above average. The trend in the school's results was above the national trend. Test results have improved significantly since the last inspection.
3. Pupils in the current Year 2 reach standards that are well above average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are above average in



information and communication technology. Overall, pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.3 (30.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.6 (29.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.4 (31.9)	28.6 (28.6)

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

4. In Year 6, pupils reached standards in the 2004 national tests that were well above the national average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. Compared to schools with similar results at the end of Year 2, standards were well above average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. The trend in the school's results was below the national trend. Compared to results at the time of the last inspection, test results remained similar in English and science but fell in mathematics. However, the value added from Year 2 to Year 6 in 2004, measured by national tests, was well above average overall.
5. Pupils in the current Year 6 reach standards which are well above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. They achieve very well. Analysis of assessment data in English and mathematics is used very well to raise standards. In addition, the quality of teaching, leadership and management in these subjects is very good. This supports pupils' very good achievement.
6. Sampling of work, discussions with pupils and observation of a limited number of lessons suggest standards are likely to be above average by the end of Year 2 in history and geography. Too little evidence was available to make judgements about Year 6 in these subjects. Standards appear to be average in design and technology, art and design and music by the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils reach the required standard in swimming by the end of Year 6, but there was too little evidence to judge other aspects of this subject. These subjects were not the main focus of the inspection.
7. Boys and girls achieve very well. Comparison with the national gender averages indicates that the work undertaken to raise boys' achievement in writing and reading has been successful. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully assessed and achieve very well. By the end of Year 6, these pupils often attain the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science. The most capable pupils also achieve very well because their needs receive full attention. The system of formally recording early awareness of issues means pupils' needs are tracked long before problems become entrenched. The quality of leadership of special educational needs, careful planning and the skilful support of teaching assistants all contribute to these pupils' success. The school has excellent systems of analysing all performance data, but the number of pupils from ethnic minorities and with English as an additional language is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions. All pupils are attaining nationally expected standards. With very good support from their teachers and teacher assistants right from the Reception onwards, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress indicates that pupils who join the school with very little or no English make very good progress.
8. Pupils' achievement is very good overall. Achievement is very good in English, speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6. Achievement is good in the infants and very good in the junior classes for information and communication technology. These high levels of achievement reflect careful school improvement planning. There has been a focus on writing in recent years which has improved standards and boys' achievement. Information and communication technology has benefited from improved resources and staff training. Children's achievement in Reception is very good for these aspects of their learning.

However, they do not achieve well in aspects of physical development because opportunities to practise skills are restricted by the lack of a dedicated suitable outdoor space. Children are also very dependent on adults to organise their activities and lack confidence in initiating activities and choosing tools, resources and techniques.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Personal development is **very good**. In particular, pupils welcome the responsibility they are given for the welfare of others. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance is excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school creates an ethos in which pupils and adults live together very successfully.
- Pupils' understanding of different faiths, culture and beliefs is weaker than that of their own.

### **Commentary**

9. Pupils are very keen to learn, as evidenced by their excellent attendance. Very good teaching stimulates deep interest in lessons and eagerness to participate in the broad range of activities provided. The high degree of care shown by all adults generates in pupils a willingness to work and play together harmoniously. For example, in a lesson about life after the Second World War, the teacher's lively pace and her strong rapport with the pupils made them want to collaborate to carry out research using computers. Moreover, such was her approach that they demonstrated a high degree of independence, leading to a delight in telling each other what they had found out. Pupils with special educational needs show the same positive attitudes as the other pupils. The good rapport between them and their teachers and assistants enables them to enjoy their lessons. They fully participate in the clubs on offer to all pupils.
10. Pupils show great respect towards one another and to adults. They behave very well both when supervised and when not, such as when they are moving around the building. Pupils confirm that there are very few incidents of unpleasantness, and do not recall any bullying. Indeed, pupils show spontaneous and sustained care towards one another, including older pupils to younger and all pupils to those with needs. This reflects the very happy inclusive atmosphere in the school and role modelling by all adults. The school's very positive approach to pupils' attitudes includes praising good behaviour and dealing firmly, fairly and constructively with inappropriate behaviour. Pupils have fully contributed to the clear framework for personal conduct. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
11. Pupils show strong self-confidence. Teachers encourage pupils to be independent and to stand in front of others to report their learning. In one science lesson, for example, pupils investigated and reported how instruments produced their range of sounds. They were not in any way inhibited in making detailed explanations. Pupils with special educational needs show their high self-esteem by fully contributing to assemblies and performances. Pupils' general personal confidence generates strong initiative. This was exemplified in one lesson where pupils suggested they record the teacher's rhyme for remembering how to solve mathematical problems. In another lesson, pupils openly but good-naturedly challenged the teacher to beat them with problems that were too difficult.
12. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school's approach to learning makes them intensely curious about their world. For example, pupils are fascinated to use the digital microscope which provides the opportunity to wonder at the intricacies of nature. Pupils work and play in an atmosphere where matters of faith touch their daily lives. They take time to be quiet and reflective as they listen to music in assemblies, which is sometimes performed live by the headteacher. Pupils reflect on personal qualities by considering, for example, Jesus' humility in washing the disciples' feet. All pupils have the opportunity to experience pride in personal achievement through its recognition by other pupils and the school. They also

experience the opportunity to develop themselves in Year 5 on a residential course which includes physical challenges.

13. Pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils genuinely admire the character and influence of historical figures such as Winston Churchill and Nelson Mandela. Pupils are acutely aware of what is always right or wrong, and this is partly developed through the school's clear code of conduct.
14. Pupils' social development is very good. They show an increasing willingness to undertake a range of duties as they move up the school. These include older pupils pairing up with younger ones with a similar personality. This sometimes establishes friendships which last many years after pupils have left the school. The school council is a very good forum for pupils to share their views about moral issues in school life, before taking the results of their deliberations to the headteacher and staff. Pupils' very good relationships with one another and adults develop through the school's programme for education in personal relationships. They partly learn how to live with one another through the residential courses and learning about citizenship.
15. Pupils' cultural development is good. It is very good for the culture of the arts and for their understanding of European ways of life. It is satisfactory for their understanding of different ways of life and their relationship with the many religious beliefs. The curriculum includes comparing and contrasting a school in Mexico and St Philip's. Pupils also create their own pictures after studying the work of famous artists such as Matisse and listen to music from different countries. Pupils enjoy learning about French ways of life on the Year 6 residential course. However, there is less emphasis on marking the importance of events and beliefs to people of different faiths, resulting in pupils having little understanding of them by Year 6.
16. The school has sustained very good improvement to all aspects of attitudes and behaviour.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.0	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

17. The excellent attendance is partly due to the school actively discouraging holidays during term time. The school monitors attendance very closely and sends home letters when attendance or punctuality is not good enough. Pupils also find their lessons interesting and fun so do not want to miss school. Lessons start promptly because pupils arrive punctually in the mornings.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching, learning, the curriculum and the quality of care are all very good. There are very good links with parents and these, together with good links with the community, support pupils' very good achievement.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Assessment procedures are good for core subjects and the use of assessment information tailors the curriculum to pupils' needs well.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Two-thirds of teaching and learning is very good or better. This high quality of teaching is found in Reception, infant and junior classes.

- Resources are used very well to support pupils' developing understanding.
- The quality of relationships results in a very good climate for learning and very good behaviour.
- Teachers' questioning skills and opportunities for discussion challenge pupils very well.
- Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are taught very well, resulting in high levels of pupils' skills and knowledge.
- Teaching assistants are skilful and contribute significantly to pupils' achievement.
- Where lessons are only satisfactory this relates to the quality of behaviour management or a mismatch of expectations to pupils' capabilities.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
7 (22%)	14 (44%)	4 (12%)	7 (22%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

18. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. In the last year, the focus of in-school training has been high quality teaching, and the outcomes in standards and improved learning speak for themselves. The proportion of high quality teaching and learning at the time of the last inspection was nearly a third of all observations. It is now two-thirds. Parents and pupils value teaching above all other aspects of the provision. Their confidence is justified.
19. Teaching and learning are very strong across all areas of the school and across the range of subjects. Lessons, which are very good or excellent, have many common features. These include excellent relationships with pupils, which are encouraging of intellectual endeavour. Pupils respond to this with rapt attention and excellent behaviour. Stimulating strategies such as role play or practical activities bring sparkle to lessons and make sure pupils' understanding is well rooted. For example, in Reception, children acted out ways to persuade an errant rabbit puppet to be kind to the squirrel.
20. Resources are used very well to deepen pupils' understanding. In Year 2, pupils referred to identification keys to learn more about the minibeasts they found in the pond. In Year 1, pupils' understanding of Kenya was extended using maps, globes, photos and video material. The overhead projector in Year 5 was used well to model persuasive writing. Then pupils drafted letters to prevent the loss, because of the proposed development of a bypass, of a field centre they had visited previously.
21. The vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons, work hard and listen well. From an early age, children show extensive powers of concentration. This reflects the relationships with adults and the expectation of very good behaviour. Most often adults draw attention to good behaviour which results in 'copycat' behaviour. This provides a positive classroom atmosphere.
22. Across the school, adults ask pupils challenging questions. It is rare to hear questions which require one word answers. Pupils are asked to explain, compare, empathise and speculate. Often pupils are encouraged to discuss issues with a partner before sharing thoughts with the class, for example in Year 3 on the diversity of uses for magnets. This gives them the confidence to risk airing developing ideas. It is noticeable that the few pupils with English as an additional language, including those in Reception, are confident in explaining their views.
23. Key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are taught very well. In Year 1, pupils during a guided reading session explored the pictures and the context of a challenging text to help them fully understand the meaning. Mental mathematical

dexterity is given high priority as it was identified by a school review as an area of relative weakness. In Year 6, a mathematics lesson began with a quick succession of mental problems to limber up pupils' thinking in preparation for considering the appropriate operations for different problems and calculations. From Reception Year onwards, children learn to draft their writing on the computer. Adults are very good at modelling the use of these skills so pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve.

