

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

**THE ROSARY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stroud

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115708

Headteacher: Maria Lockey

Lead inspector: Raymond Jardine

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 October 2004

Inspection number: 268094

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary aided  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 189

School address: Beeches Green  
Stroud  
Gloucestershire  
Postcode: GL5 4AB

Telephone number: 01453 762774  
Fax number: 01453 762774

Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Monica Jordan

Date of previous inspection: 19 October 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The Rosary is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school situated near the centre of Stroud. The school serves the parishes of Stroud and Stonehouse on the town's western outskirts from where most of its pupils come. About two thirds of its pupils are Catholic. The school is about average in size, although its number on roll has fallen in recent years from a peak of 214 pupils in 1999, reflecting a wider pattern of falling rolls in the area. It has one reception class and six other classes, one for each year group. Most of the pupils are of white UK origin but 30 are from a wide range of other backgrounds, including British Asian, African and White European backgrounds. Currently, nine pupils have English as their second language but none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average; the social and economic circumstances of pupils' families are wide ranging, but overall they are above average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving other than at the usual times is broadly average. There are 24 pupils on the register of special educational needs; about average. Eight receive additional support from outside agencies and five of these have a statement of special educational need. Their needs include moderate learning difficulties, dyslexia, speech and communication difficulties, physical disabilities and one is autistic. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is typically about average but it does vary from year to year. The school won a Healthy Schools Award in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7428	Raymond Jardine	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
1112	Peter Oldfield	Lay inspector	
22942	Jacqueline Cousins	Team inspector	English as an additional language Foundation stage Mathematics Geography History
20963	Judy Keiner	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art Music Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>30</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The Rosary Catholic is a good school that provides very good value for money. It has some very good features. Pupils achieve very well in some key subjects because the teaching is good and some of it, very good. The school's encouraging and caring ethos promotes very positive attitudes amongst pupils and good behaviour. The school is led and managed well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in reading, mathematics and science. Their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are less well developed and not used enough in some subjects.
- Lessons are interesting and planned well; there is close teamwork between teachers and their assistants that ensures pupils of different abilities are appropriately challenged and supported.
- Teachers' clear explanations and effective questioning in class discussions help pupils to grasp new ideas quickly and to argue and explain their thinking.
- The school promotes pupils' personal qualities very effectively; relationships are very good, pupils like school and are keen to learn.
- The curriculum is good and much enriched through extra-curricular activities, visits, events and visiting speakers.
- The school is improving because staff share a common understanding of the school's aims and priorities and work closely towards them under the very good leadership of the headteacher.

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The weaknesses in the school's use of assessment identified then are much improved, the role of senior managers is now well developed and ICT standards have improved, although there is still work to do. Standards by Year 2 have improved at a good rate and the high standards in key subjects in Year 6 have been maintained.

### 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*	B	B	A
mathematics	A	A	B	A
science	A	A	A*	A*

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

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

**Overall achievement is good** and it is very good in Years 1 and 2. It is also very good in mathematics and science. In 2004, Year 6 standards were above the national average in both English and mathematics; in relation to similar schools, they were well above. Science standards were in the top five per cent of schools on both comparisons. These above and well above average standards have been maintained for several years. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average in English and pupils achieve well, especially in their reading. Standards in both mathematics and science are well above average. Year 2 standards in 2004 were well above the national average in reading and writing and in the top five per cent of schools in mathematics. There is a trend of improving standards at above the national rate in Year 2. Standards seen during the inspection in these subjects are being sustained and are well above average. ICT standards are about average and pupils could achieve more. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons and make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils achieve very well, particularly in

sports, science and mathematics. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Most are likely to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in their

personal, social and emotional, mathematical and physical development, communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are likely to meet them in creative development.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Pupils have very positive attitudes and are much involved in school life. Behaviour is good and there have been no exclusions. Pupils are punctual and attendance is above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is good.**

**Teaching and learning are good.** Some teaching is very good, especially in Years 1 and 2. Most lessons are planned well for the range of pupils' abilities; a strong feature is the close working partnership between teachers and support assistants to ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged and supported, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons. Lessons are stimulating and pupils respond well, showing interest and enthusiasm. Teachers provide clear explanations and use questioning effectively to encourage pupils to recall and build on their knowledge and understanding. Unsatisfactory teaching is rare; that which was seen resulted from inadequate planning so that pupils lost interest and concentration. Assessment is used very well to monitor pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and science but is less well developed in other subjects. The curriculum is well planned and much enriched through the wide range offered of extra-curricular activities, visits and events. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported and their views sought and acted on very well. There are good links with parents and the community and very good links with other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.**

The headteacher's very good leadership has focused the staff's work on common aims and priorities geared to raising standards further. Senior managers and other key staff lead and manage their areas of responsibility well. The analysis of patterns in assessment information is a strong feature of the school's work to improve its performance. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. The governing body is well organised and effective. Governors monitor the school's work and are influential in shaping its development.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school's work in key areas; they say their children like school and are making good progress. A minority would like consultation and communications to be better. Governors and the headteacher are aware of this and are currently working to improve them.

Pupils are also very satisfied. They find lessons interesting; feel they are working hard and that they get help when they need it. They are consulted on school life and find other children friendly.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Provide teachers with additional resources and training to improve pupils' ICT skills further in Years 3 to 6 and so enable them to apply these skills more broadly across the curriculum to raise standards further.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is good overall. Children in Reception achieve well in almost all the areas of learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good. By Year 6, pupils attain well above average standards in some key subjects.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2 and in mathematics and science throughout the school; achievement in English by Year 6 is good.
- Pupils' ICT skills have improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory but they could achieve more in their basic skills and application across the curriculum.
- Children in Reception receive a good start to school and achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are very well supported in class, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The more able, gifted and talented pupils achieve very well, especially in science.

#### Commentary

1. In 2004, standards in Year 6 in both English and mathematics were above those nationally. In science, standards were in the top five per cent of schools, both nationally, and in relation to schools whose pupils attained similarly in Year 2. English and mathematics standards were well above the average of these similar schools. Overall, pupils' achievement in these subjects since they were last tested in Year 2 (when they were below average) was very good. The results continue a consistent pattern of high standards in mathematics and science in particular. In English, the results show an improvement in pupils' achievements compared to the previous year. The school met its targets for both English and mathematics in 2004.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (28.2)	27.0 (26.8)
mathematics	28.6 (29.5)	27.2 (26.8)
science	31.7 (30.9)	28.9 (28.6)

