

INSPECTION REPORT

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

Bermondsey, London

LEA area: Southwark

Unique reference number: 100832

Headteacher: Mr M Macauley

Reporting inspector: R S Moseley
16886

Dates of inspection: 26 February – 1 March 2001

Inspection number: 193561

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

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: Nursery, infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: George Row
Bermondsey
London

Postcode: SE16 4UP

Telephone number: 020 7237 4267

Fax number: 020 7237 1618

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Father A McLean

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16886	Richard Moseley	Registered inspector	Science Equal Opportunities English as an additional language	Characteristics of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well the school is led and managed How well the pupils are taught
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
22452	Mary Farman	Team inspector	Mathematics Music The Foundation Stage	How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils are
3588	Kuldip Rai	Team inspector	Geography History Special Educational Needs	
8316	Jo O'Hare	Team Inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Art and Design Physical Education	
8837	Joyce Clarke	Team Inspector	Support for English and mathematics	

The inspection contractor was:

HeadStart and Associates
Higherland Bridge
49 West Street
Gargrave
Skipton
North Yorkshire
BD23 3RJ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Roman Catholic School is bigger than most primary schools, with 332 pupils. There are 159 boys and 173 girls. There are 14 full time and 24 part time children in the nursery. There are 72 pupils with English as an additional language but only a small number need extra support. An average number of pupils, 24 per cent, are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is 55, which is above average. There are four pupils with statements of special educational needs, which is average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Children make good progress and are just below average by the time they enter the main school into the reception class. The inspection included a detailed inspection of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school with many outstanding features. The school has developed a very good and challenging climate for learning within a strong Catholic ethos where the provision for spiritual development is excellent. Pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics and science and standards are above average in these subjects by the time they leave the school. The quality of teaching is good overall with a substantial amount of very good and excellent teaching. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and there are outstanding relationships in the school. The school is very well led and managed and gives excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides a successful and challenging climate for learning and pupils develop a very good attitude to their work. This has resulted in good standards in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school.
- Strong teaching helps pupils to learn effectively.
- The arrangements for the care of its pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is very good. Provision for spiritual and moral development is outstanding. This ensures pupils' behaviour is very good. Their relationships are excellent.
- The curriculum pupils experience is enhanced and enriched by well thought out visits out of school, as well as visitors into school who contribute much to pupils' learning.
- The headteacher, with the support of the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, provides excellent leadership and very clear educational direction for the school.

What could be improved

- Although standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory, the school needs to develop the subject further, particularly in connection with staff expertise and the use of computers to support learning in a range of subjects.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school had its last full inspection in March 1997. It was at that time judged to be in need of special measures as it was not providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. An inspection by Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools in November 1999 confirmed many improvements and that the school was no longer subject to special measures. The school has not only fully overcome all the weaknesses identified but has made outstanding improvements in all aspects of school life. For example, the quality of teaching and learning is now a major strength of the school. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and they plan well to provide a strong challenge to all abilities. There has been a major improvement in the standards attained in almost all subjects. Pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to learning and their relationships have improved considerably. The school is now very well

organised by the leadership and all the staff work very well together to provide a rich learning experience for its pupils.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	D	B	A
mathematics	C	A	B	A
science	B	A	C	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

- Standards over the last three years have been variable in accordance with the abilities of the pupils in each year. However, there has been a good improvement in English and mathematics since 1998 and considerable progress in all three subjects from the level of attainment on entry, which is well below average into the nursery. The school have achieved or exceeded all their targets.
- The important improvements in educational provision have only been in place for a relatively short time and the full effect of these have yet to be seen at the end of Key Stage 2.
- When the 2000 results are compared to similar schools, they indicate well above average results in English and mathematics and above average results in science.
- Current pupils in Year 6 are already above average in English, mathematics and science with some months still to go before the National Curriculum tests.
- Attainment in literacy and numeracy is above average for pupils aged 11.
- Attainment in information and communication technology is in line with the national expectation for pupils aged 11, with a good proportion of pupils achieving higher levels.
- Religious education was not inspected as this is subject to an inspection by the Diocese.
- Attainment in music is above the national expectation for pupils aged 11.
- Attainment is satisfactory in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very eager to learn. They are responsive and show very positive attitudes in all they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of most pupils in lessons and around the school is very good. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships at all levels are excellent and contribute very effectively to pupils' personal development.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Pupils are proud of their school. They demonstrate very positive attitudes in all aspects of school life. They care about each other a great deal and respect each other's views. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, show a great deal of confidence by the time they leave the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Good

- Just over 90 per cent of the teaching is good or better and 43 per cent is very good or excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. This is a considerable improvement since the last full inspection where a substantial amount of teaching was unsatisfactory.
- Strengths are the high level of expectation of pupils' work and behaviour, the teaching methods and the ideas they use. Lessons proceed at a good pace; teachers' assessment of pupils' capabilities is excellent and they use these records well to plan future work. These strengths encourage pupils' intellectual, physical and creative effort, ensure lessons are productive and that pupils retain interest to the end of the lesson.
- The teaching support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is good attention to providing tasks that meet the pupils' special requirements. This ensures that their progress is very good.
- Throughout the school, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good and has been adapted well to the needs of the school. It is skilfully planned to include various levels of work for pupils with different needs and abilities. This ensures that pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are good by the time they leave the school.
- A few teachers lack confidence in the use of information and communication technology and the use of computers to support learning across a range of subjects is underdeveloped.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The quality and range of learning opportunities are richly enhanced by the many visits out of school and visitors into school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall, provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are very well supported both in the classroom and when they are withdrawn from lessons for extra help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although there are a considerable number of pupils with English as an additional language, only a few require any specific support. However, this support is very good. A number of well thought out activities enable these pupils to develop their understanding of English very well in order that they are fully integrated into school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for social and cultural development is very good and that for moral and spiritual development is excellent. This ensures that pupils develop confidence and personal strengths as they grow older.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good arrangements for caring for its pupils.

The procedures for child protection are very good. The provision for personal, social and health education is excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management by the headteacher are outstanding. He is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. Subject leaders are developing their roles very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Most of the governors fulfil their roles effectively but a number of governors have been appointed recently and are only just beginning to develop their roles. The chair of the governing body is very supportive and works closely with the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, staff and governors are fully aware of the school's performance and this enables them to plan very effectively for the future.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Resources are readily available and used very well. All money available to the school is spent very wisely and carefully. The school applies the principles of getting best value for money.

The headteacher, with the support of the governors, has been very successful in identifying the school's priorities. For example, since he became headteacher just four years ago, he has identified the need to raise the quality of teaching and develop the attitudes of the pupils. In this he has been very successful. He has created a very good team of teachers who all support each other and pupils' learning effectively. The priorities identified for the future, both in the next year and in the years ahead, are very appropriate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child likes the school. • Their child is making good progress. • The teaching is good. • They can approach the staff with any problems. • Their children are expected to work hard and do their best. • The school is well managed. • The school helps their children to become more mature and responsible. • Behaviour is good in the school. • Their child gets the right amount of work to do at home. • The school works closely with parents. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small number of parents felt that their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home. • A very small number of parents felt that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

- All views expressed by the parents were brought to the attention of the headteacher.
- Inspectors' support the parents' very positive views about the school. They also judged that the amount of homework is satisfactory and the extra curricular activities are good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 In the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 in 2000, pupils' attainment in reading was above average, and in writing and mathematics well above average. Although the results in reading in 1999 were slightly higher, generally since 1997 there has been a very good rise in standards for all three areas. Teacher assessments in science indicated above average results.
- 2 In the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in 2000, pupils' attainment in science was average and in English and mathematics above average. Again, although the results have been variable, they show an overall improvement since 1997 in all three areas.
- 3 When all the results at the end of both key stages in 2000 are compared to similar schools, the results read well. In reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, they are well above average for similar schools and very high in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, the results in science are above average and in English and mathematics well above average.
- 4 For this year's pupils, Year 2 attainment in English and science is again above national expectations but in mathematics it is well above the expectations. In Year 6, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is above national expectations.
- 5 All these results indicate that standards have been maintained when compared with the 2000 tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in science for pupils in Year 6 have improved. From very low levels of attainment on entry to the nursery, pupils are making considerable progress in the three major subjects of the National Curriculum by the time they leave the school.
- 6 This progress is mainly due to the improvement in the quality of teaching, the successful introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the development of the very positive learning attitudes in the pupils. These improvements have not yet had time to produce even higher standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has met or exceeded all its targets.
- 7 In English, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. These skills are developing well, both through literacy and other lessons, where pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and views. Many pupils enter school with limited knowledge of books. However, through the very good and often excellent teaching of reading, pupils improve rapidly. As a result, standards are well above national expectations at the end of both key stages. By age 11, many pupils read literature, such as Shakespeare and the poems of Michael Rosen with fluency and confidence. In writing, pupils reach levels, which are above national expectations at the end of both key stages. A significant number reach levels which are well above this. For example, pupils in Year 6 plan, draft and edit their work before presenting a final copy. Their writing is organised into well arranged paragraphs, with lively and imaginative expressions, which catch the reader's interest. Standards in literacy are above average at the end of both key stages.
- 8 In mathematics, by age seven, most pupils achieve standards well above national expectations. They use and apply mathematics very well in problem solving activities. Pupils have very good levels of skill in number work. Knowledge of different shapes and measuring ability is developing well by the end of Year 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are not quite as high as at the end of Key Stage 1, but they are still above national expectations in all the components of mathematics. These pupils did not get quite the same grounding in mathematics when they were younger and the very good improvements in mathematics teaching have not yet had time to produce even higher results by age 11. Standards in numeracy are well above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2.