24. Recent local authority monitoring identified the deployment of teaching assistants as needing improvement. It is a credit to the school that now this is a strength of the provision. Professional development of staff and the quality of teamwork mean that all adults make a substantial contribution to pupils' learning. For example, in Year 6, teaching assistants skilfully posed questions as pupils examined different instruments to draw conclusions on how to alter the dynamic and pitch of the sounds they produced.
25. In a few lessons, teaching and learning were only satisfactory. This related to behaviour management or match of task to pupils' capability. Where desks are arranged in rows it is often difficult for teachers to have close contact with some pupils to maintain their engagement or resolve any difficulties in their understanding. When pupils were restless, strategies which focused on reprimanding unwanted behaviour were not effective. Occasionally, higher attaining pupils were not challenged sufficiently, for example by limiting opportunities for them to work at their own level. The work sample contained few examples of extended writing in science. Sometimes higher attaining pupils copied writing which they were capable of composing for themselves.
26. The systems to assess standards of attainment are good; they are very good for English, mathematics and information and communication technology, good for science and satisfactory for other subjects. The analysis of all performance data and its use is excellent in English and very good in mathematics and science. Teachers mark pupils' work in English and mathematics in great detail, identifying strengths and giving pointers for improvement. They regularly test pupils and keep records of their achievement. This information is used very well to track progress and set group and individual targets in English. These targets are shared with parents so that they know their children's achievement and attainment. However, this information is not used sufficiently to set individually tailored targets in mathematics and science. The information gained from analysis and tracking progress is used very well in English and mathematics to provide additional support in class lessons and in booster classes.
27. Teachers plan very well for pupils with special educational needs. Group work is based on continuous assessments of their progress which form the basis of individualised plans for their learning targets. A very good number of teaching assistants provide close support to groups and individuals during activities, but are not always active in interpreting what the teacher is saying in class lessons. Some of them have had training in specific needs such as those arising from dyslexia. Teaching and assessment of pupils who speak English as an additional language are very good.
28. The school has a profile of moderated work in English against National Curriculum levels and this guides teachers as to what is required to attain a particular level. Pupils are given opportunities to assess their own work. This shows teachers what their pupils have understood and what they are trying to learn. Systems for assessment in information and communication technology are good but in non-core subjects they are not fully established. Consequently, it is difficult for teachers to have a clear picture of when and if there is a need to change the curriculum to improve provision.

### **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is very good overall; it is good in Reception and very good in Years 1 to 6. The range of extra activities outside lessons for Years 5 and 6 is very good but is only satisfactory for

younger pupils. Accommodation and resources are good, but there are shortcomings in the accommodation for Reception children.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is very well planned, is innovative and meets the needs of all groups of pupils.
- There is a very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Teachers and teacher assistants implement the curriculum very well.
- The enrichment opportunities are very good for older pupils but the provision for younger pupils is only satisfactory.
- The curriculum for children in Reception overemphasises activities directed by adults to the detriment of developing children's initiative.

### **Commentary**

29. The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection. The curriculum is very good now. The planning of the curriculum has improved and schemes of work in all subjects are well implemented. The curriculum for information and communication technology is innovative and has much improved. Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs is very good.
30. The Foundation Stage curriculum is used to plan activities in all six areas of learning for children in the Reception class. Very good emphasis is placed on teaching communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. As a result, children make good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. However, the balance of the curriculum favours adult-directed activity and children have too few opportunities to choose their activities and to make decisions within those activities, for example the materials to use in designing and making.
31. For pupils in Years 1-6, the school provides a curriculum that is interesting, relevant and promotes high achievement for all groups of pupils. The National Curriculum requirements are fully met. The schemes of work for all subjects are updated regularly and, although they are based on national guidance, they have been adapted and personalised to meet the needs of the school. French is taught throughout the school. All teachers from Reception to Year 6 plan their lessons very well, ensuring that skills are taught by building on pupils' previous experiences, and this helps pupils of all abilities to make very good progress.
32. The school's curriculum for information and communication technology is innovative and is much improved. The programme for personal, social and health education is good and is underpinned by the school ethos of respect and care based on the Catholic faith. A scheme of work for sex and relationship education in line with Catholic beliefs is to be implemented this term.
33. The range of extra-curricular activities to make learning more interesting is very good for older pupils. Years 5 and 6 go on a week's residential visit and this has a positive impact on their social development. Year 4 used to go on a day's residential visit, which has not happened for the last two years but plans are afoot for this year. A wide range of clubs in sport, drama and music is offered; pupils value these clubs and many attend them. Pupils are also enthusiastic about the 'book weeks', and enjoy visits from various authors. However, the number of clubs for younger pupils is small. The school is planning to respond to parents' concerns about these differences.
34. Provision for special educational needs is very good. The school adopts a highly individualised approach to pupils. Teachers not only provide for those with long standing difficulties, but also work closely with the special needs co-ordinator to provide support to pupils who experience temporary problems. Furthermore, even within a single lesson, there is the flexibility to attend to a pupil's difficulties with understanding. The curriculum provides

opportunities for the pupils to be included in activities whereby they can achieve in a variety of ways.

35. The school has a strong commitment to ensuring equal access and opportunity for all its pupils. Currently, there are no pupils who are in the early stages of learning English. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English and who belong to different ethnic minority groups receive a curriculum that is exciting and promotes very high achievement. These pupils take a full part in all school activities. They get good opportunities to gain confidence about their own and other cultures through religious education and celebrations of festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. In geography they study localities in, for example, Mexico and Kenya. However, the curriculum for music, literature and art and design does not sufficiently reflect the multi-cultural nature of British society.
36. The teachers and teacher assistants are highly experienced and are very effectively deployed. They work very well together to provide very good quality education and this has a very positive effect on pupils' achievement and attainment. The accommodation is good, and is enhanced by engaging displays of pupils' work. This stimulating learning environment adds positively to pupils' desire to learn. However, there is no outdoor area for Reception children. This limits children' learning especially in physical and personal development.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good induction procedures for Reception children.
- Accessibility for pupils and parents with physical disabilities is excellent.
- Pupils have very good personal support.
- The school council provides a very good mechanism for involving pupils in the life of the school.

