

# INSPECTION REPORT

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

Luton

LEA area: Luton LEA

Unique reference number: 109635

Headteacher: Mr John Flanagan

Reporting inspector Mrs G Jones  
1805

Dates of inspection: 1 - 4 October 2001

Inspection number: 195827

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gardenia Avenue Luton Bedfordshire
Postcode:	LU3 2NS
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M J J White
Date of previous inspection:	9 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1805	Gill Jones	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
16472	Cathy Stormonth	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils?
18804	Pauline Cue	Team inspector	Geography History	
24073	Marita Hopkinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical Education	Equal Opportunities How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
3603	Vaughan Johnson	Team inspector	Science Music	Special Educational Needs
5177	Clive Mitchell	Team inspector	English Art and Design	The school's results and pupils' achievements
20139	Brain McKeon	Team inspector	Information & Communication Technology Design & Technology	English as an Additional Language

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Joseph's is a very large Catholic Junior school, which has grown considerably over recent years. There are 576 pupils aged seven to eleven on roll who are taught in 20 mixed ability classes; there are roughly the same number of boys and girls. St Joseph's serves four local parishes with many pupils travelling some distance to school. They come from a wide range of social backgrounds, twelve per cent are entitled to free school meals, which is typical of the national picture, and there are about 50 pupils from minority ethnic groups. There is a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs (15 per cent) and one child with a statement. There are currently no pupils with English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is above the national average. The school is currently fully staffed although recruitment has been difficult.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

St Joseph's is a very popular school that is held in high regard by the local community. The school's strong leadership and Catholic ethos are successful in promoting very high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Standards of attainment are average and the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The school provides a sound quality of education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well:**

the headteacher provides strong leadership for the school community, successfully promoting the school's aims, values and mission statement;  
the ethos of the school is strong, providing a very secure environment for the pupils;  
spiritual and moral development are very good;  
pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a strength of the school, contributing to their learning and the quality of school life;  
the standard of presentation in pupils' work is constantly high across the school;  
provision for music is a particular strength;  
the school promotes a very strong partnership with parents.

#### **What could be improved:**

the progress of the above average and more able pupils across the curriculum;  
the progress of most pupils in mathematics;  
the impact of monitoring and evaluation on teaching and standards;  
procedures for, and impact of, assessment and target setting.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Since that time it has been successful in raising pupils' attainment in art and in information and communication technology. There has, however, been some decline in standards since the previous inspection although the greater majority of pupils attain average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science remain above average. The overall quality of teaching is similar to the previous inspection, the leadership remains strong and the school maintains its distinctive Catholic ethos. It continues to be held in high regard by parents. There have been improvements in the school development plan so that priorities are now clearly identified and developments are underpinned with sound financial planning. Priorities for improvement do not relate sufficiently to the school's current performance, and success criteria are not yet easily measurable. There is a systematic monitoring programme in place and the outcomes of this are used to plan for improvement. There has been good progress in training for subject co-ordinators and senior managers, and the school has put in place procedures for induction, mentoring and

performance management. Good progress has been made in preparing pupils for life in a multi-ethnic society.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	C	C
mathematics	B	B	C	C
science	C	A	B	B

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

Standards in English and mathematics were average in the 2000 national tests, and were also average when compared to similar schools. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to be above average in all three subjects. Since then, standards in English and mathematics have fallen compared to national averages. The 2001 test results confirm this trend, and, in particular, show that in English and mathematics, higher attaining and more able pupils did not achieve as well as in other schools. Standards in science have remained above average. The school achieved its targets for 2001 in English but not in mathematics. The school has set lower targets for 2002. The school is on course to meet these targets but given that the attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is above average in English and mathematics, they are not high enough.

The findings of the inspection broadly confirm the test results. It found that in English, standards of speaking and listening are good. For most pupils, standards in reading and writing are in line with national expectations across the school and standards in handwriting and presentation are very good. More able pupils are confident readers and writers but have too few opportunities to really extend their skills. In mathematics, by the time pupils leave school, most are confident in applying the four operations to work with numbers and can use associated language accurately. They understand fractions and decimals and can calculate with them in number and money. Whilst standards are in line with national expectations, the work for many pupils does not provide sufficient challenge. Standards in science are above national expectations overall. Most pupils have a very well-developed scientific knowledge, are confident to use scientific vocabulary and to undertake experiments and investigations. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations and many pupils are confident users of ICT. Standards in music are above national expectations and standards in all other subjects are in line with national expectations.

Whilst the majority of pupils make sound progress across the school, progress is generally more limited for above average and more able pupils (except in science), and for most pupils in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and are well supported. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make sound, and often good, progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good - pupils enjoy school and all the challenges on offer. They are enthusiastic and try hard to do their best. They are polite, sensible and responsive and take an obvious pride in their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good and a clear strength of the school. Pupils behave well in and out of class and their behaviour in assemblies and for Mass is exemplary
Personal development and relationships	Good - relationships are strong and pupils enjoy responsibility, accept it willingly and repay the trust placed in them. In some lessons, such as history, pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas and become independent in their learning but this does not happen frequently enough.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, attendance levels are just above the national average - but are affected by a fairly high proportion of term-time holidays.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Aged 7-11 years
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

On balance, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching in English and mathematics is sound overall with examples of good and very good lessons where pupils are challenged; this leads to good progress, especially in the skills of numeracy and literacy. There are some particular strengths in the teaching of music, science and history and the quality of teaching in ICT is good. Teachers and support staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the curriculum. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and make good use of support staff and resources. Classroom assistants make a significant contribution to teaching and learning, especially with the younger pupils. Teaching for pupils with special needs is good but some of the teaching does not provide sufficient challenge for above average and more able pupils. The quality of pupils' learning is good largely because they are well-motivated, really well behaved and have very positive attitudes to school. Homework is set exceptionally well; it is linked clearly to lessons and prepares for, reinforces and extends what pupils learn in school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory - there is a broad and balanced curriculum with literacy and numeracy strategies in place, but short-term planning does not take sufficient account of the needs of above average and more able pupils. A good range of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good - pupils with special educational needs are identified early and given strong support, particularly in the withdrawal groups. Work is carefully planned for them and most make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good - spiritual and moral development are very strong features. The headteacher and staff present very good role models. Assemblies and lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Music and sport are strengths

cultural, development	of extra-curricular activities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good - the school gives high priority to procedures and practices to safeguard the pupils' welfare. This provides a happy, safe and secure environment where good attendance, good behaviour and good work habits are encouraged.