- 9 In science, attainment is above national expectations in all aspects at the end of both key stages. For example, pupils in Year 2 build simple electrical circuits and can describe both static and current electricity. They investigate the power available in different makes of batteries by setting up a well thought out investigation. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they investigate forces and proceed to quite advanced work to explain the different forces operating on a floating boat, the screwing down of a nail or the turning forces of a windmill. Pupils' skills in experimental and investigative science are particularly strong and almost all pupils understand the importance of setting up a fair test, predicting the outcome and writing up their results clearly. Most pupils use their literacy skills well in science and have a good scientific vocabulary.
- 10 In information and communication technology, standards at the end of both key stages are satisfactory and broadly in line with national expectations. Within this, word processing skills are strong throughout the school. For example, pupils in Year 2 control a mouse and use a keyboard to type their work accurately. By age 11, a good proportion of pupils achieve higher than expected standards in word processing. Pupils amend and combine a range of information into one document. They are able to add music, different texts, fonts and a variety of illustrations to make their work lively and imaginative. Some other aspects of information and communication technology are less well developed. For example, older pupils have only just begun to use email or to use computers and sensing equipment to measure such things as temperature. The use of computers to support learning across a wide range of subjects is weaker, mainly because of a shortage of equipment. However, the school is aware of these weaknesses and will shortly be installing a new computer suite.
- 11 Religious education was not inspected as it is subject to a separate inspection by the Diocese.
- 12 Within the remaining subjects, where a judgement could be made, attainment is in line with national expectations. However, attainment in music is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. For example, throughout the school, pupils show confidence and maturity when they compose or perform music.
- 13 Many children enter the nursery with standards that are well below the expectation for their age in most areas of learning. They respond positively to the provision in the nursery and make good progress, particularly in the development of their social skills. In spite of this good progress, children's levels of attainment on entry to the reception classes are still below the expectation for most children of this age. They continue to make good progress in developing their language and number skills in the reception classes. This ensures that most children are likely to acquire the skills they need to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.
- 14 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of a number of factors. These include the early identification of pupils with special educational needs, very good support provided by teachers and classroom assistants both in class and during withdrawal, very good management of the provision for special educational needs and the close liaison between school, parents and outside agencies. For example, a psychologist visits the school weekly and gives very good support.
- 15 The pupils who have English as an additional language and need extra support, make very good progress because of the special arrangement the school makes. For example, Colombian pupils who attend the school attend a special club with pupils born in this country. Both groups of pupils celebrate and learn about each other's culture and language.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 16 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and their personal development is excellent. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and this is also an improvement on the last inspection.

- 17 Although there were several examples observed in the classroom where pupils displayed excellent attitudes both to their work and to their fellow pupils and teachers, the overall attitudes of pupils during the inspection was very good. There is a very small amount of evidence linked to occasional challenging attitudes and behaviour, being displayed in the classroom and in the playground by a very small minority of pupils. However, no pupil has been excluded from the school for a number of years. Where the teaching element of a lesson was good, very good or excellent, as was the case in the majority of lessons, pupils were quick to respond to the challenges set. In the vast majority of lessons, they demonstrated a very positive attitude to their work both in the classroom and around the school.
- 18 During the inspection there were many instances of pupils displaying positive responses to teachers' instructions. This was seen in a physical education lesson linked to the development of balancing skills; the good attitudes and behaviour of every pupil in the class matched the good teaching. Very good behaviour was also observed in a literacy class in which pupils were challenged to write a new ending to a fictional story. Pupils also displayed very good and consistent behaviour when walking around the school and when in the playground. Behaviour throughout the school, including the children in the Foundation Stage, is very good.
- 19 The day to day relationships between pupils and teachers, and pupils and pupils are excellent and there are many fine examples of pupils taking various responsibilities around the school. The school has appointed a number of prefects and one of their prime responsibilities is to assist in the supervision of younger children, both during indoor play and also in the playground. The prefects display great pride in their appointments and they carry out their individual responsibilities with both confidence and humility. Pupils are also able to work in collaboration in the classroom as seen by the good level of teamwork observed in a Year 5/6 art lesson. The school also provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through speaking, listening and having responsibility for tasks such as taking registers to the office, tidying up the classroom and taking care of play equipment. Pupils were observed to respond in an excellent manner to this provision.
- 20 The overall attendance at the school is satisfactory and incidents of unauthorised absence are low. Although there is some evidence of pupil lateness, the majority of pupils come to school and lessons on time. School registers are correctly marked.
- 21 Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are a significant strength of the school.
- 22 Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to learning and the school generally. Their relationships with teachers and other pupils are very good. They mix well with other pupils during lunch and break times and take part in extra curricular activities. This has happened because the school has been very successful in putting into practice its clear intentions on the inclusion of these pupils in lessons and other aspects of school life, as set out in its policy for special educational needs.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 23 The school has worked hard to improve the quality of the teaching and has done so very well. This has been achieved through a combination of careful monitoring and evaluation, carried out mainly by the headteacher and through teachers planning together and sharing each other's good practice. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed and in nine out of ten lessons, teaching was good or better with four out of ten lessons being very good or excellent. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection, where four out of ten lessons were unsatisfactory or poor. This improvement in teaching is one of the major reasons for the very positive attitudes pupils bring to their learning and the very good behaviour they demonstrate.
- 24 The teaching of literacy has received considerable attention over the past two years. Teachers deliver the basic skills of literacy well, some very well. The written planning for the literacy hour is well structured and includes work well matched to the needs of pupils. A particular strength is the

emphasis on expressive writing. Teachers encourage pupils to see the power in words and analyse how writers use them to convey meaning. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils were able to identify the key words that linked the feelings and actions of characters in a story and made the story dramatic and exciting. They were then able to use these techniques to improve the quality of their own writing. The teaching of numeracy has received specific attention since September 1999. The structure for planning in numeracy lessons is very good. For example, the introductory mental and oral session is done very well, lots of good practical activities are planned during the middle period and new mathematical concepts are often introduced to extend pupils' understanding.

- 25 In almost all lessons, teachers' own knowledge and understanding of all subjects is good. This enables them to answer the questions pupils ask clearly and is relevant to pupils' own lives. For example, in a science lesson in Year 3, pupils discovered that the thin wire of a small bulb burned away if too much electricity ran through it. The teacher's very good knowledge of science enabled him to explain that even with the right amount of electricity, there was still some resistance from the wire and this is why the element gets hot and gives off light. Some teachers have a weaker knowledge, understanding and confidence in the teaching of information and communication technology. The school is well aware of this and has plans to develop teachers' knowledge very shortly as soon as the new computer suite is in place.
- 26 The good and very good teaching is also characterised by very effective planning, with carefully structured learning steps, clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils and well thought out ideas. The work planned builds on pupils' previous knowledge and pupils gain in the development of skills and understanding. Lessons are stimulating and ensure that pupils are fully engaged and focused, they want to learn and enjoy their lessons. This was seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 4. The teacher introduced a number of mathematical statements, such as "any odd number is one more than an even number" and "if you multiply numbers either way round, the answer is always the same". As the lesson progressed, pupils got more and more involved in problems associated with these statements. They became fascinated with the use of numbers and by the end almost all could give examples that matched the statement. The teacher's planning and monitoring strategies resulted in pupils wanting to stay in at playtime to do more mathematics. They were also keen to have extra homework in the subject.
- 27 The management of pupils in lessons is very effective and pupils settle down quickly to their work. Pupils work productively and sustain concentration and the pace of the lesson is very good. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of all the pupils they teach and during lessons, their day to day assessments are good and teachers are fully aware of pupils' individual needs. Teachers also have very good longer term assessment procedures in place, especially for the core subjects of English and mathematics. These are used well in teachers' planning. The school has devised a good marking policy and most of the marking is of good quality with supportive and helpful comments. This helps pupils to know what they have to do to improve. Good use is made of homework. This reinforces and extends the work done in the classroom. A large majority of parents felt that the amount and type of homework was good. A few parents however, felt that on occasions, the quantity of homework was very variable.
- 28 The quality of teaching for young children in the Foundation Stage and for those pupils with English as an additional language, who need support, is very good. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers have detailed knowledge of these pupils and the targets in their individual education plans. They use this knowledge well to match tasks and resources to meet the specific needs of pupils. They also provide very good opportunities to them in lessons to answer questions and offer their ideas. There is very good liaison between teachers and classroom assistants who are very clear about their roles. Through good quality questions and explanations, the classroom assistants ensure that pupils know what they are doing. They also provide the right blend between support and challenge so that pupils do not become too dependent on them. They are particularly good at helping pupils to build their confidence and self esteem.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