### **COMMENTARY**

37. Teachers know their pupils very well and have very good relationships with them. Consequently, pupils are confident that if they have any problems they could go to a member of staff who would help them. The school has made accessibility for disabled pupils a priority and has successfully adapted the building so that wheelchair users can access both floors. Very good systems are in place to track all pupils' progress and these are well used to identify and provide extra support for those pupils who need it. The co-ordinator for special educational needs ensures that the pupils receive very good support and guidance in their personal progress. Pupils' individual plans refer to any social and emotional needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, and those who belong to different ethnic backgrounds are well cared for and are an integral part of the school community.
38. Health and safety procedures are very good with regular audits for health and safety risks. The governors also check the premises for any risks. The school's procedures for administering medicines at school and when pupils are away on visits are very good. Child protection procedures are securely in place and the policy has been recently rewritten. Staff fully understand the procedures and know what to do if they have any concerns. Staff are reminded of the procedures on the first training day of each academic year, however, there are no formal procedures to ensure that staff joining at other times have read the policy.
39. Induction for children joining the Reception class is very effective. Children and their parents have the opportunity to visit the class for a story with the teacher once a week in the last weeks of the summer term. All children join in the autumn term, but in small groups so that

they can have the individual attention they need at this time. Parents and pupils talked warmly of the 'special friends' system where pupils in Year 6 support children in Reception. Induction for pupils who join at other times is satisfactory but as there is not a whole-school policy, the quality of provision depends upon the class teacher. The school is aware that this is an area for development.

40. The school council provides a very effective forum for pupils to express their views. Through the council, pupils have requested more water fountains and seating in the outside area. The school has responded positively to these requests.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have very good information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Links with the local community benefit pupils and the community.
- There are close links with local secondary schools.
- Very good links with a local nursery support the transition to the Reception class.

### **Commentary**

41. The school provides parents with very good information about their children's attainment and progress. Reports give a clear indication of what pupils know and can do in each subject. In addition, the school provides parents with the results of tests showing the National Curriculum levels pupils are working at in English and mathematics. Pupils' targets for English and mathematics are also regularly reviewed and sent home to parents. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are very supportive of their children. They follow up suggestions made by teachers and attend and contribute to reviews of progress. These reviews also involve the pupils in self-assessment, so that they fully understand their targets.
42. There are many avenues through which parents can raise any concerns they may have. The school encourages parents to speak to whichever member of staff they feel most approachable, including support staff. There are also regular opportunities to meet parent governors. In spite of this, there is a small minority of parents who do not feel confident in approaching the school with concerns. The school accepts that it is not very sympathetic to requests for holidays during term time and this has contributed to the excellent attendance. Most parents are very supportive of the school, and the friends association works hard running social events and raising funds for the school. The money raised has been used to improve resources, for example in developing the computer suite. Parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language are involved well in school life. The school is well equipped to support parents in translations and interpretations of school documents or report on their children's attainment and achievement if and when required.
43. The school has close links with the parish church and benefits from being able to use the church building for a range of purposes including art and design and drama. Links with the local business community are strong as many are run by past pupils. This results in good support for events such as the summer fair. In addition, local people visit the school and enhance the curriculum by talking about their jobs or local history. Some parents would very much like the school to take part in the Uckfield Carnival but as it is held on the first weekend in September the preparations would have to be carried out during the summer holiday. Consequently, it would be unreasonable for staff to be expected to take on this responsibility. Local sports clubs use the extensive school grounds.
44. The school has close links with two secondary schools. This has helped to develop teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in information and communication technology. The secondary



schools have also supported St Philips when they successfully applied for the Sportsmark Gold Award. Links with the main feeder nursery, located in the school grounds, are very strong and benefit the children. The school visits many pre-school providers and uses the information they provide about the children to ensure a smooth start to school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and leadership of other key staff is very good. Management is very purposeful and the governing body is very effective in fulfilling its statutory duties.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has presided over continuous and substantial improvement for ten years.
- Subject co-ordinators provide very good role models of teaching.
- Very good professional development of all staff secures high levels of pupils' achievement.
- Governors use self-evaluation very well and their procedures for monitoring school improvement are excellent.
- Some improvement planning does not precisely follow up the analysis of monitoring.

### **Commentary**

45. The quality of leadership and management is improved since the last inspection. In particular, the influence of subject co-ordinators on raising achievement is more effective.
46. The headteacher is ambitious for the pupils. He has systematically set about an agenda for change which will improve pupils' achievement. Monitoring and evaluation are very good and provide an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All teaching staff are involved in monitoring provision and in observing teaching and learning. This contributes to a shared commitment to seeking improvement.
47. Subject co-ordinators provide very good leadership of subjects. They analyse assessment data carefully with the headteacher to identify appropriate priorities for school improvement and to set challenging targets for pupils' performance. School leaders provide very good role models, for example subject co-ordinators teach their subjects very well. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very good leadership and management so that teachers, assistants, parents and pupils collaborate closely. The co-ordinator ensures staff have the opportunity to update knowledge and expertise through training. The leadership and management of the English as an additional language service are very good. The school's analyses of performance data and its use are excellent. The information is used very well for planning to meet individual needs and to provide additional support where required.
48. School improvement planning is very good overall. The most effective planning expresses success criteria, used to measure the effect of actions taken, in terms of outcomes for pupils. It addresses precisely the points for improvement identified by rigorous monitoring. Not all planning shares these characteristics and therefore does not provide an easy basis for governors to keep these aspects under review. Wherever the school seeks improvement it is successful, for example improving the skills of co-ordinators, raising the proportion of high quality teaching, deploying teaching assistants more effectively, improving writing and mental mathematics. The school should take particular pride in the excellent improvement in standards and achievement in information and communication technology in the junior years.
49. Professional development, including performance management, is a key way in which the school improves provision. It is targeted at all staff and dovetails neatly with both individual staff needs and the priorities of the school improvement plan. The limited funds available are allocated to the improvement priorities. Recruitment and retention of staff are very good. The turnover of staff is very low. The school is well ahead in implementing the workforce reforms

and all teaching staff already receive half a day a week for planning and preparation. However, members of the senior management team, including the deputy head, receive the same amount of non-teaching time, so their workload is heavy.