*There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Inspection findings confirm that pupils currently in school continue to achieve very well in most of these areas of learning by Year 6. Achievement is very good in mathematics and science, where the teaching, curriculum planning and the subjects' leadership are particularly effective. Standards in both subjects are well above average. Pupils also achieve very well in their reading, due to very good use of phonics amongst younger pupils and very effective guided reading as they move through the school. Pupils' achievement in writing is good, although they would benefit from more experience of extended writing. Overall, standards in English are above average, as they were last year.
3. In 2004, standards in Year 2 were well above the national average in reading and writing; in mathematics they were in the top five per cent of schools. When compared to socio-economically similar schools, standards were above average in both reading and writing and

well above in mathematics. Standards have been rising at a rate above the national trend in all these subjects in recent years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (17.6)	16.0 (15.7)
writing	16.3 (16.9)	14.8 (14.6)
mathematics	18.9 (17.9)	16.4 (16.3)

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Standards seen in the current Year 2 are well above average in reading and mathematics and above in writing. Pupils achieve very well, particularly in reading and mathematics. They also achieve very well in science. The key reason is the very effective teaching and leadership of the curriculum for Years 1 and 2.
5. When children join the school their attainment is in line with national expectations. Most children achieve effectively in the Foundation Stage because of good teaching. Achievement in mathematical development is very good. Standards are likely to be above average by the time children leave the reception class as a good proportion of children will attain above average standards in personal, social and emotional development, language, literacy and communication, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Standards are likely to meet expectations in creative development but will not exceed this because of limited outside resources.
6. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection when they were weak, partly due to the introduction of a new ICT suite; but there is still more to do. Standards are now above average by Year 2 but broadly average by Year 6. Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, but they could achieve more. Their skills in researching and presenting information are rather better developed than some other aspects, such as control technology, data-logging and data-handling, and pupils do not apply their skills enough in some subjects. In other subjects seen, pupils achieve well in physical education and also in history, but their standards in art vary across the school reflecting some differences in teachers' skills in the subject.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the objectives in their education plans, and very good in Years 1 and 2. They are very well supported by trained learning support assistants, who work closely with teachers to ensure that pupils' needs are met. A strong feature of their support is the on-going assessment of their progress that is carefully recorded and subsequently used. Those few pupils from minority ethnic groups and whose English is not their first language are fully integrated into lessons and school life and achieve as well as their peers. The more able gifted and talented pupils achieve very well; there are opportunities for them to excel through music tuition and in sports and the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 in science is very high.
8. The good achievements, and in some subjects, very good, are due to close teamwork and support throughout the staff. There have been improvements in the school's management, especially in the use of assessment to analyse pupils' performance and the systematic monitoring and support of teaching by the senior management team. The headteacher's very good leadership and clear direction are a strong driving force behind these developments.

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

Pupils' attitudes to work are very good throughout the school. Behaviour is good, and very good in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Their personal development including spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development is very good. Pupils enjoy school; their attendance is good and punctuality, very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships within the school community are very good and pupils get on well with each other and adults in the school.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work.
- A few parents do not fully understand the procedures to report first day absences.
- Multi-cultural awareness is less well developed.

### Commentary

9. The school is very successful in promoting good behaviour. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults in the school are very good. This is evident from their working together very well and listening well to others. Because of these very strong relationships and the high expectancies of the school, behaviour is always at least good. It is very good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' behaviour is good in most lessons; very occasionally pupils lose concentration where teaching methods do not engage them enough in learning. Behaviour at playtimes is well supervised and is very good. There is little bullying or harassment, none was seen during the inspection, and the school takes such incidents very seriously. There is a good range of games equipment provided for pupils, which they use very well.
10. Pupils' attitudes to work are very good. They enjoy school and delight in sharing their achievements with others. The school, recognising this fact, has started an 'achievement newsletter'. Monday assembly focuses on a celebration of pupils' achievements to which parents are invited and so share in the celebrations.
11. Older pupils working with others take their responsibilities very seriously, such as the 'Angels', who help younger pupils to meet friends and help sort out any minor problems. Throughout the school, pupils accept monitor jobs very willingly.
12. The school promotes pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Assemblies provide good opportunity to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and reflection. Pupils are able to affix prayers to the wall in the prayer area, which shows a high regard for the needs, values and beliefs of others. Pupils offer prayers before and after meals as thankfulness for their well-being. Children's personal, social and emotional development in Reception is good and effective provision is made for them by the teacher and her assistant who work very closely to ensure that routines and expectations are consistently applied.
13. Pupils respond very well to the school's very strong moral code, they are very aware of the difference between right and wrong and contribute to their own school and class rules of conduct. This is evident in the lack of graffiti or damage to school property and the sensible way that pupils behave about the school. The school teaches well about the richness of pupils' own and other cultures through religious education and in other curriculum areas. However, there are few visits to other places of worship or displays around the school to show pupils how people of different ethnic background live in Britain and the wider world.
14. The school promotes attendance well, attendance levels being above the national average. Nevertheless, some parents are not fully aware of the procedure to advise the school on first day absence. Pupils arrive at school very punctually and lessons start on time.

## **Attendance**

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.3
National data	5.8	National data	0.7

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 is good. Teaching and learning are good, and very good in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum is also good; it is much enriched through extra-curricular activities, residential and other visits and events. Pupils are well cared for and very good levels of guidance are given, based on the school's monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils' views are sought and they have many opportunities to influence school life. Partnerships with parents and the community are good, and with other schools, very good.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good and a considerable amount, very good. They are very good in Years 1 and 2 and mainly good in Reception and in Years 3 to 6. The use of assessment overall is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching of English and mathematics are good and there are some very strong features to them in Years 1 and 2; in science teaching is very good throughout the school.
- Most lessons are planned well for the range of pupils' abilities; learning support assistants work closely with teachers to provide very effective support in class.
- Lessons are stimulating and challenging and pupils show interest and enthusiasm.
- Teachers' good subject expertise is evident in the clarity of their explanations and their probing questions that help pupils acquire new knowledge and skills.
- Assessment is used very well in literacy, numeracy and science, but assessment in other subjects, including ICT, is not so well developed.

### **Commentary**

15. In the week of the inspection there were two temporary teachers working in school in Years 3 to 6 because of very recent serious illness involving one teacher and also a maternity leave. Judgements are based on observations of lessons and an analysis of pupils' past work. Teaching and learning are good in Reception and in Years 3 to 6; some is very good. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is more consistently very good. Mathematics and science teaching in particular, are strengths of the school. Teaching in English is good; reading is taught very well and the use of phonics amongst younger pupils is very effective. Regular monitoring and support of teaching by senior managers and curriculum co-ordinators is helping raise teaching quality. Almost all parents who responded to the consultation prior to the inspection thought the teaching to be good and that their children are expected to work hard. Pupils also think they work hard.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor

1	8	15	4	1	0	0
---	---	----	---	---	---	---

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

16. Most lessons are planned well around clear objectives and structured to engage pupils in a variety of activities. A good balance is maintained between whole class teaching, group and individual work and resources are used very effectively, especially in mathematics and science, to provide pupils with first-hand experiences on which to build their understanding of new concepts. Most lessons are challenging, stimulating and lively so that pupils show interest and enthusiasm for learning as a result. This was demonstrated very effectively in an excellent science lesson in which pupils in Year 2 explored electrical circuits. They speculated about the current flowed in a circuit and used new terms very well in a very lively discussion with their teacher. Their subsequent explorations with buzzers, motors and bulbs were both exciting and very productive as their responses to questions at the end clearly showed. However, in the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, the objectives for the lesson were too vague to guide the focus of the work, teaching methods were not effective in engaging pupils; they lost interest and their behaviour deteriorated as a result.
17. Relationships are very good in most classes so that pupils are eager participants in lessons and behave well. The climate that teachers and other adults set in classrooms is very encouraging; praise and rewards are used very well to recognise achievement. Class discussions are often well led and effective, although the lack of computer projectors and white boards in classrooms limits teachers' ability to illustrate key points. Teachers show good subject knowledge which is evident in the clarity of their explanations and their challenging questions during whole class discussions. Pupils are encouraged to speculate and to explain the underlying reasoning for their answers, often by presenting their ideas to the class. Consequently, pupils acquire new ideas, principles and technical vocabulary quickly. Such approaches also help develop their speaking and listening skills, confidence and self-esteem. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated into lessons and work well alongside their peers. Homework is used well to extend the learning from lessons, although some parents are unsure of what is expected because the methods of communicating homework to them are not always effective.
18. The teaching of children in Reception Year is good overall. Significant strengths include the use of effective teaching methods incorporating games and practical activities. Open-ended questioning is used very effectively to encourage children to explain their thoughts. The teachers' very effective management skills and enthusiasm for learning mean that children behave very well, are very keen to learn and co-operate effectively. The teaching assistant is used very effectively to teach and assess pupils in the Reception class.
19. There is close teamwork between teachers, learning support assistants and adult helpers. Most lessons are planned effectively to meet the range of needs amongst pupils, especially in literacy, numeracy and science lessons. Activities adapted for three or four levels of demand are usual in these lessons. Learning support assistants lead the teaching of specific groups very well, guided by clear briefings from teachers and their own carefully recorded on-going assessments of individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good and sometimes very good progress as a result. The more able, gifted and talented pupils find the high level of challenge in some subjects very stimulating, particularly in science where they demonstrate some high level scientific enquiry skills. However, pupils tend to do very similar tasks when working in the ICT suite; the more competent pupils tend to work much more quickly and could be challenged to move on to more demanding work.
20. Assessment arrangements are good overall and are much improved since the last inspection when they were a key weakness. They are very well developed in literacy, numeracy and science. Pupils have short term curriculum goals for both literacy and numeracy that are prominently displayed and referred to in class. In addition there are targets for the end of each year against which pupils' progress is monitored and reviewed. However, assessments in other subjects are not as well developed; a framework for assessing pupils' ICT skills is at an

early stage of being implemented. Pupils' work and responses to questions in standard tests are analysed and the outcomes shared with teachers to guide their subsequent work. Consequently, teachers and senior managers are very well aware of those pupils requiring additional support and help. Learning support assistants contribute further knowledge through their on-going records of targeted pupils' progress in class. Marking is regular and provides correction but there is less guidance given on ways of improving through marking. Pupils' skills in evaluating their own progress towards the curriculum targets they have been given could also be improved further.

## **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is good. The school has a broad and balanced curriculum that enables all pupils to achieve well. There is very good curriculum enrichment through visits, school events and extra-curricular tuition and clubs. The staffing, accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are strengths in curricular planning for English, mathematics and science.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities, themed weeks and visits enriches the curriculum and pupils' experiences very effectively.
- There is very good provision for personal, social and health education.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs in literacy and mathematics is very good.
- Teachers and support staff plan very well together to support pupils' learning.
- Some aspects of ICT are not developed enough because of a lack of resources and training.

## **Commentary**

21. Since the last inspection, curriculum planning has been improved by the adoption of nationally recommended plans and it now promotes achievement well. The good provision in English, and very good for mathematics and science, means that these core subjects are taught effectively. Pupils of all abilities and ethnic groups achieve well. Children in the reception class have a rich curriculum. Activities are planned which enable children to learn through focused play and practical activity. Careful planning means that all areas of learning are well covered throughout the week and term. Although the curriculum and resources for ICT have improved since the last inspection, its use across the curriculum in Years 3 to 6 to help raise standards has not yet developed enough in some subjects, for example, in control technology and the use of sensors to gather data in science. Some foundation subjects such as geography, art and music, although satisfactory, are not as well developed as English, mathematics and science because of the increased attention the school has given to these core areas in recent years. Plans are in place to focus more on foundation subjects this year to help extend creativity further. The very good curriculum for personal, social and health education includes opportunities for pupils to discuss personal and emotional issues in circle discussions and extensive promotion of healthy lifestyles through the science curriculum.
22. The pupils' experience of learning is enriched through a very good range of special events, including theme weeks for a range of subjects, visitors and performances at school, a wide range of visits and a field trip. The range of extra-curricular activities contributes very well to promoting pupils' achievement, particularly those of gifted and talented pupils. It includes a very good variety of instrumental tuition, arts, crafts and sports clubs, as well as homework and computer clubs, which are well run and attract enthusiastic participation from the pupils who take part in them. The school has a highly successful record in inter-school competitive sports in its area.
23. The previously unsatisfactory curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is much improved and is now good. Pupils who need support are identified at an early stage, and good assessments of their needs are made, drawing where necessary on expert assistance from outside agencies, which is particularly strong for pupils with speech and language

- difficulties. Individual plans set clear targets and give detailed objectives and teaching strategies. Teachers and support staff work very well together in planning for lessons, particularly in English, mathematics and science. There is scope for giving more guidance to teachers on how best to support the pupils with the highest levels of special needs in some other subjects, and on how to use ICT effectively to support them in doing so.
24. Since the last inspection, accommodation and resources have improved and are now good. There is a good breadth of expertise amongst the staff. Support staff are well trained and work very effectively in classrooms. Both accommodation and most resources for the Reception classes are now good, with a secure outdoor learning and play area and plans to add a covered section to enable outdoor learning to be organised in all weathers. The resources for ICT have been much improved to include enough computers and networked internet access for all pupils, although the quality of illustration and discussion in classrooms is constrained by a lack of computer projectors and white boards.

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

The school provides a good standard of care and looks after all of its pupils well. Pupils' personal development is very well monitored and supported by staff. Pupils are much involved in school life; their views are well expressed and acted upon.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has a high regard for pupils' health and safety.
- Pupils' personal care is very well monitored and supported.
- Pupils' views are well expressed in class and through school councils.