- 29 There is a significant improvement in curriculum provision since the previous inspection. There is greatly improved curriculum planning and very good monitoring of the curriculum. National Curriculum requirements are met for all subjects. The school has policies and curriculum maps in place for all subjects and provides a broadly based and well balanced curriculum. The curriculum for children under five in the Foundation Stage is very good. The provision for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education is excellent. The school is developing the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. This is particularly noticeable in English and mathematics. However, the use of information and communication technology is under developed in many subjects. The school prepares pupils very well for future work at secondary level.
- 30 The school makes outstanding provision for pupils' physical and personal development. The science curriculum embodies a suitable health education programme that includes sex education. Pupils' personal development is promoted very effectively through the promotion of independence, self-reliance and citizenship and there are clear progressive steps of learning in all areas. The school provides an outstanding level of support for the developing maturity of its pupils. The school makes very good use of the local police to implement an effective drugs awareness programme. The school is successfully implementing the National Literacy Strategy. The impact on pupils' standards in reading and writing is very noticeable. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is proving effective in raising pupils' standards in mathematics. The school places a suitable and correct emphasis on the investigative element of work in mathematics, science, art and music. Homework is set on a regular basis and gives an effective level of support to work done by pupils in lessons. The school's provision for enhancing the curriculum is good. These include football, a writers club, a computer club, music, visits to museums, art galleries, theatres and concerts, as well as visitors into school. They broaden and enrich pupils' experiences. For example, there are opportunities for pupils throughout the school to learn to play musical instruments and to experience visits from the English National Opera Company and the National Theatre. Pupils enjoy these activities.
- 31 The curriculum for children under five in the nursery and reception classes is very good. The basis for this curriculum is the recently implemented Early Learning Goals initiative. The curriculum prepares children well for work at Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. The school is continuing to develop and improve the quality of its provision for children under five since the previous inspection.
- 32 The school ensures that all pupils, regardless of age, ability or gender, have equal access to the curriculum. This is noticeably effective in the case of pupils with special educational needs. They integrate well into classroom work and work well with their classmates. The school regularly reviews its arrangements for organising pupils into groups for English and mathematics. This enables the school to provide an effective match of pupils' ability to their group placement. The school monitors, analyses and evaluates the impact of the curriculum on the standards pupils' achieve. This ensures that the planned curriculum meets pupils' needs and abilities.
- 33 Curriculum links with the local community and partner institutions are very good. The school has very good links with the Most Holy Trinity Church. The local environment around the school is rich in history and is used whenever possible. The school is also actively seeking out local businesses to become more involved in the day to day life of the school. Sporting links with Surrey Cricket Club and more informal links with local football teams are also effectively used to enhance the curriculum.
- 34 Many Year 6 pupils transfer to the nearby St Michael's School with which there are very good transitional arrangements. The school is also a member of the Rotherhithe and Bermondsey Partnership of schools, which provide very good opportunities for pupils to enhance their education

during Saturdays and school holidays. The school has further very good links with Bacon College and Dulwich College, which provide workshops and family literacy access.

- 35 At the time of the last inspection, the school made considerable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its strong Catholic ethos and sense of community. The school has continued to maintain and build on these positive features. As a result, the provision for pupils' personal development is now excellent overall. This provision is embedded in the excellent ethos of the school, and is promoted through clear and consistent principles, which are evident in its mission statement, policies and practices. Pupils are taught to show respect and tolerance for each other, regardless of gender, race, religion or culture. Consequently relationships are excellent in classes and around the school.
- 36 Spiritual development is excellent, and it is fostered through outstanding assemblies, and the exceptionally calm atmosphere in the school. The school's Catholic ethos makes very positive contribution to valuing and celebrating each other's achievements. In lessons, teachers value pupils' ideas and give them appropriate praise and encouragement. They also provide ample opportunities for them to reflect on their own and each other's achievements. During assemblies, values such as 'respect, love, kindness and sharing' are fostered naturally as was seen in an assembly on 'Ash Wednesday'. There are very good opportunities for spiritual growth in most areas of the curriculum, but particularly in music, drama, literature and mathematics. For example, in mathematics teachers imbue pupils with fascination for and love of mathematics and the manipulation of numbers.
- 37 The provision for moral development is excellent, with the school expecting very high standards of behaviour from pupils. There is very good teaching on the difference between right and wrong. There are clear rules regarding behaviour. For example, classroom rules are discussed and agreed with the pupils. They provide very clear expectations of behaviour, and pupils are reminded of them when appropriate, although the need for this rarely arises. Pupils understand the concept of fairness and show respect for others. Adults in the school provide excellent role models of behaviour by their courtesy and respect for pupils.
- 38 There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. These include the attachment of a prefect to each class to support both pupils and teachers. The prefects meet with the headteacher once every three weeks to discuss and develop their roles. There is a 'buddy scheme' in which newer, less fluent bilingual pupils are supported by pairing them with older, more fluent pupils. Pupils are encouraged to develop positive attitudes and good behaviour in lessons, assemblies and in the school generally. Each class has monitors who are chosen on a weekly basis to carry out a range responsibilities, and the older pupils have very good opportunities to help the younger ones during lunch and break times.
- 39 The provision to support all aspects of pupils' cultural development is very good. The school is very successful in promoting the cultural traditions of its own area, as well as preparing pupils for the wider world. There are very good opportunities for them to broaden their understanding of literature, drama, art, dance and music, for example, by taking part in a number of projects run by the English National Opera and the National Theatre. Pupils also attend a range of clubs, including the Spanish and Modern Languages Clubs, and visit museums, art galleries, and theatres to enhance their cultural experience. Very good opportunities are provided for them to appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity through the celebration of festivals and traditions, such as Islamic art, the Chinese New Year, and cultural days when everybody comes to the assembly in their national costumes.
- 40 Pupils with special educational needs have full access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum through careful modification of work to meet their specific needs. When they are withdrawn for specialist help, support staff ensure that these pupils generally cover the same content as other pupils but at a different level. The school's strategies for literacy and numeracy for pupils with special educational needs are very effective. Pupils' progress is assessed systematically and regularly, and they receive well-focused individual and small group support, with tasks modified to meet their specific needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 41 The procedures for child protection and welfare are very good, as are the procedures for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development. The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is also very good. This is an improvement on the last inspection.
- 42 Child Protection procedures are in place and are very effective. The school staff, well supported by a range of external agencies, provide a high degree of welfare support to individual pupils, as seen by the first class provision for all pupils with special educational needs. This high quality input includes both the more and the less able children who are identified through consistent monitoring and assessment systems, which have been implemented across the whole school and which provide very valuable information for individual teachers and the school. In the classroom, teachers are quick to observe any personal difficulties and to take appropriate and remedial action. The school carries out occasional Health and Safety audits of the site and full records are maintained. Fire drills and alarm system tests are also a regular feature of school life and appropriate records are kept by the premises manager who maintains the school in very good condition.
- 43 The school, together with the occasional assistance of external agencies, is active in the monitoring and promoting of better attendance levels of pupils. The school has developed a range of strategies for the monitoring and control of behaviour and they are very effectively implemented. Pupils' academic performance and personal development is monitored both formally and informally by the school and steps are taken to identify individual problems with a range of strategies, which may include the preparation of individual education plans for some pupils.
- 44 The school provides a good level of educational and personal support to pupils, which is aimed at raising their individual achievement. The school acknowledges pupils' individual achievement through the praise given to pupils in the classroom and, more formally, in assembly presentations. Classroom support assistants work closely with the teaching staff to monitor the academic and personal progress being made by pupils in the school. The school has introduced a range of systems and opportunities designed to promote pupils' personal development. These are very effective as is demonstrated by the excellent relationships observed throughout the school during inspection week.
- 45 The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are of an exceptionally high quality. These procedures provide a valuable range of information about the pupils and give a clear picture of what they know and understand. This enables teachers to plan work that meets the needs of groups and individuals very effectively. Progress is systematically and rigorously tracked in all National Curriculum subjects. All teachers use assessment very effectively and consistently to plan future work. The school has a very good overview of how assessment informs curriculum planning. It analyses trends in attainment and sets challenging targets for all pupils. This is having a positive impact on standards and is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
- 46 There are very effective systems in place for assessing the achievements of children in the Foundation Stage. The use of these assessments to plan for the next stage in children's learning is very good. The school analyses data from the national tests at the ages of seven and eleven. It uses this analysis to set targets for improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is effective for English, science and mathematics throughout the school. All targets have a clear focus and sufficient challenge for all pupils. The governing body has a clear understanding of curriculum developments and assessment result implications.
- 47 Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are very well established. Very good partnership between all the people involved: class teachers, support staff and parents all contribute to very good quality individual educational plans, which contain specific and manageable targets. These targets help pupils to understand what progress they are making and promote