50. Governors are very supportive of the school and carry out their responsibilities with praiseworthy diligence. They ensure statutory requirements are fully met and monitor the budget closely. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement. Their procedures for holding the school to account are exemplary. They include visits by individual governors and a day where as many governors as possible attend the school. They talk to the subject leader they are assigned to, as well as visiting their link class and talking to the school council. In addition, the curriculum committee regularly requires subject leaders to give an update on the progress they have made against identified priorities for school improvement.

### Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	532,637	Balance from previous year	10,166
Total expenditure	525,652	Balance carried forward to the next year	17,151
Expenditure per pupil	2,434		

51. Financial management is very good. Principles of best value are used to good purpose. The profile of the budget is carefully compared with that of similar schools. The decision to spend significantly over the norm on staffing is having a good effect on pupils' achievement. However, there is little breathing space in the budget which means that the headteacher fills even long-term staffing shortages caused, for example, by staff illness. The school provides very good value for money.
52. The quality of leadership and management means the school is well placed to build on its successes. However, the current limitations of the accommodation are having a negative effect on the achievement of Reception children. Financial restrictions mean the burden of implementing workforce reforms falls heavily on senior management.

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall and remains similar to the last inspection. Very good links are made with pre-school settings. Parents justifiably value highly how well their children settle into school. Children have average starting points in communication and mathematical development but their attitude to learning is well above average. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Adults work well together to the benefit of the children, and parents make a valuable contribution to provision. Observation-led assessment is used well to inform planning but information from annual national assessments are not yet exploited to analyse the strengths and points for development in the provision.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory** overall.

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

- Pupils have too few opportunities to choose their activities and to make choices with the activities on offer.
- Teaching is very effective in helping children become aware of the needs of others.

#### **Commentary**

53. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and children achieve well. Adults provide very good examples of teamwork. Class discussions, including role play, explore very well how to support each other's emotional needs. Consequently, children very maturely suggest positive ways to influence behaviour rather than, for example, punishing misdemeanours. Children concentrate for extended periods of time and work hard. They are eager to please their teacher because of the warm and supportive relationships. The timetable for Reception has the same structure as that for older children, including assembly and playtimes. This restricts opportunities for them to carry out extended activities. In addition, the lack of a suitable outside area limits children's opportunity to play. Use of the shared area outside the reception classroom is affected by the needs of nearby infant classes. Independent activities are avoided in case too much noise is generated. These children are on track to meet most of the goals for their learning by the end of the Reception Year. They are likely to exceed them for social development. However, goals related to independent learning, such as selecting activities and resources, are unlikely to be met by the present provision and use of accommodation.

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

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

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

- Reading and writing skills are taught and modelled by staff very well.

#### **Commentary**

54. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is very good. Teachers works hard to extend children's vocabulary and provide many opportunities for discussion. Open-ended questions encourage children to think and be expressive of their thoughts. Consequently, all children, including those with English as an additional language, are confident about sharing their thoughts with the class. Children are introduced to a range of stories including some from

cultures other than their own. Reading is systematically taught and children use a broad range of strategies to understand texts. Their writing is developing extremely well. The teacher models this skill expertly and children are encouraged to employ their rapidly developing phonic knowledge to write independently. Assessment is used very well to match tasks to children's ability and consequently both children with special educational needs and those of high capability work to their potential. Children are on track to meet the demanding goals for their learning in most respects. They are likely to exceed the goals for speaking and listening.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's counting and number recognition skills are developed very well.
- The provision does not develop children's problem-solving skills sufficiently.

### **Commentary**

55. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is very good. Teaching is challenging and sensitive to the needs of young children. A puppet brings humour to some mathematical activities. Excellent strategies are taught to enable children to count on in twos and tens. Consequently, children are confident in counting well beyond the expectations of their age. In exploring symmetry, very good links were made with literature as children examined the patterns in a very illustrated African story. Children enthusiastically practise use of money in role play, such as the garden centre. However, annual assessments indicate that, overall, children have too few opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to practical problem solving. Assessment is very well used to ensure other tasks are appropriately tailored to children's attainment. Most children are on track to meet the most of the goals for their learning. They are likely to exceed goals for number work.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have too few opportunities to select tools and techniques when designing and making.
- Families are involved well in children's learning.

### **Commentary**

56. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is good. Children have good opportunities to explore similarities and differences and patterns and change. These are reinforced by useful first-hand experiences, such as examining different sized, shaped and coloured seeds and comparing babies coming to visit the class. Children are taught information and communication technology skills well in small groups tailored to their needs. The organisation of resources and the balance of adult-versus child-initiated activity are not helpful in developing independence in designing and making. Children are taught individual skills very well, for example, different joining techniques, but they have too few opportunities to apply these skills independently. Most children are on track to meet the goals for their learning, except in relation to aspects of design and making.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

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

- The lack of a suitable outside space slows progress in moving with control and co-ordination, and prohibits the use of small equipment such as balls and beanbags.

#### **Commentary**

57. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good for small muscle control but is unsatisfactory for larger movement and physical development. This relates to the lack of a suitable outside space both for specific physical development activities such as catching and for other activities across the curriculum which are large scale. Children use a range of tools well. These include pencils, paintbrushes and other small items such as paper fasteners and malleable materials such as play dough. Children's handwriting is progressing well. The development of large-scale movement occurs in timetabled physical development lessons. This does not provide regular enough experience for many children. Consequently, their ability to move around imaginatively, keep to their own space and catch balls is underdeveloped. Most children are on track to meet the goals for their learning, except for moving with control and co-ordination.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

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

- Stories provide children with very good opportunities to explore thoughts and feelings.