### **Commentary**

25. The school has good procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. The site and equipment are checked regularly and any concerns dealt with well. All staff have had training in first aid procedures, minor injuries are carefully recorded and parents are advised in writing of such incidents. The daily maintenance of the property is to a high standard, such as the attractive garden area and flower display which have been recognised through an award, pupils learn to respect the property and keep it tidy.
26. Child protection procedures are very well understood. A senior member of staff discharges these duties, being well trained and aware of these responsibilities. The school maintains good contact with an appropriate range of support authorities. Attendance is well monitored but not all parents fully understand that they should advise the school of first day absence, some sending notes upon return. The very strong relationships and high expectancies of behaviour mean pupils feel happy. During the inspection week, many pupils said that they did have an adult to whom they could turn if they were worried. Children in Reception Year are well cared for emotionally and academically.
27. Pupils' views are very welcome at the school. There is a system of class councils and class representatives which form the school council. They are very well supported and feel confident to express views, knowing well that the school welcomes their views and acts upon them. This gives confidence and strengthens the very good relationships which exist between pupils and staff. Playground 'Angels' help pupils feel well settled, especially the younger children. This is a very good way of allowing older children to help in the daily life of the school.
28. The good care described in the last report has been well maintained, this is always of high priority evident in the daily meeting between the head teacher and senior lunchtime supervisor, so that problems can be easily and quickly dealt with and supported. Teachers monitor the

reaction of pupils in lessons, including personal and social education classes, and so can deal with concerns as they arise. Targets are set for all pupils in key subjects. Their progress in English, mathematics and science is closely assessed and reviewed and action taken where necessary to provide extra support, for example, through booster classes. The school shares targets with parents on a regular basis.

29. Very good arrangements are established to welcome and assimilate children into the school. The procedures to help the youngest children settle easily into school life are very good; parents are very pleased that their children look forward to school. Older pupils have a very good introduction to secondary education because there is a well-established programme to give them a thorough insight into the curriculum, staff and pupils.

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

The school has a good partnership with parents and keeps them well informed about school life. There are good links with the community and very good links with other schools, especially in the Catholic Federation of Schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good links with parents and the local community, both of which contribute very well to pupils' learning.
- A minority of parents would like better communication and more consultation about school life.
- There are very good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to, and very good links with, other local schools especially other Catholic schools.

### **Commentary**

30. Links with parents are good. A large number of parents regularly help in school, such as in reading or swimming lessons. The school provides good information for parents through letters and newsletters, including a good indication of termly targets. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality. Occasions for parents to discuss their children's progress are very well attended and involve almost all parents. Parents are very supportive of the school and they are generally very happy with the school's work in key areas; for example in their children's liking for school and in helping them to become mature and make good progress. Most parents are very keen to help their children at home. Homework is regularly set, although expectancies of homework are not so well understood by all parents. A minority would like communication and consultation between home and school improved. The school has recognised this and in consequence, the governors have introduced a 'Parents Forum' where representatives of parents for each class draw attention to and discuss any concerns raised. The school values the partnership with parents and has offered questionnaires so that parents' views can be understood and acted on. The headteacher also offers an 'open door' policy for parents. Open afternoons are also provided to allow parents to review their children's work.
31. There are very good links with other schools to support the curriculum and for staff training and professional development, especially in the Catholic Federation of Schools. For example, the partnership with a local special school involves collaboration in classes, concerts and plays. There have also been curricular opportunities such as competitions involving other local schools, especially in sports, arts and science. These very strong links with other schools contribute very well to pupils' learning and personal development. The transfer to secondary education is effective and smooth, allowing pupils to settle very well. The Parents Association has provided generous support to the school and offers a programme of social and fund-raising events.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and direction for the school. Consequently, staff throughout the school promote the school's aims and priorities through effective teamwork and the school is improving. The leadership of other key staff is good. The school's management and its governance are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff work closely towards common aims and priorities as a result of the headteacher's clear vision and focus on raising standards.
- The school's self-review and improvement strategies are well developed and involve all staff; consequently, standards have improved in key areas.
- Assessment is used very effectively to monitor the achievements of groups and individual pupils and to act on the issues identified.
- Governors are very well organised, understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and work well with the headteacher to guide its development.

### **Commentary**

32. The headteacher, appointed three and a half years ago, has united the staff to work more closely as a team focused on raising standards, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. To achieve this, she has worked hard to make the school's management more systematic and inclusive of all staff, encouraging them to take more responsibility and to be innovative. The senior management team now works closely as a team (a weakness at the time of the last inspection) and takes the lead in analysing the school's performance, particularly patterns in pupils' achievements and monitoring and developing teaching quality. Arrangements for the management of individual staff's performance include all support staff and are linked closely to the school's wider priorities; they contribute much to its success. Training and professional development is effective in improving staff expertise, for example, in their ICT skills to enable them to use the school's new ICT suite effectively.
33. Strategic planning is well developed and the school's improvement plan is founded on a sound review of the school's effectiveness. Systems for tracking pupils' progress in particular are much improved since the last inspection. They are used very well to analyse the performance of different groups and to ensure no pupil falls behind, especially in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science. Subject co-ordinators now play a more prominent role in monitoring their subjects and leading developments in them because the school has established a three year development cycle that ensures that every subject is a focus at an appropriate time within it. This systematic approach is making monitoring and improving the school's performance central to its practice at every level. The cycle is still being implemented; the focus in recent years has been mainly in core subjects but an emphasis on the foundation subjects and encouraging more creativity is planned for this year. Most subjects are well led, especially those of science and mathematics where leadership is very good. A strong feature is the analysis of pupils' responses to questions in standard tests that alerts teachers to areas that need more emphasis in the curriculum. Overall these developments are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements throughout the school, sustaining high standards by Year 6, and improving standards at a good rate by Year 2. The headteacher's very good leadership has been a key factor in bringing about these improvements.
34. The governing body is very experienced and well organised through its committee structure. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are strongly committed to the school's success. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and are involved in shaping its direction with the headteacher. For example, they are currently working to

introduce nursery provision to the school and have instigated a new Parents' Forum to help improve the school's communications with them, a weakness they identified last year. Governors regularly visit the school to observe its work and to meet with subject leaders of those subjects they are linked with. They also receive reports from key staff, the headteacher and local education authority. Their relationship with staff and the headteacher is very good. The governors' monitoring role is currently being incorporated into the school's three year review cycle so that they can monitor work in its priorities more closely.

## **Financial information**

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	503,674	Balance from previous year	27,470
Total expenditure	489,932	Balance carried forward to the next	41,212
Expenditure per pupil	2,499		

35. The finance committee monitors the school's spending closely and they plan strategically, especially at a time of falling numbers of pupils in the town and where a review of surplus places is being undertaken. The larger than typical carry-forward in the school's budget last year is planned to enable it to maintain single age classes this year while the review is completed. The school seeks good value in its spending and challenges its work and the service it provides to the community. It rigorously compares its performance with national benchmarks and acts on the patterns identified. Staff are fully consulted but the school is aware that more work needs to be done to consult and act on parents' views. Spending per pupil is low; taking account of the school's good quality of education and pupils' good achievements, it provides very good value for money.