effective planning by teachers. There is good provision for termly and annual reviews. The annual reviews of statements of special educational needs are of very good quality. In addition to these reviews, the special educational needs coordinator meets each teacher once a term to talk about all pupils on the register, evaluate results and agree and write new targets. The special educational needs coordinator also supports teachers well on how to integrate the targets and the individual education plans into their normal day to day planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 48 There are very good links with parents who have very positive views of the school. The impact of parental involvement with the school is very good. This provision was good in the last inspection. The school has been very active in promoting and developing strong relationships with parents.
- 49 The parents' meeting with the inspectors was well attended and the parental questionnaire was returned by a relatively high percentage of parents. Almost all parents are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents feel that their children like school and that they are making good progress. Parents also feel that the teachers are good and that the school is well managed. Parents are very much regarded by the school as co-educators and this significant and proactive part of the school's philosophy is the driving force behind the continuing development of the school/parental partnership. The information provided by the school through the prospectus, annual report to parents, and via regular class newsletters is of a very high standard. School reports include sections on academic progress and target areas for development.
- 50 Some parents are frequent visitors to the school, both in terms of providing very welcome classroom support and in attending school assemblies. All parents have been invited to enter into a home/school agreement, which is designed to promote improved relationships between the school, parents and children. The school opens its doors to all parents and the headteacher is always available to discuss any particular worries or concerns parents may have.
- 51 Many parents also play an important part in their children's education by helping them at home by listening to them read, or in assisting them with occasional project work related to a particular topic being studied at school. The school's links with parents provides a very strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development and it is a significant strength of the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all aspects of their children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 52 Overall, the quality of leadership is very good and within this, the headteacher displays outstanding qualities of leadership and management. He is very well supported by his deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, all staff, governors and administration staff. By the use of his many personal skills, the headteacher has enabled all his staff to fulfil their leadership roles very well. He has also developed a strong team spirit and an agreed sense of purpose. This is a strength of the school and is central to the school's drive for success in all it does. The last report, four years ago, stated there was a lack of effective leadership, there has therefore been a very substantial strengthening in this area. The headteacher provides a very clear vision and distinct educational direction. This has resulted in the creation of a very effective school where educational standards have risen considerably and pupils are given every opportunity to develop personally and spiritually to their full potential.
- 53 The headteacher very effectively monitors the performance of teachers. There is an agreed timetable of observations for all staff, during which the headteacher makes judgements on the quality of teaching and learning, set against an established range of criteria. Feedback is provided and the outcome of observation is discussed with teachers. As a result of these observations, targets for development are agreed and these form the focus for the next observation. Monitoring of teaching has been very effective, as the quality of teaching is now a strength of the school, with

almost all the teaching being good or better. The monitoring of standards is done very well. All national test results are carefully analysed. This has resulted in the setting of targets for improvements. All these targets have been achieved or exceeded.

- 54 Curriculum coordination is good. There are coordinators for all subjects and other areas, such as personal, social and health education and assessment. They all support their areas well, examine teachers' planning and pupils' books and occasionally provide demonstration lessons. All information is used carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses and to prepare an improvement plan for their subject.
- 55 The governing body is supportive and effective in many ways. The chair of the governing body is fully committed to the school. He is involved in the life of the school, is a regular visitor and often engages in professional dialogue with the headteacher. He is also the numeracy governor and meets with the numeracy coordinator on occasions. A number of other governors visit the school and are involved in aspects of the curriculum. For example, support from the governors with a responsibility for special educational needs and literacy is effective. Most governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and they all support the headteacher and the aims of the school well. They are involved in the setting of performance targets for the headteacher. A number of the governors are new to their posts and the chair is anxious to develop their roles further and to extend their involvement in school life.
- 56 The school's aims, values and policies are implemented very effectively. The yearly school development plan is very effective and gives a clear framework for action. It is evaluated regularly. The headteacher and governors have also a longer term vision for the school. For example, they are developing plans to improve the quality of the building and the school site. The leadership has developed an excellent ethos in the school within a strong Christian tradition. Pupils have developed very good attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic about school and there are excellent relationships throughout. There is a commitment to equal opportunities for all.
- 57 The school is staffed by a good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers, who are effectively deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum. Lunch time supervisors provide a high standard of care at mid-day and, through well planned activities and games, ensure that the pupils use their time profitably. The premises supervisor maintains the buildings, grounds and resources well. He ensures a high standard of cleanliness and hygiene at all times. The accommodation is satisfactory overall to meet the demands of the curriculum and is very well used by the staff. However, the facilities for staff are unsatisfactory and in need of urgent attention. The headteacher has explored numerous ways of resolving the situation, as yet, without success.
- 58 There are no playing fields for sporting activities, but the school provides a high quality outdoor environment. All staff make very good use of the external areas for physical education and games. The pupils have recently been involved in planning different areas for quiet and boisterous activities for all year groups. Towards this end, they have drawn plans to ensure that every space available can be used profitably. In consultation with a building firm, small alterations have been made to the pupils' designs and work is to start as soon as the weather improves. This is a very good example of the way that the leadership provides opportunities for pupils' personal and social development.
- 59 The overall quality of resources is satisfactory for teaching and learning, apart from science, mathematics and music, which is very good. However, resources for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. This shortage has been a significant factor adversely affecting the pupils' overall attainment in the subject. Nevertheless, the situation is shortly to be improved with alterations to the building to accommodate a computer suite and a library.
- 60 The role of the special educational needs coordinator is very well developed, and he manages the provision for special educational needs very effectively. He has excellent links and relationships with staff, parents and outside agencies who make very good contribution to the writing and reviewing of individual education plans. There is sufficient time allocated to the special educational needs coordinator to carry out his responsibilities effectively in relation to the management of

pupils' individual educational plans, record keeping, and the maintenance of pupils' files. Consequently, provision for special educational needs is very good. The nominated governor for special educational needs, who also works as a classroom assistant in the school, has a very clear understanding of her responsibilities which she carries out very effectively.

- 61 Excellent financial planning, and school administration by the school secretary supports educational developments and priorities very well. The quality of financial control through the school bursar, headteacher and chair of the governors' financial committee is outstanding. They target money for special purposes very well. For example, the school has identified the need to raise standards in information and communication technology further. The school has set aside money for this purpose and the fairly large financial carry over budget is to be used to build a well-resourced computer suite. The school uses all the money at its disposal very well and is fully aware of the need to get the best value for its pupils. The management systems now in place have ensured many major improvements since the last inspection, an excellent capacity to maintain an effective school and introduce further improvements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 62 To maintain the quality of education and promote further development, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- 63 Continue to raise attainment in information and communication technology by:-
- further development of teachers' knowledge, understanding and confidence in the use of computers
 - planning appropriate opportunities for information and communication technology to be used more effectively to support learning across a wide range of subjects.
(these are identified in paragraphs 10, 25, 29, 85, 96, 114, 117, 118, 121)

In addition to the above issue, the following minor weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- some governors are new and the chair is anxious to develop their involvement in school life.
(paragraph 55)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	31	48	9	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	306
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	6	72

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	55

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16	30	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	27	28	29
	Total	42	44	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	96 (94)	98 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	27	29	28
	Total	42	45	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (97)	98 (88)	96 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	22	23	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	19
	Girls	21	20	20
	Total	38	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (62)	84 (81)	87 (89)
	National	75 (76)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	19
	Girls	21	20	20
	Total	38	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (62)	84 (81)	87 (89)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	18
Black – African heritage	86
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	165
Any other minority ethnic group	15

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	273.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
--------------------------------	------

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	674,399
Total expenditure	676,257
Expenditure per pupil	2,195
Balance brought forward from previous year	58,036
Balance carried forward to next year	56,177

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	332
Number of questionnaires returned	94

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	16	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	83	16	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	81	19	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	71	17	6	2	3
The teaching is good.	89	10	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	23	2	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	10	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	91	7	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	73	22	1	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	90	4	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	87	11	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	28	7	2	22