The partnership with parents is strong. Parents have very positive views of the school and are pleased with the education and care provided for their children. The school encourages parents to help their children at home. Parents like the homework diary that allows a helpful dialogue between home and school and also supports children's learning

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school community, well supported by two assistant heads and a number of co-ordinators. There is an increasing emphasis on raising achievement but this does not yet have a sharp enough focus.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a strong commitment to the school; they fulfil their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily and have an effective committee structure. There are good governor links with curriculum co-ordinators.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good procedures in place for monitoring and evaluation. The outcomes from evaluation are used to plan for improvement but this is not always effective. The school is at an early stage with the analysis of data which is not yet sufficiently rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes effective use of the resources available and gives careful consideration to all its spending options when purchasing resources and services. Finances are securely managed.

There are sufficient numbers of teachers, a good number of classroom assistants, and an adequate level of resources. The accommodation is tight, but imaginative use has been made of the buildings to create the maximum space for teaching and learning.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the headteacher's leadership;</li> <li>their children like school, are expected to work hard and are making good progress;</li> <li>the good behaviour in the school;</li> <li>the good teaching;</li> <li>that the school is approachable;</li> <li>that the school is helping their children to become mature;</li> <li>that the school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the amount of work that their children get to do at home;</li> <li>information about their child's progress;</li> <li>the range of activities out of class.</li> </ul>

The comments from parents are exceptionally supportive, underpinning the high regard in which they hold the school. While inspectors support most of the comments, they consider that the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and has exceptionally good

arrangements for homework.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The results of the national tests, taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 in May 2000, indicate that their overall attainment was average in English and mathematics and above average in science. In English and mathematics, these results were lower than in the previous two years and lower than at the time of the previous inspection in 1997.
2. The results of the 2001 national tests are lower in English and mathematics. Whilst in English the proportion of pupils achieving the expected national standard (Level 4) was above average, the proportion achieving above the expected national standard (Level 5) was below average. In mathematics, the proportion achieving Level 4 was average but below average at Level 5. Higher attaining and more able pupils did not achieve as well as in other schools or as well as they should.
3. In science, the results in 2000 and 2001 were above average.
4. The school achieved its targets for 2001 at Level 4 in English but not in mathematics. The school has set lower targets for 2002. Given that the attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is above average in English and mathematics, the 2002 targets are not high enough.
5. The picture painted by the 2001 test results is largely confirmed by the inspection findings.
6. In English, standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Pupils listen well and attentively in class, in assemblies and around the school. They speak confidently and clearly and can offer ideas, opinions and suggestions. In reading, most pupils achieve national expectations. Pupils' reading skills develop well: pupils can read a range of appropriate texts accurately. They can use dictionaries and thesauri confidently. In writing, most pupils also achieve national expectations. Standards of handwriting are very good and pupils' work is very well presented. Higher attaining and more able pupils confidently achieve standards in line with national expectations in English and some achieve higher standards, although they have too few opportunities to really extend their skills.
7. In mathematics, by the time pupils leave school, most are confident in applying the four operations to work with numbers and can use associated language accurately. They understand fractions and can calculate with them in number and money. They can estimate and calculate with decimals. Whilst standards are in line with national expectations, the work for many pupils does not provide them with sufficient challenge.
8. Standards in science are above national expectations overall. Most pupils have a very well developed scientific knowledge and record this well. They are confident to use correct scientific vocabulary, to sort and classify and to undertake experiments and investigations. During the inspection this was shown in good work on exploration of electrical conductivity, methods of and equipment for separating mixtures and, under very carefully controlled conditions, investigating the relationship between micro-organisms and food decay.
9. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations. Pupils are confident users of ICT and by the end of Year 6 they can, for example, access information from the Internet and on CD ROMs.

10. Standards in music exceed national expectations. In all other subjects, standards are in line with national expectations.
11. Whilst the majority of pupils make sound progress across the school, progress is generally more limited for higher attaining and more able pupils (except in science), and for most pupils in mathematics. Pupils with special educational need make sound progress and are supported well. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make sound, and often good, progress.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and even better than they were at the previous inspection. Personal development is good. As pupils move up through the school they develop greater confidence, become more mature and are able to take on more responsibility. Parents are particularly pleased about this. Pupils form very good relationships with their teachers and other pupils. These strengths make an important contribution to the pupils' learning and the quality of school life.
13. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They show good responses to challenge, are keen to learn, concentrate well, listen attentively and answer questions eagerly. They show obvious respect for resources and handle them carefully; this was seen in the computer suite where they took turns calmly and sensibly. Pupils are eager to please their teachers and often the teacher's question results in a sea of hands. They respond well to classroom routines, demonstrate a willingness to improve and a strong determination to succeed. This was a common feature in music lessons when pupils offered helpful and polite appraisals of others' performance. Another strong feature is the supportive culture that is apparent when pupils make a special effort. A less able pupil gave a really good definition of an electrical switch in a Year 4 class and this resulted in spontaneous applause.
14. Behaviour during assemblies and Mass is outstanding. These are important times when pupils give their full attention and participate eagerly. They also show high levels of self-discipline and reverence during other prayer and reflection times. Behaviour during lunchtime in the dining hall is excellent. Large numbers of pupils are well catered for in restricted accommodation and all the arrangements are calm and orderly. Pupils are very sociable and they enjoy lunch in convivial surroundings. Behaviour in both playgrounds is good. Some of the ball games were a little boisterous but pupils, for the most part, have fun in a good-natured way. No pupils have been excluded in recent times and bullying and other oppressive behaviour rarely occurs. Pupils confirmed strongly that "St Joseph's school did not have bullies and did not want bullies."
15. Pupils' personal development is good. They are very friendly, courteous, helpful, and welcoming to visitors. They are very considerate and have good social skills. They listen to each other carefully and are aware of each other's feelings and values. Pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions on others is outstanding and is another major strength of the school. A relative weakness in personal development is the lack of opportunity for pupils to apply their independence and responsible attitudes to their learning. Many lessons are too tightly controlled, restricting pupils' freedom to choose, observe, question, investigate, develop their own ideas and acquire better research skills.
16. Pupils value their time as prefects; they take on classroom jobs during their week of office as well as monitoring behaviour in the absence of the teacher. Many were seen at lunchtimes helping teachers prepare for afternoon lessons by getting resources ready. Pupils enjoy making their class rules; a Year 5 class has class contracts in the form of prayers and pledges. The reward systems work well and pupils are encouraged to try harder, both socially and academically. An entry to the Roll of Honour is a very special accolade. There are many charity drives and pupils devise their own money-making

schemes to support two orphans from Thailand and a priest in Nigeria. The personal, social and health education week extends pupils' personal development and they become aware of how to be responsible young citizens. The residential trips to Dell Farm and Morcombe are also rich sources of learning away from home and beyond the classroom.