#### **Commentary**

58. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is satisfactory. Song is used to reinforce learning, such as understanding how to behave or to explore pitch and dynamic. Well-resourced role play allows children to express and communicate their ideas. When painting, children mix their own colours. Most of these activities are initiated by adults which limits opportunities for children to express and develop their own creativity. Most children are on track to reach the goals for their learning by the end of the Reception Year.

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

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above the national average at the end of both key stages.
- Pupils' achievement is very good as a result of consistently very good teaching.
- Analysis of data and its use are excellent.
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages the subject very well.
- Some pupils' work is not presented well.

#### **Commentary**

59. In National Curriculum tests in 2004, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' results were well above the national average and that of similar schools. Writing results for Year 6 were in the top five per cent of schools. Standards of the current cohorts are similarly well above average. Boys' attainment is better than the national picture, but within the school their attainment was slightly lower than that of the girls. The school identified this as a whole-school priority and has implemented effective strategies. Currently, there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
60. Pupils achieve very well. Pupils who have special education needs are very well supported and achieve very well in relation to targets set in their individual education plans. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are fairly fluent in English and they achieve very well.
61. Standards in speaking and listening skills are well above the expected levels throughout the school. Pupils receive many opportunities to discuss work in pairs and ask and answer questions in class lessons. This helps to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. In all lessons, pupils explain their work eloquently and show confidence in asking questions to clarify their thinking.
62. In reading, pupils' achievement throughout the school is very good and standards are well above the national average. Year 2 pupils read fluently and understand the text well. Even below average readers can explain what they have read and predict what is likely to happen in a story. Higher attaining pupils read short novels and use context clues very well to read more difficult words. They enjoy reading.
63. By the end of Year 6, pupils read aloud confidently and expressively in whole-class lessons. They interpret text very well and understand beyond the literal meaning. They discuss the work of different authors and explain their preference for a particular author. They skim and scan the text and make meaningful notes to retrieve information. They know how the library system works and use their school and the local library very well for research purposes.
64. Pupils' achievement in writing throughout the school is very good as a result of very good teaching. Standards are well above average. All pupils write for a range of purposes. In excellent lessons, Year 2 pupils demonstrated very good skills in using a suffix to change the meaning of words; Year 3 pupils used different synonyms for 'said' and role-played to demonstrate understanding. They used powerful synonyms and correct speech marks in 'Chapter 3' of their stories.
65. Year 6 pupils' poems, biographies, letters, stories and non-chronological reports are of a high standard. Pupils' spelling skills are very good and their vocabulary is very advanced. Their handwriting skills are good and most write neatly, clearly and legibly. However, presentation of pupils' work needs to be improved. Blank pages are left and many times work is completed on pieces of paper and is not added neatly to the books. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They concentrate, persevere and enjoy learning.
66. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good and three lessons were excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and their demonstrations and explanations of tasks stimulate pupils' interest. They consistently build learning on previous lessons and this maintains continuity in pupils' learning. Very good use of questions promotes pupils' thinking and maintains interest. Behaviour in lessons is consistently excellent and, as a result, the pace of lessons is very good. Teaching is always stimulating and captures pupils' interest.
67. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils who have special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language and receiving additional support for extended vocabulary. Teachers assess their pupils' work thoroughly and set appropriate targets. Marking of pupils' work is very good and it informs them exactly what is good about their work and how they can further improve it. Tracking of pupils' progress is

excellent and this information is used very well to plan work and provide additional support to meet individual needs.

68. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages the subject very well. He monitors lessons, teachers' planning and analyses pupils' work. This information is used very well to further improve standards. Analyses of data and its use are excellent. The co-ordinator aims to improve pupils' attainment so that the school's results are in the top five per cent of schools nationally. This is appropriate for this stage of the school's development. Homework is used very well to enlist parental support to extend learning. Book weeks and invitations to authors to speak to pupils enrich the curriculum well.
69. The school's progress since the previous inspection is very good. The school has been able to maintain well above average standards. The provision, pupils' achievement, teaching and learning, and leadership and management have improved from good to very good.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

70. The provision for literacy across the curriculum is good. Pupils use computers well to draft text and prepare PowerPoint presentations. Pupils use their literacy skills well in mathematics, design and technology, geography and history. However, in science, higher attaining pupils are capable of more recording than is currently demanded of them.

### **French**

This subject was sampled and was not a main focus of the inspection. No reliable judgements can be made about the quality of provision. No lessons were observed.

71. French is a weekly part of the curriculum for all classes. In Reception, children start with simple greetings and answering the register. By Year 6, pupils have the opportunity to practise their linguistic skills on a school journey to France. Pupils' personal and social skills are also extended by exchanges with French students.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are most enthusiastic and achieve very well because of the strong teamwork between teachers and support from their parents.
- Teachers and their assistants work very closely with pupils with special educational needs so that they reach their full potential.

### **Commentary**

72. In the 2004 statutory tests for seven-year-olds, pupils attained well above average standards in comparison both with schools nationally and with those having a similar intake. Eleven-year-old pupils attained average standards in comparison with schools nationally, but above those with a similar intake. Inspection findings confirm the results for seven-year-olds but show that 11-year-olds now attain the standards reached by pupils prior to 2004, which is well above average. Once again, there is a very high proportion of pupils reaching levels above those expected. The school has a renewed focus on ensuring higher attaining pupils achieve well.
73. Pupils' achievement in Year 2 is very good. Most of them work confidently with numbers up to 100 and with problems involving simple fractions. They work out for themselves which operation they should use to solve a problem. They name a variety of two-dimensional shapes

and interpret bar charts using precise mathematical vocabulary. Pupils' achievement is very good in Year 6, because they also attain well above average standards. The vast majority work confidently with complex fractions, percentages and proportions. Pupils solve problems using large numbers and two decimal places. They interpret pie charts for themselves. Pupils successfully carry out and report investigations, for example about the lines of symmetry in different two-dimensional shapes.

74. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers adopt a very inclusive approach in their planning so that pupils work at an appropriate but challenging level. They and teaching assistants provide strong support for pupils with special educational needs. Marking is constructive and shows pupils how to improve. However, teachers do not use what they learn from the school's very thorough assessment systems to give pupils individualised learning targets. Nevertheless, most lessons stimulate pupils' enthusiasm to work very hard. In one excellent lesson in Year 4, pupils urged the teacher to give them bigger and bigger numbers to add and take away by partitioning. They were genuinely and audibly sorry when their work had to stop, but eagerly shared their mental strategies with the class. When lessons are less well prepared and the teacher does not engage with the pupils, their achievement is far lower and they become restless and inattentive. Pupils benefit from regular homework.
75. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. She has ensured that teachers pay attention to mental calculations. Consequently, pupils have improved in this area and enjoy explaining how they arrive at an answer. She has arranged for higher attaining pupils to attend masterclasses in mathematics at the local secondary school so that they are continuously challenged. She monitors teaching and learning and feeds her findings back to teachers so that they continuously improve in a spirit of teamwork.
76. The school works very closely with parents. They strongly support their children and many attended an excellent 'maths week', where teachers, governors, parents and pupils enjoyed a wide variety of exciting activities together.
77. The school has maintained very good continuous improvement since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

78. The use of mathematics across subjects is good. Year 2 develop understanding of degrees by programming a floor robot to make a journey. Pupils in Year 4 make effective designs using rotating shapes. Older pupils use computers to create complex mathematical designs using their knowledge of control procedures, and for recreating statistical graphs.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and have improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils achieve very well.
- The curriculum places due importance on practical and first-hand experience which ensures scientific learning is well rooted.
- Links made with numeracy, for example by using graphs, are strong but pupils are not required to apply their writing skills often enough in reporting their experimental work.
- Planning to raise attainment does not specifically reflect and respond to the findings of monitoring of provision.

### **Commentary**



79. In 2004, assessment results at the end of Year 2 show the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was in the top five per cent of results for all and similar schools. The proportion reaching the higher level was also well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Pupils in the current Year 2 reach well above average standards and achieve very well in all aspects of science. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when pupils' understanding of materials was less well developed than other aspects of science.
80. The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected level in national tests in 2004 was in the top five per cent of all schools and of schools with similar attainment in Year 2. The proportion reaching the higher level was above the national average and was in line with the average for similar schools based on prior attainment. The standards of the current Year 6 are well above average and pupils achieve very well.
81. The skills of teachers and their class assistants ensure pupils achieve very well overall. Special educational needs are identified and pupils are given the support they need in lessons. Consequently, they achieve very well. Pupils with English as an additional language and from ethnic minorities achieve as well as their peers because of the quality of the curriculum and the good staff-to-pupil ratio. However, too often, similar demands are made of all pupils. Consequently, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged by the tasks and the nature of the writing they have to do.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In both infant and junior classes there are examples of very good and excellent teaching, but also teaching which is only satisfactory. Teaching and learning are particularly impressive in Years 2, 3 and 6 and contribute to the high standards pupils attain in national assessments. Throughout the school, pupils' scientific knowledge is developed well. Teaching places great importance on extending pupils' scientific vocabulary and giving them opportunities to discuss in pairs and groups. Consequently, pupils express their ideas precisely and speculate confidently about possible outcomes of investigations. The curriculum is practical and includes the practical coverage of revision material in Year 6. The school environment is also used very well. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and their learning has strong foundations. Numeracy is applied well. Frequently, older pupils present findings in bar and line graphs and they interpret accurately their results, for example the point at which sea water boils or the type of exercise which causes their heart to work hardest. Where teaching is only satisfactory, higher attainers are not challenged sufficiently or pupils become restless. Sometimes it is difficult for teachers to talk to individual pupils during lessons because of the arrangement of the tables. Marking is variable. The very best highlights how to improve attainment rather than making general but uninformative comments.
83. Leadership and management are good overall. Monitoring of pupils' work and informal discussions with staff have identified the weaknesses confirmed by the inspection. Subject improvement planning is general and does not specifically highlight ways to address the few wrinkles in the provision. The use of information and communication technology has been weak in the past. This is improving with the purchase and use of new software and the recent arrival of a weather station. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers make full use of their own and their assistants' considerable knowledge and expertise to enable pupils to achieve very well.
- The subject leader co-ordinates staff well and continuously improves resources so that pupils both enhance and broaden their own skills.