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 64 The school makes very good provision for children throughout the Foundation Stage. It gives children a very firm base for their future learning in the nursery and reception classes. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Children enter the nursery from the age of three. They move into the reception classes in the September and January after their fourth birthday. Children benefit from the exchange of information between home and the nursery staff. The school provides structured, calm and friendly routines that give children a sense of belonging and security.
- 65 Staff in the nursery and reception classes work closely together to ensure that children build on their previous learning. Planning successfully identifies what the children are to learn from each activity. It is very linked well with careful assessments of the progress children make in their learning. This is used to plan what steps to take next for individual children. It ensures that children make good progress towards the expected outcomes of the Early Learning Goals. The record keeping system is thorough, clear and informative throughout the Foundation Stage. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The nursery and reception classes provide an effective level of support for children with special educational needs. The support for children who have English as an additional language is effective and unobtrusive. It enables children to work confidently in group and class lessons. All members of staff ensure that children have full and equal access to the areas of learning.
- 66 Many children enter the nursery with standards that are well below the expectation for their age in most areas of learning. They respond positively to the provision in the nursery and make good progress, particularly in the development of their social skills. In spite of this good progress, children's levels of attainment on entry to the reception classes are still below the expectation for most children of this age. They continue to make good progress in developing their language and number skills in the reception classes. This ensures that most children are likely to acquire the skills they need to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 67 Children settle quickly into the nursery and reception classes. They make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills. Teaching of this area of learning is very good. All members of the Foundation Stage staff have calm, caring and friendly attitudes. This provides security for the children. Children are confident when moving around the nursery, reception classes and outside. Most children share and take turns happily for example, when giving out milk and biscuits. They clearly enjoy their work and cooperate happily with each other and adults. Children take care of classroom equipment and soon learn to tidy up after themselves. They work well, independently and together. For example, groups of children worked together to mix and prepare pancakes. They try hard to finish their tasks and talk eagerly about their work. Staff encourage them to develop initiative and independence very effectively. Children quickly understand the routines of school life. The reception children walk sensibly and without fuss to the main hall for assemblies and play contentedly together at break times. By the time they are ready to move into Year 1 most children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are likely to exceed the expected levels in the development of their social skills. The school has continued to maintain and improve this area of children's development effectively since the previous inspection.

Communication, language and literacy

- 68 The provision and teaching for this area is very good. In the nursery, staff ensure that children learn to enjoy books, know how to look at them and begin to learn letter sounds. This is developed well in the reception classes where many children have above average reading skills. Another strength

of the teaching is the way staff give children opportunities to realise that reading and writing are used for different purposes. For example, children learn to read a list and sequence instructions when they buy ingredients and make pancakes. As a result, children are eager to read and write and soon begin to write independently. All members of staff ensure that children have ample opportunities to share their ideas with adults as well as with each other. This contributes positively to developing children's skills in speaking and listening. The reception class teachers use the literacy strategy very effectively to develop further children's listening, speaking and reading skills and to develop their writing abilities. All children in the Foundation Stage listen carefully and attentively to stories. They re-tell them, enjoy talking about the pictures and join in with familiar sentences. This is a direct result of the enthusiasm and interest that members of staff show. Most children are likely to achieve the standards necessary to reach the end of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Mathematical Development

- 69 The provision for children's mathematical development is very good. Teaching in the reception classes is outstanding. This high quality teaching is reflected in the standards children achieve. A strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers take every opportunity to use counting and number skills throughout the day. This ensures that children develop an interest and fascination for number. For example, the shopping trip promoted an interest in shops and children soon learnt the principle of giving change. Most children make good progress in consolidating and developing their number skills. They use suitable mathematical language to describe processes such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' and know the correct names for two-dimensional shapes. Most children are likely to reach the standards necessary to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 70 The nursery and reception classes make good provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage of learning because of the good teaching. They have many opportunities in the nursery and the reception classes to explore the natural and man-made world. For example, children in the nursery and reception measure and mix ingredients to make pancakes. They investigate properties of materials, watch plants grow and wait for chickens to incubate and hatch. Children use computers as a matter of routine and know how to use a mouse to control movement on the screen. Most children are likely to reach the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception classes.

Physical development

- 71 Children make good progress in developing their physical skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children have the level of coordination and physical control expected for their age. Most have skills in riding bicycles and controlling pencils and paintbrushes that exceed expectations for their age. All children experiment confidently, for example, a group in the nursery explored how to paint effectively using cotton buds. Staff promote physical skills well. They ensure that children in the reception classes have access to the nursery's outdoor activity area. This helps develop children's climbing and balancing skills well. Children develop good skills in cutting out shapes and mark making.

Creative development

- 72 Creative development is supported well throughout the Foundation Stage. Children make good progress as they learn basic techniques. This enables them to use and control materials effectively. They hold brushes correctly, apply paint to paper with increasing confidence and use ready mixed paint confidently and boldly. As they progress through the reception classes, children show a good awareness of shape, pattern and colour. They enjoy experimenting with materials when, for example, they make and decorate clay heads. Children sing a variety of songs from

memory and show a suitable awareness of melody and rhythm. Most children are likely to acquire the level of skill necessary to reach the outcomes of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

- 73 The quality of teaching for the children in the Foundation Stage of Learning is consistently good. In over one third of lessons, teaching is very good, and in one fifth it is excellent. This consistently high quality of teaching reflects the level of progress in learning that children make in their early years at school. The teachers, nursery nurses and members of the support staff work very closely together to promote learning. They have a clear understanding of the needs of young children along with realistically high expectations of achievement and behaviour. All members of staff work very well together as a team. This means children have challenging and interesting tasks to consolidate and develop their knowledge and understanding and there is no unnecessary repetition of work. All members of staff use precise diction and carefully chosen language to develop children's speaking skills. This ensures that all children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. All members of staff provide a good balance between the direct teaching of specific skills, such as how to use pencils and scissors, and the promotion of independent learning. They encourage pupils to work independently and make choices. The quality of teaching is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

ENGLISH

- 74 The national test results for year 2000 show that in reading, standards at the end of Year 2 were above average but, in writing, these were well above average. When compared with similar schools, pupils achieve well above average standards in reading, and in writing, standards are very high. By age 11, standards are above average in the national tests and well above, when compared with similar schools. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen steeply throughout the school. This is due to the high quality of teaching and good management of the subject. Another factor in rising standards is the effective support that the pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive, to help them learn basic skills. In addition, there are after-school clubs twice weekly and on Saturdays, when some pupils are given specific teaching in the skills of writing. This is a very good example of the commitment and dedication of the staff.
- 75 Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English are above average by the time pupils are seven and eleven. Starting from a low level of language and literacy on entry to the nursery, pupils achieve very well.
- 76 Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average by the time they are seven. The school has justly identified this area for further development. Careful plans have been put into place to ensure that these skills are developed through English and other subjects. Teachers seize opportunities to promote new words and understanding of these in context. In a 'Good Work' assembly, pupils were introduced to the word malleable to replace squidgy. In addition, pupils are taught from the first day in school, to be courteous, to listen and because they are valued by all staff, they learn from their example to value themselves and others. Their behaviour is exemplary and it is a contributory factor to pupils' very good progress in English.
- 77 By the time pupils are 11, their speaking and listening skill are average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress in developing social speaking skills. Teachers provide their pupils with numerous opportunities to express opinions and views in literacy and in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to talk about the characters in Greek myths and to undertake various roles in a drama presentation. This was observed in an outstanding lesson in a mixed age and ability class in Years 5 and 6. The pupils were exploring the power of the English language and the effects on the audience. The teacher through his infectious enthusiasm, excellent pace of lesson and challenging activities, sustained pupils' interest well. Pupils' progress was enhanced further by the use of a tape recorder, whereby pupils could evaluate their work and improve it. Throughout the school, clarity of speech improves as teachers encourage their pupils to be precise in their

answers. The development of correct terminology is a planned feature of each subject, but, nevertheless, there are plans to improve this area further.