17. Attendance is satisfactory. Attendance levels (95.2 per cent) are slightly above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence has dropped significantly in the past year as the result of improved follow up of absences. Absence is mainly attributable to genuine illness and term time holidays, which cause disruption to pupils' education and hinder progress. Punctuality is satisfactory.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

18. On balance the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It has remained about the same as at the time of the previous inspection. Lessons observed during the inspection were sound overall: 92 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better, 35 per cent was good 12 per cent very good or better and 8 per cent less than satisfactory. None were poor or very poor. Teaching for pupils with special needs, in music, history and geography, is frequently good. About one in twelve lessons was unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory lessons were characterised by insufficient preparation, weak control or lack of challenge, all of which resulted in too little progress for the pupils.

19. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour across the school. They manage any inappropriate behaviour very well and create a calm and ordered environment both in and out of the classroom. A really good example of this is the very orderly changeover for sets in mathematics that leads to prompt and orderly starts to lessons. Expectations of pupils' academic achievement are less consistent across the school and result in standards of attainment that are too low for many, particularly the above average and the more able.

20. Teachers have a sound knowledge of National Curriculum subjects and are competent at teaching the basic skills. Their knowledge of National Curriculum levels and assessment criteria is less secure. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is generally sound; sometimes it is good, but the progress of the above average and more able is often limited by work being pitched at too low a level to provide them with sufficient challenge. This results in too few pupils attaining at the higher levels.

21. Lessons start promptly; teachers prepare well for them and provide a good range of resources to support pupils' learning. Classroom assistants make a good contribution to teaching and learning, often focusing on small groups, particularly pupils with special needs, to ensure their access to the curriculum. Teachers' planning clearly focuses on what is to be learned and learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Planning does not often identify what is expected of different groups of pupils. As a result the whole class receives a similar diet that does not always provide enough challenge for all, particularly the above average and more able. Regular evaluations are completed to identify how well lessons went. These evaluations are rather general; they do not provide assessment information to inform how future lessons need to be adapted.

22. There are examples of teachers providing pupils with good oral and written feedback to let them know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This practice is not yet widespread but a review of the marking policy, scheduled in the school development plan, should help to address this. Short-term targets are set with pupils to guide their next stage of learning. These targets are often effective and pupils respond well to them although, overall, they do not focus sufficiently on raising academic achievement.

23. Teachers use a range of effective teaching methods and approaches, particularly for systematic development of basic skills. These have a positive impact on pupils' progress so that presentation skills, for example, are consistently high across the school. In history, geography and science there are open-ended tasks that help pupils to think creatively and achieve well. Overall, the range of teaching approaches across the curriculum more widely does not include enough open-ended explorations or opportunities for making choices, problem solving, creative thinking or using pupils' ideas. This limits pupils' progress particularly at the higher levels of attainment.
24. Homework is used very well to support teaching and learning. Teachers link it well to lessons, using it for preparation, reinforcement and follow-up. Pupils respond well to this and it has a positive impact on the quality of their learning and on the progress that they make.
25. The quality of pupils' learning is mainly good. They are well behaved, well motivated and respond enthusiastically to the opportunities provided for them. Their learning is well supported by the good relationships in the school and by the strong and positive ethos throughout. On balance, however, progress is too slow for many.

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

26. The educational provision offered for pupils is sound; the curriculum is broad and balanced and gives due emphasis to religious education. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and reflects effectively the stated aims of the school. Pupils are taught in their own class groups with the exception of mathematics where they work in sets from early in Year 3. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and these help staff to plan for pupils' progress in skills, knowledge and understanding. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is linked to the national strategies.
27. An overview of the curriculum in each subject sets out the main themes undertaken termly and medium-term plans are securely in place. Short-term plans identify learning objectives, but the needs of the above average and more able pupils are not specifically planned for. This has an adverse effect on the progress of these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and good provision is made to meet their needs. A variety of arrangements, including in-class support and withdrawal, ensures appropriate match of support for them.
28. Links with the community are strong and have a very positive impact on provision. There is a programme of visits and visitors to school and there are good links with partner institutions. Year 6 pupils and staff work on a joint project to assist transfer and induction into the secondary phase. A wide range of extra-curricular activities including netball, football, cricket, swimming, athletics, recorders, choir, orchestra and clubs for art, gardening and wild life, support the curriculum. Pupils compete in local swimming galas and there are school performances, that involve many pupils, twice a year. The quality of the curriculum is also enhanced by the use of the school grounds and the local environment, particularly in science and geography.
29. Very good use is made of homework to extend and strengthen curricular provision.
30. Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is very good overall and is a strength of the school. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in provision for spiritual development.
31. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school's policy encompasses its mission statement "Building God's Kingdom Together" and this is fully reflected in its

work. All classrooms have special displays and symbols, which are used as the focus for prayer and reflection. An annual programme of Masses and assemblies effectively promotes pupils' spiritual development. Feast days are also celebrated. During the inspection, a first Mass for Year 3 included the dedication of a new altar made by a parent and funded by the 'Friends of St Joseph'. Pupils also visit the nearby church for whole school Masses. In lessons, teachers take opportunities to develop a sense of wonder. In a science lesson pupils were amazed at mould growth and the effect of yeast when making bread. When contrasting their locality with others, in geography, they showed surprise and had some of their misconceptions challenged.

32. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The headteacher and staff are strong role models for pupils and a clear code of conduct is known and understood by all members of the school community. Pupils know right from wrong, learn to show respect, tolerance and care for all and can explain the effect of their actions on others. This has a clear impact on their relationships and behaviour in school. The school's commitment to supporting a number of charities and its links with the local home for elderly citizens help pupils to understand the needs of others. An outreach link with a special school ensures the successful integration of a pupil on a part-time basis and helps pupils to develop empathy and awareness.
33. Provision for pupils' social development is good. There is an outline scheme of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including sex education, and developments are planned by the enthusiastic new co-ordinators. Many aspects of PSHE are currently being addressed within religious education, science and physical education. For example, the 'Lifebus' road show is used to support work on drugs education, and a TV series for sex education. During the annual PSHE week, a comprehensive range of activities is planned for pupils in all age groups. This year, Year 6 produced a manifesto on 'improving things around the school' which resulted in improvements at playtimes. A group is organised by the headteacher and other staff to help children deal with loss. This is a strong and successful feature of the school's work. Pupils are taught to deal with their feelings and emotions positively. Staff show sensitivity in their management of pupils and encourage them to listen, play and work co-operatively. Achievements both in and out of school are recognised and recorded.
34. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Music is a strong feature of cultural development; many pupils have the opportunity to sing or play an instrument. Years 5 and 6 are selected for football and netball teams and compete regularly and successfully with other schools. There is a programme of visits for all pupils, from local walks and visits for lower juniors to residential trips for Years 5 and 6. The school has strengthened the multicultural dimension of the curriculum since the previous inspection. The new co-ordinator has established links with the local resource centre to enable teachers to draw on a range of resources to support their work, and curriculum opportunities have been identified for all age groups. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were contrasting life in Bangalore with their own lives, some were observed learning to play the sitar, and teachers who attended sessions on African music were able to use this to teach songs and dances to their classes. The school is well placed to continue to develop this work.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

35. The care and support that the school provides have improved since the previous inspection and help to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum. Teachers know their pupils very well and pupils are confident in their approaches to their teachers and other adults in the school. This helps them to feel safe and secure. The school gives a high priority to a very good range of procedures to encourage good attendance, behaviour and work habits.

36. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Registers are consistently maintained and absences are followed up rigorously to reduce unauthorised absence levels. Visits by the Education Welfare Officer ensure that the school takes all reasonable steps to improve attendance. The school tries to discourage term time holidays especially in the period leading up to and including the national tests but parents do not always heed this advice.
37. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very successful. Pupils are familiar with their own class rules, the school rules and the school's mission statement. They have high expectations of their own behaviour and behave very well. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are outstanding. On the rare occasion that bullying is reported, the headteacher takes effective action and reports back to parents.
38. Arrangements for child protection are good and meet all statutory requirements. The headteacher is the designated person, and staff are fully aware of the local child protection systems. All injuries to pupils are closely monitored. When pupils are sick or injured they receive a high level of care and attention; all medical conditions are well catered for. The school has good systems for carrying out routine health and safety checking and these are well documented. This is a big improvement on the previous inspection and gives greater assurance that the school is a safe and secure place. School lunches are home cooked and provide good, healthy and nutritious meals which pupils really enjoy.
39. Pupils' personal development and achievement are monitored satisfactorily by teachers, who know them very well. Parents indicate full satisfaction with the strong, inclusive ethos and the way in which their children are supported and valued. At the year's end, staff are allocated time for an exchange of information on personal development to the receiving teacher in preparation for the year ahead. The best target-tracking files include comments on how pupils are developing personal qualities, and how much effort they make. There is, however, inconsistency in these records and some comments are too general to be useful. Procedures are securely in place for assessing special needs provision and pupils' progress.
40. In the previous inspection there was little formal use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning. Although a number of assessment systems have been put in place, the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress remain weak overall. The results of national and optional assessments in English, mathematics, spelling and reading are available but are not yet analysed sufficiently to project pupils' future potential and set targets for their attainment.
41. Target-tracking records are kept for each class to indicate the progress being made. Overall, the quality of the records is unsatisfactory; many do not provide a clear picture of progress. There is a good system of pupil self-assessment, marking is undertaken regularly and some teachers use it to provide good feedback to pupils, but this practice is not widespread across the school.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

42. The school continues to have a very strong partnership with parents and their views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. They are very supportive and are highly satisfied with the education provided for their children. Parents feel welcome and are kept informed about their children's progress and the day-to-day life of the school.
43. Parents particularly like the approachability of the headteacher and the welcoming and caring environment in the school. They had slight misgivings about the range of extra-curricular activities provided but the inspection team found that the range of extra-curricular activities is good overall for a junior school, particularly in music and sporting activities.

44. The school has good arrangements for family induction and transfer from the infant school, allowing children to settle quickly and happily. Parents are provided with a booklet for new entrants and a full and well-written prospectus. Other class letters are also good and let parents know what their children will be learning. A regular school newsletter keeps parents fully in touch with other news and information.
45. The quality of information parents receive about their children's progress is satisfactory overall with strengths and weaknesses. There are formal consultations termly which provide an opportunity for them to discuss their children's work and share their new targets for learning. Staff also make themselves available at the end of each day to discuss any immediate issues with parents. School reports do not, however, meet statutory requirements. There is too little information on the knowledge, skills and understanding pupils have acquired over the past year and advice on how they should improve is inconsistent. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good. Homework is regularly set and forms an important part of learning. The homework diaries are used well and provide a useful way to remind parents of pupils' targets and for parents to communicate with the school.
46. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. Some volunteer to help in school, are given good guidance and are deployed well in a number of ways such as helping with swimming and hearing readers. During the inspection a Year 3 class was accompanied by parents on a walk to Norton Road School. In a history lesson pupils quizzed some parents on their ancestry and life experiences. Parents support their children in large numbers by attending assemblies, Masses, productions, curriculum meetings, sporting events and music activities. There was standing room only at the first Year 3 Mass. The Friends of St Joseph's School is a very impressive, well organised and hardworking group raising large amounts of money and providing the school with a busy social calendar. This money has purchased, amongst other things, computers, play and PE equipment, the new school altar and outdoor seating. The Friends of St Joseph's canvas the views of parents who suggest fresh ideas for helping the school. In this way parents make a good contribution to children's learning and help improve the quality of school life.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

47. The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school community and is held in high regard by staff, pupils, parents and governors. There is a very positive ethos firmly based on the school's mission statement 'Building God's Kingdom Together' and its aims and values are clearly lived out in day-to-day life. Relationships are strong throughout and there is a full commitment to providing equal opportunities for all.
48. The school was unable to recruit a new deputy when the previous one left last year. In the light of this, the headteacher and governors took the decision to create a new management structure. Two assistant heads and an office manager have been appointed to direct the strategic work of the school, and a wider management team contributes significantly to more operational management. This system is at an early stage but is already working well. Co-ordinators' roles are well developed and they play an important part in subject leadership across the school. Some staff have a very heavy workload, while, for others, this is much lighter; this has an impact on the effectiveness of some work.
49. There is a clear direction for the school's work, which is known and understood by staff and governors. The school is aware of the need to raise standards and its development plan clearly identifies priorities for improvement. The priorities are not based sufficiently on the school's current performance and progress towards targets, and the plan does not fully address how standards will be raised and how improvement will be measured. Priorities are supported through sound financial planning.