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

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

Provision in almost all areas of learning for children who are in their first year of schooling is good. Overall, children enter the school with average levels of knowledge in all areas of learning. Arrangements for children starting school are very good. For instance, staff meet parents several times before their children start school and discuss children in detailed interviews with them. Children are carefully assessed when they start school and the teacher and the teaching assistant regularly note their achievements. Good record sheets assess children's progress throughout their first year of schooling. Children achieve well in most areas of learning because of good teaching. By the time they start Year 1, standards exceed expectations in most areas of learning. Since the last inspection there have been satisfactory improvements in the provision for children in their first year of school. Provision in Reception is led and managed well and there is very strong teamwork between the teacher and her support assistant. The curriculum has been enhanced through a more imaginative use of resources which means that children have more extensive opportunities to explore areas of learning through play indoors. However, resources for creative play outside are underdeveloped.

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

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

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

- The teacher has high expectations of children and so they have very positive attitudes to learning.
- The teacher and teaching assistant quickly establish very supportive relationships with children.

#### **Commentary**

36. Children's standards in personal, social and emotional development are likely to be above national expectations by the end of Reception. Teaching, learning and children's achievement are good in this area. The children speak fairly confidently to adults and other children. In the school, children mix well with all pupils from Years 1 to 6. The teacher and teaching assistant work very effectively to develop positive relationships with children so that they are confident to discuss their learning and any problems they have. Teachers' high expectations of children help ensure that they learn how to control their emotions. The majority of children show a very good level of interest in their learning. For instance, children are particularly keen to answer the teacher's questions about the story of the Gingerbread Man. Children settle quickly to their tasks and concentrate well for short periods of time. Most children behave well because of the teachers' high standards of discipline and good management skills.

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

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

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

- Basic skills of speaking and listening are taught effectively.
- Resources are used effectively to develop pupils' writing skills.
- Opportunities are missed to extend children's creative development using language.

### **Commentary**

37. Standards in language, literacy and communication are likely to be above expectations by the end of Reception. Children achieve well in acquiring these skills as a result of teaching and learning that are good overall. Significant strengths of teaching include the wide range of opportunities for children to talk purposefully to adults and to each other. Effective methods are used when the teacher asks children to remember what happens in a story and then discuss it. The teacher captures children's interest when she uses a 'Big Book' well so that they concentrate on learning to read simple words. The teacher uses effective methods when she points to key words in the book. Good planning by teachers ensures that children are taught effectively to recognise the letters and sounds of the alphabet. Basic skills are taught well when children learn to write on wipeable white boards. However, the teacher does not often discuss extension activities with children which would enhance their creative development and communication skills together.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teacher uses questions very well.
- Practical methods are used effectively to develop children's understanding.
- The teaching assistant uses time and resources very well.
- ICT is rarely used to support children's learning.

### **Commentary**

38. Standards of mathematical development are likely to be above expectations. Children achieve very well in mathematics. This is because of very effective teaching and learning overall. The teacher plans plenty of practical activities to promote children's mathematical development. For instance, children learn to find totals when they play with coloured skittles. Very good methods are used when the teacher asks open-ended questions. For instance, she asks "How did you work out that there were five skittles?" so that children learn to talk about their thinking effectively. Many opportunities are taken by the teacher and the teaching assistant to reinforce children's counting skills and to check their mathematical understanding through well-directed questions. Time and resources are used effectively when children learn to compare the number of skittles knocked down. Most children count accurately to five and more able children count ten pencils well. However, after children have completed a task, teachers and the teaching assistant rarely explain to children what they have done well to help guide their learning. ICT is occasionally used to develop children's mathematical skills but resources are rather limited.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective use of resources brings learning to life.
- The teacher's good levels of expertise mean that children learn well about materials.
- ICT resources are rather basic.

### **Commentary**

39. Standards are likely to be above national expectations in this area of learning because of good teaching. Overall children achieve well. They learn about the properties of materials such as sand and paint by handling and working with them regularly. Children learn to predict before they carry out investigations as a result of good use of open-ended questions by the teacher. Basic skills are developed well when pupils learn to observe what happens to objects placed in water. Good expectations by the teacher allow children to learn how to solve challenges in different ways. Religious education is taught effectively through lessons and in assemblies. Most children learn about the life of Jesus effectively. The teacher's organisation means that children learn to use the computer satisfactorily and develop their understanding of how to control the mouse. However, computer programmes are rather limited and the computer is not very reliable.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources are used well to develop children's body control.
- The teacher's oral comments rarely tell children what they have done well.

### **Commentary**

40. Most children develop physical body control and are likely to attain standards above those expected for their age due to good teaching. Overall, children achieve well in their learning. Children enjoy regular opportunities to be active in physical education lessons in the school hall and playground. Resources are used effectively when children learn to control their bodies and move very quietly around the hall. The teacher's good expertise is evident in the way she helps children learn to control their movements. This was seen when children learned to sing songs and to stamp their feet on the spot. Although the teacher uses positive comments to encourage children to join in she does not often tell them what they achieved effectively in the lesson.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of activities is planned in the classroom.
- Outside play resources are rather limited.

### **Commentary**

41. Children's creative development is in line with national expectations. The majority of children are likely to meet nationally expected levels for the end of Reception as a result of satisfactory teaching. Overall, children achieve satisfactorily. Children paint and draw confidently due to the teacher's good organisation skills. Effective use of the teacher's knowledge and understanding ensures that children learn to use observation when they paint self-portraits. Good methods are used when children learn to clap slowly and quickly. Basic skills are developed effectively when children learn to count and clap in time. Inside the classroom the teacher ensures that a good range of activities are planned to develop children's creative development but the outside area offers rather limited opportunities for children to play creatively.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen since the last inspection, particularly in Year 2.
- The teaching of reading skills is very good.
- The school makes very good use of test results to improve planning and teaching.
- Not enough is done to get pupils to check and correct their writing.
- Too little use is made of ICT in English lessons, particularly to help the lowest achieving pupils make progress in reading and writing.