- 78 Many pupils enter school with limited knowledge of books. However, through the very good and often excellent teaching of reading, the pupils improve rapidly. As a result, by the time they are seven, the standards in reading are well above average. A particular strength of the standards is the enthusiasm that pupils have for books. Through this, their love of literature and enjoyment of the written word is a contributory factor to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. This was observed in an outstanding lesson in Year 2, where the pupils made excellent progress in reading, through the skilful guidance and organisation of group activities. The strong focus on the teaching of letter sounds and blends in lessons contributes well to this development. In addition, the part time teacher is very effective in helping the pupils to acquire reading skills. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning through English as an additional language, make very good progress because of the specific and targeted activities carefully planned for them. The school has a good home-school reading record book, through which parents are actively encouraged to hear their children read.
- 79 As they go through the school, pupils continue to make very good progress. Consequently, by the time they are 11, their reading standards are well above average. In response to the effective teaching, the pupils achieve very well. A particular strength in the teaching is the infectious enthusiasm that the teachers have for literature. As a result, pupils are inspired not only to read but also to enjoy all that is best in the English language. For example, in a discussion with a group of Year 6, the pupils evaluated which Shakespeare play they enjoyed best and gave valid and mature explanations for their choices. They enjoyed 'the language, the atmosphere created by the bard in Macbeth or in Romeo and Juliet'. The pupils enjoy a wide range of literature, including modern writers, such as J.K. Rowling, Roald Dahl and the poetry of Michael Rosen. Pupils' love of literature is actively encouraged through regular visits to theatres such as the Globe.
- 80 All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress in acquiring writing skills throughout the school. By the time the pupils are seven and eleven, they achieve levels which are above the national average, with a significant proportion of pupils reaching levels which are well above the average. These achievements are due to the carefully and progressively structured programmes for teaching and learning. Teachers, having identified this area for further development, have put into action numerous strategies to bring improvements. These have been successful, as the results clearly indicate. Moreover, pupils are keen learners because their teachers are committed, dedicated and enthusiastic.
- 81 The pupils in Year 2 write for numerous purposes, such as letters, stories, poems, recording and well sequenced instructions. Their writing shows well extended sentences, which are appropriately punctuated, with a good range of punctuation marks, including the apostrophe. Spelling is generally accurate. Pupils begin to use their developing skills in other areas, such as history, geography, science and mathematics. There are very good examples of pupils' work on display in classrooms and in any available area. Year 2 pupils, in writing about 'Sounds too loud', write true stories of damage done to hearing of friends and relatives, as a result of dancing too near a speaker at a disco'. These reports are well constructed, showing the high levels that the pupils achieve. Pupils' handwriting is fluent, neat, often in joined script. The school has made a deliberate decision to introduce joined writing early into the writing programmes. This strategy successfully avoids the need for pupils to relearn a pattern established earlier in their school life.
- 82 By the time pupils are 11, their writing shows that they understand and use the writing process to plan, draft and edit their work, before presenting a final copy. Their writing is often organised into well arranged paragraphs, with lively and imaginative expressions, which catch the reader's interest. For example, in personification writing, based on the Nativity, entitled 'I am a donkey', one pupil writes: 'There was definitely something different about Mary, I just couldn't put my hoof on it.' Pupils indicate that they are able to write for numerous purposes and in different forms, such as writing, based on John Cabot's Diary. They use appropriate language for this form of writing. The pupils' spelling is accurate, writing is generally neat, and in ink, in Years 5 and 6.

- 83 The high quality of the teaching is the major contributory factor to pupils' very good achievements in English. Some outstanding lessons were observed. Teachers plan thoroughly and conscientiously on a weekly basis, ensuring that they build systematically upon pupils' earlier learning. They share learning targets with their pupils at the beginning of lessons and check with the pupils whether these have been achieved. These strategies successfully involve pupils in their learning. Procedures for assessing the pupils' progress are excellent and information gathered from these is carefully recorded and used to plan the next steps of their pupils' learning. Assessments are also used for setting individual targets, which are shared with the pupils and their parents. In addition, teachers make demands so that their pupils give of their best. Homework is well used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Marking is generally meaningful and assists the pupils to improve their work. A very good example was seen in one exercise book, where the teacher wrote, 'Start a new paragraph to show movement of time'. Throughout the school, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere, in which pupils work and learn. Relationships that exist are outstanding and are conducive to the pupils' progress and subsequent attainment.
- 84 The National Literacy Strategy has been very effectively implemented and has impacted positively upon standards that pupils achieve. The school has sensibly customised the curriculum for English to suit pupils' particular needs and adjustments to the timetable followed, to maximise learning.
- 85 The quality of leadership and management for English is very good. The coordinator is knowledgeable and she is very well supported by the headteacher and the literacy governor. Together, they work for excellence and ensure a suitably high profile for the subject. Through careful monitoring, they have a thorough and detailed overview of pupils' progress and attainment, as well as teaching and planning throughout the school. At present, information and communications technology is not yet fully used to support learning. This is due, in the main, to insufficient confidence and knowledge by some teachers, a lack of resources, and the planning of strategies and opportunities to support learning across a wide range of subjects.

MATHEMATICS

- 86 The improvement in standards since the previous inspection is outstanding. By the age of seven most pupils achieve standards well above national expectations. Standards by the age of 11 are above national expectations. This reflects the results of the 2000 national tests. Standards also reflect the positive impact of the structured teaching of mathematics throughout the school. Since the previous inspection, improvement in teaching quality is very marked. The quality is consistently high, with almost one fifth of lessons being outstanding. This contributes greatly to pupils' achievements and their enthusiasm for mathematics.
- 87 The school has rigorous, carefully structured and thorough procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. It gives teachers accurate information about individuals' achievement and ensures target setting is challenging and accurate. The school's results show much improvement over the past four years. There are high quality systems in place to ensure this continues. The management of mathematics throughout the school is outstandingly effective.
- 88 Inspection findings show that work throughout the school gives pupils a suitable level of challenge. This meets their identified needs and abilities and is a direct result of teachers' careful assessment. An example of this is the support and extension work the school provides for a mathematically gifted pupil in Year 5. Another example is the achievements of pupils who have English as an additional language. Teachers' marking is consistent throughout the school and gives pupils clear guidelines for improvement. All teachers insist on careful presentation of work. This all contributes to the high standards.
- 89 Across the school, pupils have many opportunities to use and apply mathematics in problem solving activities. All pupils achieve high standards in this area. From Year 1 onwards pupils are

very confident in investigating properties of numbers. Pupils investigate different ways to make numbers larger and smaller and use correct mathematical language for two and three-dimensional shapes. For example, two boys explain that 'a triangular based prism has three faces and a square based pyramid has four faces'. Teachers build very carefully on these early skills and develop them effectively throughout the school. All teachers use a suitably wide range of strategies to ensure pupils understand what they are to learn. Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge and understand how to move learning forward. For example, Year 4 pupils are told to remember their three times table by 'imagine in your head a big red triangle with three corners. Just flash that up when you are not sure of the next number'. By Year 6 pupils confidently use their mathematical knowledge and understanding in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they apply it very effectively to work in science and to creating patterns in art. This is a very significant improvement for both key stages since the previous inspection.

- 90 The very skilful teaching and implementation of the numeracy strategy develops pupils' understanding of number very effectively. Pupils have very good levels of skill in mental and oral work as a result of the daily mental recall tasks. This enables them to work out complicated problems in their heads. For example, pupils in Year 3 show above average ability to recall and use prime numbers. Pupils of all abilities enjoy these sessions and participate eagerly. There is a marked improvement in standards throughout the school. By Year 2 pupils have very well developed knowledge and understanding of multiplication skills. This continues through the school. All pupils in Year 6 use these skills confidently to solve problems. Most have above average understanding of angles and their relationship to triangles. Pupils of below average ability have well-developed knowledge and use of number patterns. Skilful teaching ensures above average achievement for all.
- 91 Work on shape, space and measures is developing well by Year 2. Pupils have a good understanding of the names and properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. In Years 5 and 6 pupils show above average understanding of axis of symmetry. They apply this to problem solving activities and enjoy investigating properties of shape. For example, one pupil explained that 'a circle has infinite lines of symmetry'. Teachers ensure pupils of all ages and abilities acquire high levels of knowledge and understanding in this area. The older pupils make effective use of information technology to support data handling. Teachers ensure they use relevant and suitable programs in this work.
- 92 Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their teaching is enthusiastic and makes learning fun. It promotes independent learning; mathematical enquiry and helps pupils understand what they have learnt.

SCIENCE

- 93 Standards in science are above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. This is a good improvement from the last inspection. Pupils, including those who have English as an additional language and those pupils with special educational needs, are making good progress and are developing their general knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science well. This is because teachers make lessons interesting and exciting and encourage their pupils to record effectively what they see and observe. For example, they know about the properties of a range of different materials, such as plastic, wood, metal and paper. They are also aware that if you apply heat to some materials they begin to change. This was seen in Year 2 where pupils examined a piece of bread under a magnifying glass. After toasting the bread they examined it again and recognised the changes that occurred. In a similar investigation in Year 1, pupils could explain the difference that occurred to a piece of chocolate when the teacher put it into warm or hot water. By doing these investigations they are also developing their observation, measuring and recording skills well.
- 94 At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are also above national expectations. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. This is an improvement on the results attained in 2000 National Curriculum tests where standards were average. The progress is mainly due to the steady

improvement in the quality of teaching, the support given to the subject by the coordinator and the rise in standards in reading and writing. For example, good quality work on forces was seen in the books belonging to Year 6 pupils. They can describe the type of forces that are at work when a windmill revolves or a door is pushed open. They explain the numerous forces that operate when a boat is floating on water. Although pupils' understanding of all the components of science are good, their understanding of experimental and investigational science is a particular strength. This is because teachers encourage the approach of 'finding out' as much as possible.