50. Clear procedures and policies have been put in place for the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum planning, teaching and standards; this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher, year heads, co-ordinators and governors are involved in the monitoring programme. Strengths and weaknesses are identified through monitoring activities and this information feeds into the school's planning for improvement. The impact of monitoring is limited, however, as evaluations do not always give a clear picture of what needs to improve, how and by when. For example, feedback on teaching and lesson planning does not provide clear strategies and timetables for development and, as a result, there is too little improvement. Data analysis is at an early stage of development and is not yet sufficiently detailed to inform target setting for individuals, groups or the school. Improving the use of data and pupil tracking is identified as a priority in the school development plan.
51. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and have an effective committee structure. They are very supportive of the school and the chair of governors is in regular contact with the headteacher. There are good individual governor links with curriculum co-ordinators. The link governors provide monitoring reports for the whole governing body and this helps to keep them well informed about these areas of the school's work. The roles of governors in strategic planning and as critical friends are not yet fully developed.
52. Staff training and appraisal were issues at the time of the last inspection. Performance management is securely in place and teachers' targets are contributing to professional development programmes. Standards funds are appropriately targeted to staff training and all staff have an annual entitlement. Currently there is no overall staff development plan which details how the training needs of individuals and the school will be met to ensure that resources are targeted to the areas of greatest need. Procedures for induction are in place and there is an informative staff handbook.
53. The school makes efficient use of the resources it has available. There are sufficient teachers and support staff and all curriculum areas are suitably resourced. Accommodation is tight but the school has made good use of all available space to provide an attractive learning environment. There is an adequate library and a good ICT suite. The school has only one hall and this has to be used for many purposes: assemblies, dinners, physical education etc. This is difficult to manage and places restriction on such things as the physical education programme and parental attendance at assemblies, Masses and school productions. Finance is appropriately targeted for maintenance and improvement of the buildings. The school's finances are securely managed and there are clear plans in place for the current underspend. The principles of best value are applied to spending decisions.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. The school has many strengths. The headteacher provides strong leadership for the community and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are very good. It is important now that the school directs its attention to raising standards. In order to do this, the headteacher staff and governors should:

- 1) Improve the progress of the above average and more able pupils across the curriculum, and the progress of most pupils in mathematics by:
  - making these issues an immediate priority;
  - including in teachers' planning specific objectives for these pupils;
  - broadening the range of teaching strategies to include more open ended tasks and more opportunities for:
    - making choices;
    - creative thinking;
    - problem solving;
    - using the pupils' own ideas.

(paragraphs: 1,2,6,7,11,15,18,19,20,22,23,25,55,56,62,63,64,71,72,73,84,92,95,102,103,121,132,148 )

- 2) Improve the impact of monitoring and evaluation on teaching and standards through action by the headteacher, and senior management team to ensure that:
  - clear and shared criteria are in place for evaluating the quality of teaching and planning;
  - teachers are clear about what they need to do to improve and by when;
  - areas for improvement focus appropriately on raising standards of attainment;
  - there is a systematic follow-up programme to ensure that improvements have been made;
  - the strengths identified are used in modelling and coaching for other teachers;
  - the outcomes of monitoring are used systematically to target training for the whole staff and for individuals;and through action by the headteacher and governors to ensure that:
  - school development planning is focused according to the data and that it identifies specific and measurable targets;
  - the analysis and use of data is further improved.

(paragraphs: 4,49,50,67,80,82,108)

- 3) Improve procedures for, and the impact of, assessment and target setting by:
  - using value added data from the Autumn Package and other sources to set high expectations;
  - setting National Curriculum targets for all year groups;
  - using the information gathered to inform curriculum planning and to set challenging short-term targets for all pupils;
  - improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of National Curriculum levels through whole staff training;
  - implementing with some urgency the planned programme for tracking pupil progress;
  - improving day-to-day assessment and its impact on teachers' planning.

(paragraphs: 4,20,21,22,39,40,41,70,95,107,119,132 )

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	135
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	14	47	60	11	0	0
Percentage	2	10	35	44	8	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	576
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	86

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.4	School data	0.4
National comparative data	5.2	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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	81	62	143

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	69	66	74
	Girls	55	48	58
	Total	124	114	132
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (86)	80 (80)	92 (88)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	58	70	65
	Girls	57	51	54
	Total	115	121	119
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (87)	85 (88)	83 (91)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	23
Black – African heritage	17
Black – other	6
Indian	3
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	512
Any other minority ethnic group	11

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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	23.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	28.25

### Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	247

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	1,083,688
Total expenditure	1,071,217
Expenditure per pupil	1,837
Balance brought forward from previous year	80,765
Balance carried forward to next year	93,236

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	571
Number of questionnaires returned	303

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	34	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	32	3	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	46	9	3	1
The teaching is good.	64	32	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	41	9	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	19	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	49	42	6	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	71	26	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	37	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	43	12	3	10

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

### **ENGLISH**

55. The results of the national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2001 indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected national standard (Level 4) was above average. The proportion achieving above the expected standard (Level 5) was well below the national average. At Level 5, pupils' writing results were better than their reading results. In both reading and writing, girls achieved better results than boys.
56. Compared to similar schools the results at Level 4 were above average in 2000 and 2001. The results at Level 5 were below average in both years. Improving the attainment of the more able pupils is a clear priority.
57. The inspection findings broadly reflect this picture. In speaking and listening, the inspection found that pupils' standards are above national expectations. Pupils speak confidently, clearly and articulately. They were very forthcoming in giving their views of the school to inspectors! They learn to use appropriate language in other areas of the curriculum, for example, in a Year 5 music lesson pupils gave good explanations about the texture of the music they had just listened to. Similarly in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils were able to give clear explanations of problems relating to the measurement of time. When given the opportunity, pupils can discuss things well, for example, in a science lesson about the human body. In English lessons pupils have opportunities to offer their views and opinions although examples of extended explanations were rare.
58. Pupils listen carefully and attentively. This is evident in all aspects of the school – in classrooms, school assemblies and around the school generally. Their listening skills are good not only when listening to adults but also when listening to each other. In an art lesson, for example, pupils listened well to each other when discussing their work.
59. Most pupils clearly enjoy reading and can read a range of appropriate texts accurately. This is fostered by teachers' choices of good reading material in English lessons. In one Year 5 class, for example, the novel 'Babe (the sheep-pig)' was at the right level to appeal to the pupils, and to provide a reasonable challenge in terms of vocabulary to many. In a Year 6 class, 'Goodnight Mr Tom' similarly maintained pupils' interest. In Years 3 and 4, teachers work hard to secure basic skills in reading. In all years, pupils are given opportunities to read quietly and to choose from a range of material both in the classrooms and in the school library. A careful record of the books the pupils have read is maintained, and in Years 5 and 6 pupils are often expected to review what they have read. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6, most can use dictionaries and thesauri well to help them with reading and writing. They can make notes - for example, on a history video about the 'Victorian Poor' (Year 6) - and retrieve information - for example, in a Year 5 geography lesson on St Lucia.
60. Pupils learn to write in a range of styles. For example, one Year 5 class was writing in the style of a particular author and another in the style of a journalist. They compare and contrast texts on similar themes, such as poems on the sea in Year 4. Pupils focus on particular aspects of writing too, for example, the characters in the class novel in a Year 5 class. There is a firm focus on the skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Year 3 pupils, for example, were learning the rules of spelling when adding '-ing', and appropriate 'word families'. Standards of spelling are in line with national expectations. Overall standards of handwriting and presentation are very good throughout the school. Most pupils master a fluent cursive style and present their work neatly.

61. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching in all year groups. There was a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. In the good lessons, teachers provide pupils with clear illustrations and explanations about what they are expected to achieve and set interesting and challenging tasks to help them achieve it. A typical example was a Year 5 lesson in which pupils studied the characters in the class novel. The teacher worked on an example with the whole class and then set appropriate tasks for groups of pupils. A plenary session at the end of the lesson helped pupils to summarise what they had learned. The pace of the lesson was brisk and helped to maintain pupils' concentration. Similar qualities were seen in a Year 4 lesson on poetry which focused on developing rhythm.
62. The teaching of English skills is consistently competent, but some lessons on spelling were seen which were a little dull. In contrast to the lively lessons in which spelling is taught well, the pace of these lessons was slower and there was less interaction between pupils and teachers. In the small proportion of unsatisfactory lessons, there was a mismatch between the learning objectives and the pupils' activities and, in one, the pace was much too slow.
63. Reading is taught thoroughly with a sound and appropriate emphasis in Years 3 and 4. The teaching of reading ensures that a high proportion of pupils achieve national expectations. Whilst higher attaining and more able pupils are confident and fluent readers, there are insufficient teaching strategies to really extend the reading of these pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6. Similarly, the teaching of writing is thorough and ensures that a high proportion of pupils achieve national expectations. The more able pupils can write fluently and at length. In the lesson observations there were no examples of teachers making clear to the higher attaining and more able pupils what they needed to do in order to extend their writing to higher levels of attainment. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 go to extension classes once per week. Whilst the teaching in the Year 6 extension class is excellent, the withdrawal of pupils for extension lessons is not a sufficient strategy to ensure that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 improves. The focus here needs to be on ensuring that class teaching includes clear and specific strategies for extending reading and writing to higher levels of attainment.
64. The teaching of English is planned thoroughly throughout the school and is consistent between classes and year groups. Although the school has not implemented the full Literacy Hour, the planning draws on the objectives from the National Literacy Strategy framework. The planning does not identify specific objectives for higher-attaining pupils in reading and writing other than for spelling and aspects of grammar and punctuation.
65. Pupils with special educational needs in English are supported well, the quality of the teaching they receive from special needs support teachers is good, and they make the expected progress. The progress for the above average and more able is too slow.
66. Pupils engage well in their English lessons with positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive in class, willing to answer questions and work well together in pairs and in groups.
67. The subject is led and managed well by the co-ordinator. Writing was a priority last year in the school development plan and this has clearly had some impact on raising standards, although reading standards have fallen. Strategies for raising boys' attainment have been discussed and these need to be implemented consistently. This underlines the need for English to remain a priority until standards have risen and are secure. The co-ordinator has monitored the subject well, with clear reports to the staff. This monitoring now needs to focus on ensuring that planning includes specific strategies for extending reading and writing and improving the range of teaching strategies.

68. Resources for English are adequate throughout the school and are continually reviewed and improved by the co-ordinator and the staff. The school library is well organised, with good systems in place to help pupils locate the books they need. All pupils are timetabled for using the library and are taught appropriate library skills.
69. Plans are in place to computerise library-lending procedures; this will give a good system for tracking pupils' usage.
70. Standards in English were above average at the time of the previous inspection. Whilst most of the strengths identified then have been sustained, standards at Level 5 have fallen. The school now needs to:
  - sustain and extend the initiatives begun last year;
  - implement specific class teaching strategies to raise attainment in reading, and to continue to raise attainment in writing, for more able pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. The results of the national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2001 indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected national standard (Level 4) was just in line with the national average. The proportion achieving above the expected standard (Level 5) was below the national average.
72. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for Key Stage 2, standards in mathematics were a little above average at Level 4, average at Level 5 and average when compared with similar schools. Having risen sharply in 1999, standards have dropped over the past two years. Work seen during the inspection closely mirrors this picture. Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with above average attainment and leave with average attainment. This represents unsatisfactory progress for most pupils.
73. The school is implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and the three-part lesson structure is well established. Pupils are placed in sets for mathematics in Years 4, 5 and 6 and, in Year 3, following half a term in the school. Teacher assessment and tests are used to inform pupils' initial set placement, and this is reviewed regularly. While progress for most pupils is too slow, the top and bottom sets make satisfactory progress overall.
74. In Year 3, many pupils know number bonds, doubles and near doubles. They are confident with the language of addition and subtraction and many know the time on the hour and half past. They learn to use calendars to indicate days of the week and months of the year. They can make simple measurements of length and identify a number of two and three-dimensional shapes. They know how to record calculations in money using appropriate symbols.
75. In Year 4, pupils are taught that division is the inverse operation of multiplication. They know their two, five and ten times tables. They learn about units of measurement and how to convert centimetres to metres and millimetres to centimetres. They learn to measure accurately using rulers, metre sticks and trundle wheels. They learn about money and how they can link their calculations to work in number.
76. In Year 5, pupils are taught about fractions and how to find fractions of numbers and shapes. They recognise equivalent and improper fractions. They learn about percentages and how these work in real life situations. They are taught to order and round numbers and explain their reasoning. They learn about numbers, place value and decimals.
77. In Year 6, many pupils are familiar with the four rules of number and the associated language. They know how to use brackets in calculations and most are secure in their

knowledge of basic number bonds and multiplication tables. During the inspection pupils were working on fractions and using them to calculate in number and measurement. They learn how to cancel fractions to their lowest form, to add simple fractions and about the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages.

78. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching and a small number of very good lessons was seen in all year groups. There was also a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Most teachers have clear learning objectives that they share with pupils; in some classes, these are used well to evaluate learning. Effective use is made of resources to support learning, and classroom assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
79. In the best lessons teachers use well-structured and targeted questions to keep pupils involved, clarify their understanding and assess their knowledge. Accurate language is well promoted and modelled. Clear explanations and the use of demonstration help pupils to learn. Mental starters are well paced and used effectively to reinforce taught strategies e.g. doubling and halving. Plenaries revisit objectives and reinforce learning. Whiteboards are used well to involve pupils and to enable them to work out their calculations.
80. Where teaching is less effective, the pace is slow and too much time is spent on whole class teaching resulting in insufficient progress for many. Although considerable effort is invested in lesson evaluation, comments are often too general and do not often result in adjustments to planning.
81. Pupils across the school have very good attitudes to mathematics. They are keen to discuss their work, present it well and contribute fully in plenary sessions. Behaviour is consistently well managed and transfer between sets runs smoothly with little time lost. Relationships in class are very good. Pupils are taught formal recording methods from an early stage and this, combined with consistent expectations, ensures that the school's policy is implemented successfully. Marking is broadly in line with school policy but much of it lacks the level of feedback needed for individual pupils to know how to improve.
82. The subject is led by a co-ordinator who is also a year group leader and assistant head. An action plan details specific tasks to guide her work and she is fully aware of the need to raise standards. In conjunction with other year leaders, planning is monitored regularly and written feedback is given. She has also monitored lessons, given feedback to teachers and written a report for staff. This is beginning to have an impact on school practice. For instance, as a result of the most recent monitoring, plenary sessions have improved. Improvements to the system for recording pupils' progress are being introduced and this should result in a clear picture of what is known and understood by individual pupils. Currently, however, the system is insufficiently robust to enable individual progress to be tracked and monitored. Given the school's current standards, mathematics requires a higher priority in the school development plan.
83. The school has invested in a range of new resources to facilitate teaching and learning; overall, resources are satisfactory. An annual audit takes into account gaps in provision. ICT links are being developed and examples of computers being used to support learning were observed in some classes. Very good arrangements for homework are in place and consistently applied by teachers so that pupils and parents know what is expected. The homework diary encourages a good dialogue with home.
84. Overall, progress since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. At that time, teaching and progress were judged to be good and standards were above the national average. The current picture indicates a decline in standards, which are now significantly lower. There is evidence to suggest that the numeracy training received has had a positive

impact on teaching and, if mathematics is given high priority, the school should be well placed to improve.

## SCIENCE

85. Science continues to be a strength of the school. By the end of Year 6, standards in science are above average, both in relation to national averages and to standards achieved by similar schools. This picture was maintained and indeed improved at Level 4 in the 2001 end of key stage tests, although there is a decline at Level 5.
86. Most pupils have a very good scientific knowledge and they record this well. They are confident to use correct scientific vocabulary, to sort and classify animals, plants and materials and to undertake experiments and investigations. During the inspection this was shown in good work exploring electrical conductivity, investigating methods of and equipment for separating mixtures, work on food chains and, under carefully controlled conditions, investigating the relationship between micro-organisms and food decay.
87. Pupils are developing good scientific methods as they undertake more investigative work and are confident to explain methods of fair testing. Work samples show a good range of such tests and investigations occurring throughout the school. The school is continuing to focus on improving this aspect of science.
88. Since the previous inspection, the school has sustained high standards in science. The vast majority of pupils meet or exceed national benchmarks and the school performs better than similar schools. Response to the subject is still very positive and pupils make sound and often good progress, particularly at the upper end of the school.
89. Recent improvements in the provision of computer equipment have led to better access to relevant programs and had a positive impact on learning. Examples of this include researching good drawings of the skeleton and selecting, arranging and printing diagrams of food chains and habitats. Plans are in hand to develop ICT links further, particularly in relation to data capture.
90. The teaching of science in the school is good overall and some is very good. This is characterised by well-planned and prepared lessons, which enable pupils to know exactly what they are setting out to learn. Teachers' interactions with pupils help them to develop confidence in their investigations, predictions or hypotheses and recording methods. Effectively managed plenary sessions review results, conclusions, check and reinforce learning or explore applications of principle.
91. There is good support from teaching assistants for all pupils, but particularly for those with special educational needs. Some staff provide work which is very carefully matched to specific needs of groups and individuals. Such pupils therefore make good progress.
92. In a very small proportion of classes, progress was restricted by too much talking by the teacher, provision of worksheets and results formats which did not encourage pupils to think or develop their own methods. In others, there was some over-concentration on writing and recording rather than planning and investigating.
93. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. The pupils are attentive, hardworking, responsive and collaborate well.
94. The subject also benefits from very good leadership and management. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, promotes confidence, has very good science teaching skills and has produced excellent monitoring reports. These have led to improvements in teaching and learning.

95. Time and emphasis are given to the subject, which benefits from a good scheme of work, a clear policy and a high profile in the school through displays and resources. Good resources and decentralised storage systems help pupils and staff to access appropriate equipment even when large numbers are engaged on similar activities. Next steps should include even more investigative work, which is a focus in the current school development plan, and more open-ended recording, more careful assessment, target-setting and tracking, particularly for more able pupils, and a check on the value of current provision for enrichment activities, some of which does not significantly motivate or extend the pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