#### Commentary

42. Standards at the end of Year 2 have risen substantially in both reading and writing since the last inspection because of much improved planning based on very good knowledge of pupils' needs. They were well above the national average in 2004. Standards are now high in reading, well above average in speaking and listening, and above in writing. Standards of handwriting and presentation are good in all years. Standards in test results at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated because of variations in groups of pupils each year; they were above the national average in 2004 and well above schools whose pupils had similar prior attainment in Year 2. Standards seen in the current Year 6 are also above the national average.
43. All pupils achieve at least well overall at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The highest achieving pupils make very good progress in reading, speaking and listening throughout the school. Pupils at the end of Year 2 have very good knowledge of letter-sound relationships. By the end of Year 6 they show good reading comprehension in discussion with their teachers. They know a good range of children's authors and discuss them knowledgeably; for example, they explain why they prefer the Harry Potter books to the film versions. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress when they are directly supported in lessons by specialists. Pupils' progress in writing across the school, while good, is not as rapid as in other English skills, because there is less emphasis placed in many lessons on writing than on reading. Pupils are offered too few opportunities to develop extended writing in a wide range of styles and do not systematically check and correct their writing.
44. Teaching and learning are good overall. The school has made very good analysis and use of test results in each year to identify year groups' and individuals' needs, so that lesson planning helps them make good progress. Teachers plan very well in Years 1 and 2 to develop pupils' handwriting skills and their knowledge of letters and sounds. They teach reading and the understanding of books very well in all years through shared reading of books, which is linked effectively to group and individual tasks. Year 2 pupils enjoyed discussing Judith Kerr's "Mog and the Vee Ee Tee" and signalling by clapping when they recognised the "ed" word endings that the lesson focused on. A group of Year 6 pupils showed very good speaking and listening skills when they discussed the role of futuristic technologies in a science fiction book they were reading, confidently explaining the use of words like "hologram" by drawing on examples from films they had seen.
45. Teachers guide pupils well in how to structure extended writing, for example in writing accounts of Darwin's development as a scientist. They encourage pupils to read widely, suggesting good writers they could try. However, many tasks in lessons and homework are based on short writing exercises, with too few opportunities, particularly for the highest achievers, to develop more extended writing, such as "chapter" story writing, biographies or

personal reference books. Too little emphasis is given to teaching pupils to review, check and correct their work systematically before they hand it in. Teachers rarely use ICT in classroom English lessons although the ICT suite is used more extensively. Most tasks for pupils with special educational needs are very well planned and taught by teachers and support staff, but they do not make enough use of the good ICT tools in the school, such as “talking” word banks and digital cameras, to help these pupils develop greater independence in producing high-quality writing. Teachers ensure that pupils complete written tasks and regularly mark them. They sometimes give pupils feedback which helps them improve their writing, but more is needed, particularly for pupils with average or low achievement. For example, teachers set pupils individual targets such as “improve the use of detail in writing”; but clear guidance on how to do this is sometimes lacking. A Year 2 teacher’s comments provide a good example when she wrote very good guidance on how to build up a sequence of sentences describing different details.

46. There has been good curriculum leadership and management since the last inspection, particularly in developing the use of assessment to track pupils’ progress, and in identifying from test results which skills need most development. Standards have risen at a rate above the national trend in Years 1 and 2 and good achievement has been maintained in later years.

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

47. Teachers develop pupils’ literacy skills well in other curriculum subjects. Good examples were seen during the inspection in science, ICT, history and geography work. In a Year 4 ICT lesson, pupils made good progress in learning typical journalistic styles and layout through well planned work on creating a desktop-published “ancient Roman newspaper” based on their history studies of Boudicca’s rebellion. Scrutiny of pupils’ work and discussions with pupils showed they achieve well in learning good approaches to researching, summarising and presenting information from books studied in a range of subjects. They know the library non-fiction classification system well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High standards have been maintained for several years in tests and throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve very well.
- Teachers’ marking is rather limited.
- The co-ordination of mathematics is very good.
- ICT is not often used to develop pupils’ understanding of mathematics.

### **Commentary**

48. The standards attained in the 2004 national tests in Year 2 were very high. In Year 6 standards were above average when compared to all schools and were well above average compared to schools whose pupils attained similarly in Year 2. Over half the Year 2 and one third of Year 6 pupils attained above the nationally expected levels. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when far fewer pupils reached these higher levels.
49. The pupils currently in Years 2 are working at standards which are well above those expected for their age. As pupils’ mathematical skills and understanding on entry to the school are average, this represents a very good rate of progress. The very good teaching pupils receive in Years 1 and 2 is a major factor in helping pupils achieve very well. For instance, the Year 2 teacher uses the end of the lesson very effectively when she asks questions which carefully assess pupils’ understanding of shapes. Early in the academic year pupils in Year 2 can

- name many three-dimensional shapes and group them using complex properties very well. All pupils including those with special educational needs are very well supported and included very effectively in sessions by their teacher and teaching assistants.
50. Standards in the current Year 6 are also well above average and pupils achieve very well. A significant strength of Year 6 pupils' knowledge is in their understanding of how to use fractions. For example, at the beginning of the academic year most pupils are able to add various types of fractions accurately by finding a common denominator. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of effective support.
51. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall; some teaching is very good, especially in Years 1 and 2. Teachers manage their classes well and create a good working atmosphere in which pupils can learn effectively. Pupils have very positive attitudes to work and behave well because lessons are stimulating and interesting. Relationships are particularly strong and a great deal of mutual respect is evident in most classes. Significant strengths of teaching include the effective methods teachers use to explain knowledge to pupils. For example, particularly good teaching methods were used when Year 2 pupils learnt the names of three-dimensional shapes by finding the shapes and matching them to name cards. Very good open-ended questioning by teachers, such as "How do you know it's a cylinder?" helps pupils learn to explain their thinking carefully. Teachers' high expectations challenge pupils effectively. This was seen in a very good Year 4 lesson where the teacher asked pupils to identify different features when pyramids were compared with prisms. Teachers do not often explain to pupils in their marking what they have done well or say how they could improve it specifically. Pupils' short-term targets are displayed and are known to pupils, but they could be used better. They need more guidance on how to achieve some of them and to review their own progress.
52. The co-ordination of mathematics is very good and has brought about good improvement since the last inspection. There is a strong focus on raising standards. The provision is carefully monitored to identify areas of strength or weakness; for example, pupils' responses to questions in standard tests are analysed and lessons learned to guide further improvements. Problem solving was identified a few years ago as an area for development; now, this is a considerable strength of pupils' knowledge which has enabled them to do so well in national tests. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is also very well tracked and monitored.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Pupils' skills in mathematics are used satisfactorily in other subjects. When such links are made they prove useful, making learning more relevant and helping pupils reinforce their skills and understanding in mathematics. Pupils measure in science and design and technology lessons and sometimes draw tables and graphs of their findings. For example, Year 4 pupils, learning about the skeleton and movement in science, measured features of their bodies such as head circumference and recorded their results in a chart to compare them. Although Year 6 pupils have used spreadsheets satisfactorily to sum and compare spending patterns, there are missed opportunities to use ICT to support pupils' learning, for example when presenting data graphically in the most appropriate way.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well in their knowledge and understanding of key concepts and in their scientific enquiry skills.
- Class discussions are very effective; scientific vocabulary is given due emphasis and questioning is used very well to encourage pupils to think and explain.

- Resources are chosen carefully to enable pupils to explore and build new ideas through first-hand experience and they record their findings carefully.

- ICT is not used enough in science to help raise standards.
- The subject is very well led and managed; teaching is monitored and assessment used very well to help guide the focus of further improvements.