- 95 The quality of teaching in science is good overall. Teachers plan their lessons very well using a good scheme of work. This is ensuring adequate coverage of all areas of the science curriculum. Particular strengths in the teaching are seen in the way experimental and investigative science is taught. For example, most teachers give enough information and support in order for pupils to have a clear picture of what they have to investigate. However, teachers make sure that enough information is held back in order that pupils will become excited about finding out. This approach works well and pupils are motivated to work hard, to enjoy their science work and persevere well until they have discovered some of the answers to the challenge that has been set. Another strength is the emphasis placed on the importance of setting out the investigation properly in pupils' books. This is especially effective for pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils carefully prepare for the investigation by writing down the objectives, listing the apparatus needed, making sure the experiment is fair and making their predictions about what might happen. This approach means that by the time all this is done, they can hardly restrain their enthusiasm to complete the investigation.
- 96 Older pupils build on this good grounding and by Year 6, pupils have a very secure knowledge of fair testing. This was seen in a lesson on reversible and irreversible change where pupils took great pains to ensure fairness and could discuss and explain why this is important. Teachers have good class control and lessons proceed at a good pace. This ensures that pupils are motivated and are expected to give of their best at all times. Assessment procedures are good and these records are used well in future planning, especially in relation to the support given to pupils with special educational needs. A weakness is the under use of information and communication technology. The coordinator has built into the syllabus areas where computers could be used to support learning but, owing to a lack of confidence by some teachers and a shortage of equipment, these are only used on a few occasions. However, there are good links with literacy and numeracy; teachers emphasise the importance of using a good scientific vocabulary and take every opportunity to measure accurately and to use graphs to demonstrate results of investigations where appropriate.
- 97 Leadership of the subject is effective. The coordinator has set out the school's approach to science very well. There is a good policy and scheme of work and the subject is enhanced by a number of valuable out of school visits to places of scientific interest, such as the science museum, Kew Gardens and the Shell scientific workshops. There are plans to develop the school grounds further as a resource for learning.

ART AND DESIGN

- 98 Standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 are in line with the national expectations. Since the previous report, the school has maintained its standards. All pupils in the school make satisfactory progress, including those who speak English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs.
- 99 Pupils in Year 2 use a variety of skills, materials and media to create pictures and design models. For example, in connection with a science project, pupils make pictures from wood, metal and other materials. There are attractive designs of weaving, using wool or different coloured papers.
- 100 As the pupils move through the school, they learn to use different media at increasingly more complex levels. In Year 3 and 4, pupils use mosaics to represent Columbia and, drawing on different symbols from that area, they make a large and attractive plaque for the school display. In

this way, pupils who have recently been admitted into school from that country, feel welcome and share their culture with their peers. Both groups gain from these kinds of experiences that the school offers the pupils in that they learn to appreciate the rich diversity of the world beyond the immediate surroundings.

- 101 In Year 5 and 6, pupils learn different techniques for making a coiled clay pot. They successfully experiment with the medium and produce thoughtful work. The pupils evaluate their designs and offer suggestions as to how improvements can be made. They make suggestions such 'Make sure that the coils are strong enough to support the top' or 'Make sure it's securely fixed to the sides but don't use too much water'. In connection with a history project on Ancient Greece, pupils draw and paint vases after the style of the period and reproduce it effectively.
- 102 Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn through English as an additional language are all fully included in all activities and are proud to show their finished work.
- 103 The quality of teaching is good. The teachers have an enthusiastic knowledge of art and design and teach specific skills progressively, as the pupils move through the school. In a very good lesson in Year 5 and 6, the teacher gives careful explanations, and through setting of time limit, she successfully promotes understanding and sense of urgency to the tasks. The teacher uses questions effectively to target specific pupils, thereby ensuring that they all maintain interest and understand the techniques. As a result, the pupils are very well behaved. The learning targets are shared with the pupils. These give pupils clear understanding of expectations and enables them to work successfully and with a purpose.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 104 By the time the pupils are seven and eleven, standards are in line with national expectations. Since the previous inspection, when it was judged that standards were poor at the end of Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2, the school has made very good improvements.
- 105 At seven, pupils study an appropriate range of work, often linked to topics. They plan a design, make simple decisions on the resources they will use, make the product and compare it with their original design to find out how successful they have been. During the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 looked at a variety of picture frame designs and evaluated these before deciding which one were suitable for a child or for an adult. They also looked at standing and hanging devices before proceeding with decorating their own frame designs, using a variety of materials. In this practical task, all pupils were entirely engrossed in the activity.
- 106 At the age of 11, the pupils gain new skills in designing, making and evaluating their products. They achieve well in the subject. There are attractive displays around the school such as masks made by Year 3 and 4, using plaster of Paris. They use solar panels to power a carousel. These models are intricate and show careful designs, which are effective working models. Work is closely linked to mathematics and science and pupils use the skills of accurate measurement and investigation. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 make wheeled vehicles with axles and use their designs in measuring and cutting wood accurately for the frame. In one class, pupils investigated cantilever and suspension bridges. They could explain how they decided on the design and how much weight it could hold. Their good literacy skills were used well to describe the experiment. The pupils learn about food technology. A practical session was successfully undertaken recently, where the pupils sold soft drinks and popcorn which they produced themselves. Pupils used information and communication technology to produce tickets and programmes for the occasion. Parents and pupils from other classes were invited to buy the products. The pupils were able to apply their mathematical skills to this event successfully, as well as their wider skills of carrying out social responsibilities.
- 107 The quality of teaching is good and planning for the subject takes account of pupils' previous learning. Teachers display their pupils' work well and celebrate their successes in assemblies for others to see. They plan effectively to link other subjects to design and technology.

- 108 The subject is well led by the new coordinator and his predecessor, who both have developed the subject well. There is portfolio of pupils' work, which clearly shows how the subject is progressing. In addition, the headteacher keeps an overview of the progress that pupils make.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

- 109 Owing to the school's cycle of topics, teaching could be observed only in history. Further evidence was gathered from looking at school documentation, analysis of available pupils' previous work, and discussions with the coordinators for history and geography and some Year 6 pupils. This evidence indicates that pupils' attainment in history at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 is in line with that expected for their ages. In geography, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards at the end of Key Stage 1. However, there is enough to indicate that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with that expected for their ages. This is good improvement in history and very good in geography since the last inspection, with standards in both subjects. This has happened as a result of the school addressing successfully the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection.
- 110 By the age of seven, pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past they have studied. This is so because teaching is good, and there are particularly good opportunities for pupils to use a range of resources, including the community, which makes learning about the past stimulating and interesting. During the inspection, there was a good example of Year 2 pupils listening to and discussing with a visitor, her experiences of being evacuated as a child during World War 2. This helped them to ask historical questions and empathise with the experiences and feelings of children who had been evacuated. There is evidence in pupils' previous work of the higher and average attainers showing an emerging sense of chronology as, for example they compare a Victorian classroom with a modern one.
- 111 Work at Key Stage 1 is carried forward successfully at Key Stage 2. By Year 6, most pupils talk with confidence about the major events in a range of topics they have studied as well as in the topic they are studying currently. For example, in a Year 5/6 class as part of their work on the Ancient Greeks, pupils demonstrated a sound understanding of the differences in the treatment of 'citizens, women and slaves' in the Athenian society. They debated competently whether it was fair to have these differences. They showed understanding of the rules of debate and the skills developed in speaking and listening and used resources well to research for ideas to defend their points of view. Pupils can identify similarities and differences between different periods, and they begin to give reasons for, and the effects of, the main events studied. For example, they talk about the causes of the Second World War and its effects on the lives of people. At both key stages, pupils use a range of sources to learn about the past and make appropriate use of historical terms about the passing of time.
- 112 In geography, Year 6 pupils are able to talk about the major features of their locality in detail and with confidence. They demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of the effect of these features on the lifestyles of its residents. They express views on their locality, and can suggest improvements to it. Pupils' map skills are satisfactory. They compare and contrast the features of their locality with those of Wrotham and Eynsford, which they have studied as contrasting localities. Pupils show sound knowledge and understanding of their topic on rivers, which they have studied, in the recent past. They make satisfactory use of geographical terms, particularly those related to rivers.
- 113 Pupils have very good attitudes to learning history and geography. In history lessons, they listen with attention and are able to sustain concentration. They respond to questions positively, and are very well behaved. Their relationships with each other and adults are generally excellent.
- 114 With no teaching seen in geography, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. In history, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their instructions and explanations are clear and they

always plan their lessons well. Teachers make good use of questions to check pupils' understanding and match tasks and resources to their stage of learning. They welcome pupils' ideas and build on them. This helps pupils to understand what they are learning, and to acquire new knowledge and understanding at a good pace. At Key Stage 2, there are good opportunities for pupils to appreciate the importance of using both primary and secondary sources, and the need to be careful when doing so to avoid bias in them. The support staff provide very good support to pupils with special educational needs and there is very good support for pupils with English as an additional language. Some examples of pupils using word processing skills were seen; however, overall the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. There are no significant weaknesses in teaching.