## Commentary

84. Pupils' attainment at the age of seven is above expectations, which represents good achievement. All pupils word-process their poems and stories, sometimes entering sentences into speech bubbles. They produce graphs from surveys, such as of people's favourite fruits, and carry out research on the Internet. They store findings from their own investigations and retrieve the information later to develop their studies further. They paint quite complicated pictures, including some of habitats. Pupils' attainment at the age of 11 is well above expectations, which represents very good achievement since their entry into the school. All pupils use spreadsheets confidently and create multi-media presentations. They also use sophisticated resources to control very well made working models of fairground rides.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Although, in each lesson, teachers instruct pupils with the same skill, they work with knowledgeable assistants to enable the pupils to progress at their own rate. Teachers always set challenging tasks, which pupils are very keen to undertake. Rigorous assessment at the end of every module of work enables teachers to plan for individuals. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Teachers take full advantage of the range of high quality resources available to develop pupils' learning. For example, pupils study insects in depth, using a digital microscope to take photographs of their eyes and legs. When teaching is particularly good, pupils raise their own attainment. For example, in a lesson in Year 2 about habitats, the teacher's rapport and very informative demonstration made pupils think very hard. They were audibly thrilled when they produced detailed answers from their own individual research on the computer. Teachers take every opportunity to give pupils access to computers; for example, they sometimes practise their skills during and after registration.
86. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management so that the school has made excellent improvement since the last inspection. Pupils at seven have moved from attainment in line with expectations to being above them. Pupils at 11 have leapt from attaining below expectations to well above average standards. This reflects the very high standard of provision and the teamwork of staff and their knowledgeable assistants.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

87. The use of computers across subjects is very good. Teachers develop pupils' oral language by expecting them to explain and demonstrate the steps they go through on the computer. Pupils develop their literacy through word-processing their own poetry and stories. History is brought alive through both videos and computer programs, such as about Britain since 1930. Younger pupils develop their understanding of programming a floor robot by exploring control of their own direction in physical education. They use a painting program to make pictures of different habitats in science, and to make designs based on the work of Matisse. There are plans to provide every classroom with an interactive whiteboard in order to enhance learning across the curriculum.

## HUMANITIES

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

88. Only one lesson in history and two in geography were observed. A scrutiny of pupils' written work and their work on display indicates that standards in **history** and in **geography** are above average by the end of Year 2. However, there was insufficient work in Year 6 pupils' books to make judgements about their standards. National Curriculum requirements are met. Residential visits by Year 5 and Year 6 enhance their learning in geography. No judgements on overall provision, teaching and learning and progress since the previous inspection are made.
89. In a Year 4 **history** lesson, teaching and learning were very good. Pupils developed skills of interpreting evidence to investigate the Egyptian civilisation using very good video material of carvings and paintings in ancient tombs. Teacher's planning was very good. Consequently,

pupils worked purposefully and understood the links to previous learning. Very good questioning challenged pupils to think about why it was important for Egyptians to embalm food and leave other important objects with dead bodies. Good links were established with geography, information and communication technology, art and design and literacy.

90. In **geography**, Year 2 compared and contrasted their school with a Mexican school in Tocuaro. Year 1 used maps to find Kenya in order to identify where Barnaby Bear had been. Excellent use was made of pictures, maps, toys and other objects. Pupils learnt the importance of secondary sources of information when it is not feasible for them to visit, for example Kenya or Mexico. Very good teaching and learning in both the lessons was characterised by revision of previous learning, excellent use of pictures and artefacts and demanding questions which encouraged pupils to analyse and draw conclusions.

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

The inspection sampled **art and design, design and technology, physical education and music**.

91. One lesson was observed in art and design and physical education. No lessons were observed in music or design and technology. Samples of work and photographic evidence were examined. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 were interviewed. This did not provide sufficient evidence to allow inspectors to make reliable judgements about the quality of provision.
92. Actual and photographed examples of pupils' work in **art and design** were looked at. The evidence suggests that attainment is in line with expectations at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils' paintings of plants in Year 2 show the expected skills with pencil and paint. Pupils in Year 6 show the same dexterity with computers as part of their multi-media work, and their designs form part of very good presentations. The lesson demonstrated how pupils base some of their work on famous artists. The teacher expected pupils to use the vocabulary of art. In common with design and technology, pupils evaluated their own work so that they learnt how to improve.
93. Actual and photographed examples of pupils' **design and technology** work were looked at and pupils were interviewed about their work. The evidence suggests that pupils' attainment is in line with expectations at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils cover the expected curriculum. Pupils confirmed that they go through the expected steps for planning and making, including thinking about how they could improve their work.
94. Singing was heard in assemblies and a practical session in rhythmic work was held with pupils from both Years 2 and 6. The evidence suggests that standards of attainment in **music** are in line with expectations in both years. Pupils sustain their own rhythmic phrases against a number of others and against long rhythmic sentences improvised by one of the group. The older pupils are more confident in developing their rhythmic ideas. Singing is in line with expectations, with satisfactory intonation, volume and rhythmic accuracy. Pupils listen well to a wide variety of music including live performances by the headteacher. There was little evidence of composition, but pupils perform in front of an audience. They have the opportunity to learn to play instruments such as the recorder or violin.
95. Pupils were interviewed about their work in **physical education**. The evidence suggests that standards of attainment are in line with expectations. Pupils in Year 5 showed the expected degree of hand-eye co-ordination as well as control of the ball when throwing and receiving. Most pupils swim 25 metres by Year 6. Pupils confirm that they cover the expected curriculum.

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

96. The school's programme for personal, social and health education is good and further developments are being implemented. It is taught as a discrete subject through the emotional

and personal relationship programme, class discussions known as 'circle time' and in conjunction with other subjects. Pupils are encouraged to think about those who are less fortunate and collect funds for charities such as the Tsunami Appeal and Red Nose Day.

97. The school takes on board the suggestions of the school council for improvements in areas such as the playground and school building to improve opportunities for pupils to play and work in a more harmonious environment. In circle time, pupils discuss issues such as how to resolve a conflict situation. There are appropriate class rules and pupils' behaviour is excellent in many lessons. The school's very good Catholic ethos contributes positively to pupils' development as effective citizens, as well as to their personal and social education.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

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

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

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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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