### **Commentary**

54. Standards in Year 6 in 2004 were in the top five per cent of schools nationally and also in relation to schools whose pupils attained similarly in Year 2. These results represent a further improvement on the already well above average standards of recent years. Inspection findings show that the pattern of high standards is being sustained. Pupils attain well above average standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 and are achieving very well, especially the more able, gifted and talented pupils who excel in the challenging climate in lessons, particularly in Years 2 and 6. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs also make very good progress, partly due to the very good support they receive from the very well briefed and effective support assistants in classrooms.
55. There are several reasons for the high standards achieved. The curriculum is very well planned and structured, including the teaching of scientific enquiry skills, so that pupils build systematically on their knowledge and skills as they move through the school. Lessons are very challenging and pupils respond very well to the open-ended tasks they are provided with to extend their understanding. This was very evident in an excellent lesson about electricity in Year 2. The teacher highlighted and modelled the use of new vocabulary very precisely during a whole class discussion about features of electrical circuits. Through excellent questioning, pupils speculated about the flow of electricity and what happens when there is a break in the circuit. They were delighted to make lights, buzzers and motors work in their own circuits and recorded how the direction of motion changed when they reversed the connections. Some noticed that the motor got hot; others noted that the buzzer had to be connected the correct way around in order to make it work. By the end of the sequence, their learning and achievements were excellent. Teachers build on this very secure foundation in later years through a very good balance of discussion and first-hand experience; for example, pupils in Year 4 made models of an elbow joint when learning about how muscles cause movement at joints in the body.
56. By Year 6, pupils acquire a very good knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles. Teachers provide pupils with very useful prompts to guide their decision making when planning investigations and to help ensure their report writing is focused and structured. Consequently, all pupils are skilled at planning and carrying out a fair test when experimenting. Teachers expect pupils to repeat and check the quality of their observations and measurements and to consider ways in which their working methods can be improved. A particularly strong feature is the way in which many more able pupils in Year 6 are thinking about how reliable their evidence is when drawing conclusions from it. This was evident when pupils tested various materials for properties such as electrical conductivity.
57. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are stimulating and lively and resources chosen carefully to help pupils learn. Year 1 pupils were given a carefully selected range of fruits and vegetables (some of which they had not seen before) to consider when learning about healthy eating. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of the subject, evident in the quality of class discussions and the challenge in their questioning of pupils. This helps pupils acquire very good scientific enquiry skills and to use scientific notation and vocabulary precisely. The structured approach, which teachers insist on when pupils record results and write about their findings, contributes much to their achievement. However, teachers are not using ICT effectively to help raise standards. Opportunities are missed to use spreadsheets to process and display data graphically; neither are pupils using sensors and data-loggers to gather and display variables such as light, temperature and sound in their investigations. Marking is good; it is regular and teachers provide correction but there is less guidance given on ways of improving.

58. The subject has been very well led over several years and consequently pupils' achievements have risen further since the last inspection in both Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching is monitored and training provided. Good use is made of the wider community to enliven the subject, for example, through visits to a science exploratory in Bristol and involvement in science fairs with other schools. Pupils' progress is assessed through the use of tests and other assessments after each major unit of work. The results are collated and reviewed by the subject leader. A strong feature of the use of assessment is the analysis of pupils' responses to questions in standard tests that enables the co-ordinator to feedback to teachers key areas on which to focus more attention.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in their basic skills.
- By Year 6 pupils have good skills in researching and communicating information but they are weaker in handling data through databases and spreadsheets.
- The new ICT suite is being used well to teach basic skills; teachers demonstrate new skills and techniques effectively and provide good support as pupils work.
- ICT is not used enough within some subjects to help raise standards, partly because of a lack of the appropriate resources.
- The subject has been well led and managed. This, combined with the new ICT suite, has resulted in good progress in pupils' standards since the last inspection.

### Commentary

59. Standards in Year 2 are above expected levels. By Year 6 standards overall are in line with those expected. Good progress has been made since the last inspection when the subject was a key weakness. A new ICT suite, installed about a year ago, and training for staff in its use, are having a positive impact on pupils' acquisition of basic skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in their basic skills and their application within subjects. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievements overall are satisfactory, but some aspects of ICT are not developed enough. By Year 6, pupils acquire good skills in researching and communicating information, for example, by combining text with images and sound to create effective presentations that take due account of their intended audience. However, pupils' skills in processing and presenting numerical data, for example, through the use of databases and spreadsheets, are not as strong. The uses of ICT in control technology and to gather data from sensors in science investigations in Years 5 and 6 are not developed because the school lacks sufficient resources for this aspect of pupils' learning.
60. By Year 2, pupils are skilled in creating and saving files on the school's network and learn to draft and edit their writing in a range of contexts - for example, when writing about the causes of the Great Fire of London and in writing poems. They use a graphics programme to create striking pictures of the Great Fire. They write in different styles, such as providing instructions in which each key point is given due emphasis. These skills are developed further in later years as pupils learn to adjust font and style and to include pictures and other graphics to enhance the presentation of their work. Year 4 pupils researched information about the Romans in Britain and wrote about them in the style of a newspaper report. Many of these are of a good standard and include pictures and eye-catching headlines. By Year 6, pupils show good standards when creating slide presentations to illustrate their talks, for example, about the arguments surrounding smoking in public places. These skills develop well because teachers are confident in these aspects of ICT and link the teaching of new skills to their current work, especially in subjects such as history and literacy. However, there is less emphasis given to how ICT can be used to help process and present data and to derive

information from it in databases and spreadsheets and consequently, pupils' standards are not as good in this aspect. For example, pupils seldom model the effect of changing values in data or use formulae to derive further information.

61. Teaching and learning seen in the ICT suite are mainly good. Most teachers have good skills and this is apparent in the quality of their demonstration using the inter-active white board and projector facilities there. Teachers achieve a very good balance between instruction and questioning in class demonstrations that encourages pupils to suggest next steps in a new skill or task. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and work effectively on shared tasks. There is a wide range of ability in some classes reflecting those who have access to computers at home and those who do not; yet pupils generally do similar tasks. The effect is that some work at a much faster pace. Others receive good support from their teachers and support assistants to ensure they are able to progress. Those with special educational needs and the less able make good progress as a result.
62. The subject has been effectively led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who understands the subject's current strengths and weaknesses well. Teaching is monitored and support given where necessary. Training has been provided for all staff to ensure that the new ICT suite is used effectively and new resources brought in to develop the use of ICT further within subjects. However, a framework for assessing pupils' skills and competence is only now being introduced to help teachers match tasks more closely to and build on pupils' skills. Pupils' standards have much improved from relatively low levels, especially in the past year, but the school realises there is still much to do to raise standards further.

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

63. The application of ICT is uneven across the curriculum. Pupils research information from the Internet, write in a range of styles, edit their work and use ICT to provide emphasis and impact for their audience in some subjects such as history. They also use graphics programs to create pictures and repeating designs in their art. However, the use of ICT is not extended to some other areas of the curriculum sufficiently, especially in Years 3 to 6 in subjects such as science, design and technology and mathematics. The lack of computer projectors and white boards in classrooms limits the quality and scope of presentation during class discussions.