- 115 The history and geography curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. The school has implemented the schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority successfully, with some changes to meet the specific needs of its pupils. There is consistency and continuity in coverage and planning, with teachers using the school's 'curriculum map' of topics. These topics follow a two-year cycle to avoid duplication of coverage in mixed-age classes. Overall, there is a good range of resources, and they are used well. The arrangements for assessment are good. There are good opportunities for pupils to visit museums, the local environment, and to go on day trips to Wrotham, and Eynsford to enhance the history and geography curriculum. Both subjects are led well, with the arrangements for monitoring being good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 116 It was possible to see only one lesson being taught during the inspection. Judgements are based on discussions with the pupils, the scrutiny of work, observations of pupils using computers to support their learning in other subjects and a discussion with the coordinator.
- 117 By the time the pupils are seven and eleven, standards are in line with those expected nationally. Word processing skills are strong throughout the school. Since the previous report, when it was judged that standards were unsatisfactory, the school has made significant progress in this area. The main weaknesses are due to some teachers' insecure subject knowledge. In addition, while the use of computers is a carefully planned feature of mathematics, this is not true of all subjects. As yet, there are insufficient strategies and opportunities for information and communication technology planned to support learning across a wider range of subjects.
- 118 By the time the pupils are seven, their word processing skills are generally secure. They can control the mouse and use the keyboard to type their work but they have insufficient opportunities to practise the range of skills they are acquiring. The situation is to be improved shortly with the new building projects to accommodate a computer suite and through inservice training for teachers to coincide with these developments.
- 119 As pupils move through the school, their overall progress has recently been accelerated through the acquisition of the Internet, which some of them are able to use competently. They access it when possible, sending mail electronically, sometimes from home. The teachers and pupils have devised a policy to ensure safe use, which has to be agreed with parents. This is a very good example of the way the school places responsibilities on their pupils and helps them to grow into moral and reflective young people.
- 120 While the overall standard by 11 is in line with national expectations, nevertheless, there is a good proportion of pupils who achieve higher levels. In a discussion and demonstration by Year 6 pupils, it was evident that they could add to, amend and combine a range of information from the Internet for a history project on Ancient Greece. They add music, texts and illustrations to make a lively and imaginative presentation. The teacher seized the opportunity to remind the pupils 'not to use anachronisms'. The pupils understand that the language must be appropriate to the times and cultures. The pupils work well together, cooperating and helping each other with the tasks. They persevere with their tasks until a satisfactory presentation is achieved.

- 121 While not all teachers use information and communication technology fully to support teaching and learning in other subjects, nevertheless, there are some good examples where computers are used to extend learning. For example, the pupils collect information in mathematics and use it for study purposes. In English, following their visit to the theatre, pupils in Years 5 and 6 evaluated the Macbeth production, explaining preferences, such as 'The soliloquies were good' or 'I didn't like the fact that the witches came on stage in army clothes and had a gun in their hands. It was not very believable.' There are examples in classrooms and in corridors, where the pupils have used the computer to generate portraits and advertisements. Computers are used well to support pupils with English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs.
- 122 The subject is managed very well by the coordinator. While the present situation with a lack of appropriate resources is frustrating, nevertheless, she has moved the subject on by organising some inservice training for teachers, and helping staff to use the available equipment as far as it is possible. In addition, she has produced a curriculum framework for each year group, outlining skills to be acquired. Planning shows how information and communication technology can be used in other subjects. The coordinator has also purchased sensing equipment, which the pupils will shortly be able to use, in other subjects of the curriculum, such as science and in geography. Given that the school has such an inadequate level of resources at present, much has been achieved.

MUSIC

- 123 The improvement to standards in music since the previous inspection is very significant. Standards exceed those expected for pupils of seven and 11 years. The quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils of all abilities throughout the school.
- 124 Pupils throughout the school show confidence and maturity when they compose and perform music. This shows a very marked improvement since the previous inspection when standards, by the age of seven, were below and, by the age of 11, well below national expectations. This improvement is because of the enthusiasm of the specialist music teacher and the wide range of musical experiences provided.
- 125 The policy and curriculum plan covers all elements of the National Curriculum. They provide clear outlines of what each year group is expected to learn. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress in performing, composing and in their knowledge and understanding of music are careful and thorough. They give a clear framework for the teacher to plan for improvement to the curriculum. These are significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- 126 By the age of seven pupils sing confidently and use dynamics effectively to create mood. An example of this is when they sing 'The White Cliffs of Dover'. This is a direct result of careful teaching of how to stand, breathe and develop voice control. Pupils in Year 2 conduct skilfully and work hard to achieve pleasing sound effects in their compositions. Careful questioning enables them to evaluate their performance. All pupils show much enthusiasm and enjoyment for music. They respond very well to the teacher. This is reflected in the quality of their work.
- 127 By the age of 11, pupils sing enthusiastically and maintain correct pitch and rhythm in school assemblies. Another example is when Year 4 pupils sing 'Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy'. The teacher encourages all pupils to identify important words and different moods in the song. This improves the finished effect of pupils' singing. All pupils know the importance of posture, breathing, diction, dynamics and phrasing. The teacher ensures that pupils understand the need to practise to improve performance. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and enjoy the interesting teaching. This enables all to achieve and enjoy success.
- 128 Throughout the school pupils make good progress in their learning. This reflects the quality of teaching. The teacher ensures that pupils consolidate and develop their musical knowledge and skills very effectively. Pupils enjoy the challenges in lessons, work hard to improve their skills,

listen carefully to music and show respect for others' efforts. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have opportunities to consolidate their skills and understanding. Pupils who have English as an additional language receive a suitable level of support in lessons. This enables them to learn at a similar rate as their classmates.

- 129 The use of information and communication technology to support work in music is under-developed. The school is aware of this and has plans to correct this shortcoming. Pupils have a rich programme of activities that enhance the curriculum. This includes a Saturday morning music club, a free facility for instrumental playing, working with national orchestras and the English National Opera Company. Opportunities such as these and visits to concerts and musical performances enrich and promote learning and contribute effectively to pupils' achievements.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 130 Pupils aged seven and 11 achieve standards in physical education that are in line with national expectations. Since the previous report, the school has maintained its standards.
- 131 By Year 2, pupils develop good games skills. The majority throw accurately and catch balls accurately from different positions. They show good control and coordination when working in pairs, sending a ball to each other. They know that there is a need to warm up before exercise and have begun to notice the effects of exercise on their bodies.
- 132 As the pupils go through the school, they continue to develop games skills in lessons and in extra-curricular clubs. In dance, they learn to create sequences of movements to form an expressive dance pattern, in response to the seasons depicted by Vivaldi. The teacher asked questions skilfully, such as 'Are you synchronising your movements?' to help the pupils to improve their work. They practise their movements and improve their patterns successfully. The pupils learn to evaluate their own and other pupils' performance by careful watching and comparison. They comment constructively on each other's efforts and recognise examples of good performance. All pupils have swimming lessons in Year 3 and 4 and about 70 per cent of the pupils achieve the 25 metres distance successfully. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who learn through English as an additional language all participate fully in the activities provided for them by their teachers.
- 133 Teaching is generally good throughout the school. All lessons have a clear purpose. The stated learning targets enable the teachers to plan the developments of skills progressively. For example, in one lesson, the pupils began by throwing and catching a ball. The activities were carried out with an increasing degree of accuracy and modified in the light of their performance. As a result, the pupils were being continually challenged to extend their skills. The teachers ensure that their pupils work within safety limits. Pupils respond sensibly and use their initiative.
- 134 The subject is very well led by the coordinator, who is keen to develop the pupils' abilities to the full, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. He organises clubs, competitions and events to extend the pupils' skills and to give them opportunities to take up interests and to mix socially with others. In addition, there are opportunities for the pupils to participate in outdoor pursuits, which are organised annually at centres such as Weymouth, Devon and the Isle of Wight. The pupils at St. Joseph's School have wide and varying experiences, which successfully prepare them for life outside school.