### **HUMANITIES**

Religious education was not part of this inspection. History and geography were both sampled. One history lesson was observed and a discussion held with the co-ordinator. Pupils' work was reviewed in both subjects and discussions held with them.

64. Work seen in pupils' **geography** books and a discussion with pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6 indicate that standards meet national expectations. An analysis of pupils' books from Years 5 and 6 indicates that teachers' expertise about different environments is good. Pupils in Year 6 make good gains in their learning when they study environments such as the Alps. Effective teaching methods are evident when pupils write down questions they would like to answer to guide their research projects. Resources are used well; for example, when pupils study books as well as use the Internet to research different environments. Literacy skills are also utilised effectively when pupils record facts about wild life. For example, some pupils write detailed bullet points about golden eagles found in the Alps. Good teaching methods used in Year 5 enable pupils to compare and contrast people's actions and their effects on the environment of Stroud. Maps are drawn and used satisfactorily. In Year 3, pupils draw maps of Africa free hand and colour is used effectively to highlight the different countries. Although resources are satisfactory, Year 6 pupils only have rather limited memories of working with scaled maps and using four figure grid references.
65. A scrutiny of previous **history** work and discussion with pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6 shows that standards are above expectations in Year 6. Most pupils achieve well when they learn

about several eras of Britain and the wider world. Year 6 pupils could describe features of life for people during World War II. They have valuable opportunities to understand how people of the past felt when they write about children being evacuated from towns during World War II. Through good use of literacy skills, pupils in Year 5 learned to explain changes to England during the Victorian era. The difficulties for people living in towns and cities during the 1800s were described well. Year 3 pupils had good opportunities to learn about ancient Greece and the Olympics when they studied pictures of pottery from this era. In the single lesson seen, in Year 4, teaching was effective and gave pupils opportunities to use research skills well on the Internet to find out about Romans. The well planned lesson enabled pupils to learn about the diets of Romans living in Britain. Good methods were used when the teacher asked pupils about previous lessons to encourage them to link their knowledge. The subject's co-ordinator has worked effectively to improve the curriculum and resources; good resources are now available to teachers and pupils.

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

Physical education was inspected in full and is reported on below. Music and art and design were both sampled. Examples of pupils' art work from the previous year and in classroom displays were scrutinised, discussions held with pupils and evidence from assemblies, teachers' plans, parts of lessons and extra curricular activities noted. There was insufficient evidence available early in the school year to report on design and technology and it was not inspected.

66. The small amount of work in **art and design** on display in classrooms was of appropriate quality. Some high quality work was seen in the Year 6 and Year 3 classrooms. Of particular note were the mixed media still life images of flowers by Year 6 pupils, who had drawn well on their studies of William Morris in their careful and detailed drawings of plant stems and leaves. The work of Year 3 pupils in drawing imaginatively on wild life photography had produced some splendidly exuberant images of African wild life. There was little evidence of systematic use of sketchbooks to develop pupils' work. There was also evidence of some work of limited quality where teachers lacked expertise in the subject, particularly in how to draw on studies of artists' work to raise pupils' standards and how to ensure that art done as part of wider curriculum themes develops pupils' skills in and understanding of art and design.
67. Evidence seen in a very short observation of a **music** lesson for Year 2 showed pupils progressing well towards learning to sing in parts by taking turns in groups to sing different parts of "London's Burning" and accompany it on tuned and untuned instruments. Pupils in all years participate enthusiastically in singing in assemblies, including a hymn practice assembly where they sang a repertoire of hymns they knew, broadly in time and tune. More opportunities could be created for pupils receiving instrumental tuition to demonstrate and develop their skills in music lessons and assemblies.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good; most teachers have good subject knowledge and demonstrate skills and techniques effectively to enable pupils to acquire and consolidate their skills.
- Partnership with the local secondary school enhances the range and quality of provision.
- The co-ordinator's very good leadership has improved the quality and range of the curriculum.
- Teachers do not record assessments of pupils' standards and progress.

## **Commentary**

68. Standards seen during the inspection are in line with expectations overall at the end of Year 2 and above expected levels by Year 6. Year 6 pupils of both sexes, showed good standards of ball control and passing skills in a football lesson as a result of the teacher's effective demonstration of techniques and his organisation of group activities. Pupils' achievement in most lessons is good, reflecting teachers' good planning, and the range of involvement that many pupils have in extra-curricular and competitive sport organised by the school.
69. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers' planning draws well on nationally recommended curriculum plans. It has been further improved by working with an advanced skills specialist teacher from the local secondary school. Teachers structure lesson time well, giving pupils good guidance through demonstrating and explaining skills and giving them an opportunity to share and learn from each other's work at the end of the lesson. Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to participate and demonstrate. In a Year 2 dance lesson, the class teacher and specialist support assistants helped all pupils, including those with high levels of special educational need, make good progress by joining in and demonstrating dance movements and commenting supportively. The teacher invited highly achieving pupils to comment on the good qualities in their classmates' work and also ensured that the pupils with special needs enjoyed demonstrating their work. While teachers assess and guide pupils' skills and achievements in lessons well through informal comments, they do not record individual standards and achievement. This limits planning to develop individuals' skills and knowledge over time.
70. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has used national planning guidance and led training well to help her colleagues plan good use of the school's large gymnastics equipment and ensure that pupils make good progress in all lessons. She has worked very well with the local secondary school's PE specialists to develop the teaching of football, cricket and athletics, and drawn on national expertise in improving the school's apparatus. She is aware of the need to develop recorded assessments of standards, and is keen to use ICT equipment, such as digital photography to support this. She makes a good contribution to the wide range of extra-curricular sports activities and has ensured that there are also clubs for the youngest children. She has developed the school's annual sports day well to include non-competitive as well as competitive sport, working closely with parents to involve them in planning and supporting it.

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

71. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) was sampled. One lesson was seen and elements of this area observed in assemblies and lessons such as science and physical education.
72. The PSHE programme is taught mainly as an integral part of the curriculum but there are also some dedicated lessons. The school bases its planned curriculum on a published scheme and places a strong emphasis on health education. It won a national Healthy Schools Award in 2003. The very good quality of this aspect is very evident in science where pupils in Year 1 learn about features of a healthy diet and life style. In a good PSHE lesson observed, Year 1 pupils discussed and considered how to keep themselves safe at home by thinking about objects such as scissors and knives that could be dangerous. Year 6 pupils prepared some very effective slide presentations setting out the argument for and against smoking in public places. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take part in sports and the importance of exercise for health is reinforced in physical education lessons.
73. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. The school's Catholic ethos strongly promotes in pupils consideration for others less fortunate than themselves and an awareness of the impact of their own actions on others. Classes devise their rules of behaviour. Pupils pray daily to give thanks for their food

and well-being and pray to help others who are ill or suffering in some way. Weekly assemblies, where pupils celebrate the achievements of individuals with certificates, contribute much to pupils' self-esteem and social development, as do annual school trips and a residential visit for Year 6 pupils.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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