96. Standards in art and design are just in line with national expectations. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were below national expectations. Since then the school has implemented a new scheme of work, undertaken a range of staff training, improved art resources and ensured that art is taught regularly in each class. The combination of these measures has ensured that improvement has come about.
97. A range of art activities was seen during the inspection week. Pupils in Year 3 were experimenting with line and extending a pattern using watercolours. For many pupils this was their first encounter with watercolours and the overall standard of their work was good. Many could use a sable-hair brush to paint fine as well as heavy lines, match colours and extend existing patterns. In Year 4, pupils were looking at symbols to depict a familiar route. Where this worked well, pupils were provided with a range of materials from which to choose and could use them to create effects and moods.
98. In Year 5, pupils were focusing on the skills and techniques of paper laminating and decorative techniques and most pupils were able to design, make and decorate a laminated container. Many pupils showed careful control of this more disciplined work. In Year 6, lessons were based upon the theme of 'the moving body'. Again good resources, such as small jointed figures, helped pupils to focus on their drawing skills. Whilst these skills vary between very good and below average, most pupils were able to develop a series of moving figures.
99. In most lessons pupils made reasonable progress. In some lessons, progress was good because pupils had plenty of opportunity to experiment and use appropriate materials, and received unobtrusive but helpful guidance from the teacher.
100. The overall quality of teaching in art is satisfactory, with some good teaching and a little that is unsatisfactory. Where the teaching is good, resources are used well, as illustrated above, pupils are given a degree of choice in their work and a high proportion of the lesson is devoted to pupil activity. Where the teaching is weaker, too long is spent directing and explaining and there are too few opportunities for pupils to make choices and develop their own creativity. A sound feature of many lessons is the use of the work of artists to illustrate the theme – such as the work of the sculptress Elizabeth Frink in Year 6.
101. Pupils have good attitudes to art and apply themselves well to their tasks. They support each other well and can sustain their concentration. They can offer useful comments and suggestions about their own and each other's work.
102. The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a clear view of current strengths and areas for improvement. The subject has been monitored recently, focusing upon the implementation of the scheme of work. In order to sustain improvement, the school needs to focus on the progression of key skills across the school and ensure that

pupils have ample opportunity to develop their own ideas through combining and organising different techniques and materials.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103. Evidence from the lessons observed, the work displayed around the school and the discussions with teachers and pupils, indicates that attainment in design and technology is broadly in line with national expectations by Year 6. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in developing their skills of designing and making. More should be expected of the most able pupils but some teachers are unsure what to do about this because of their own limited confidence in the subject.
104. Pupils can work with a variety of materials. They learn to sketch or model their designs before constructing the finished article. Many pupils are beginning to apply their knowledge of the suitability of materials for a task. This was observed in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were examining the construction of heat-pads and assessing the suitability of wadding as an insulator of heat. When pupils in Year 4 were designing pop-up books for younger children, they were able to take into account the needs of the users. Through effective group discussions they concluded that the product should be interesting as well as being safe and durable. In Year 3, pupils when designing bags, were able to focus on the purpose of the finished product and they were also able to reflect upon their designs and to make refinements and modifications. On balance, there is an over-emphasis on the use of paper and card and there is too little experience of systems and control.
105. Pupils show interest in design and technology and willingly discuss what they are doing. They are enthusiastic and obviously enjoy their work. They co-operate and collaborate well when they work as part of a team. All pupils are very responsible and take care of equipment and use it appropriately. Teachers and pupils are aware of the importance of safe working practices and safety is given due emphasis at the start of each lesson.
106. Teaching standards are satisfactory, overall. Teachers have a sound understanding of the National Curriculum requirements for the subject though some lack confidence and expertise. There has been a specific focus on improving the teaching of design as this was cited as a weakness in the previous inspection report. Although there is still some way to go, this aspect of the teaching has improved significantly, and as a direct result of this, pupils' designing skills are developing well. A broad range of work has been planned although there are too few opportunities provided for pupils to make choices and to develop and communicate their own ideas.
107. There are systems in place for assessing pupils' work and tracking their progress. These systems are not consistently well-used and so pupils do not always get the help they need to improve.
108. The co-ordinator encourages and supports other teachers well. There is some monitoring of curriculum planning and of pupils' work but the process currently lacks the rigour required to impact upon standards and teaching. Improving staff confidence and expertise and implementing an effective monitoring system have been usefully identified as priorities for development. The school has a good range of resources to support teaching and learning in the subject.
109. Since the previous inspection in 1997, the school has maintained the same levels of pupils' achievement at the end of the key stage. Pupils' skills in design have improved

and there have also been some improvements in the quality of teaching so that it is now satisfactory, overall.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. By Year 6, standards in geography are in line with national expectations. The evidence suggests that this is also true of Years 3 and 4, although few lessons were seen in these classes. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection.
111. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a good understanding of what it would be like to live in the places they have studied, and can use the correct geographical vocabulary. The books of previous Year 6 pupils show a good understanding of how human activities can change the environment, and a well-developed sense of personal responsibility. In these aspects, pupils achieve higher standards than the national average. The subject makes a very effective contribution to pupils' personal, social and moral education.
112. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, because they are supported well by teachers and classroom assistants. Extension work for more able pupils has been identified as a priority for development by the co-ordinator. Currently the progress of these pupils is slower than that of others.
113. Teaching is generally satisfactory. Pupils know the purpose of their work and are able to focus on key geographical questions because the teachers' planning is good, and learning objectives are shared effectively. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations and pupils respond accordingly. For example, Year 5 pupils took part in a role play about the effects of building new hotels in St Lucia. They were able to work out the views of different interest groups by drawing on information provided and their knowledge of the island from previous studies.
114. The previous inspection found that pupils were not always provided with opportunities to develop their own ideas. This has improved and is now an issue in only a small minority of lessons. The pace of lessons is generally good, but sometimes introductions are over-long, leading to pressure of time on independent work.
115. Where ICT is used, it contributes significantly to pupils' learning. In one lesson, a pair of Year 3 pupils took great interest in investigating and labelling an aerial photograph of the school, and were able to explain in detail what they had found out. The use of ICT to support the subject is still developing, and has been identified by the co-ordinator as a priority.
116. There is some variation in the subject's contribution to literacy; all teachers stress the use of correct vocabulary and encourage pupils to explain their views, but the quality and independence of written work varies.
117. Pupils respond well to the subject. They are interested and keen to take part, and, because teachers have created a good classroom atmosphere, they are able to say what they think.
118. The co-ordinator has worked hard to build up a good range of resources, which contribute well to pupils' progress. However, the small size of some of the rooms hinders movement and therefore pupils' participation in discussions.
119. The scheme of work for geography has been updated, and supports teaching by providing a focus for key questions in the subject, suggesting a useful range of assessment activities, and encouraging creativity. It needs to be expanded to provide more guidance

on teaching more able pupils. Although monitoring in the subject is established, further development is needed to ensure consistency of approach by all staff. There is some good assessment practice but this is inconsistent across the school.

## **HISTORY**

120. Standards are average overall but above average in some aspects of history. Year 6 pupils can distinguish confidently between key aspects of the lives of the Tudors studied in Year 5 and the Victorians, their new topic. They also have a comprehensive picture of the Tudor period. Opportunities for independent research help them to develop this deeper understanding. Pupils achieve higher standards than expected in their understanding and use of historical sources. For example, Year 5 pupils, even those with special educational needs, know the difference between primary sources (such as classical Greek pottery) and secondary sources (such as books about ancient Greece). Year 6 pupils can discuss why some sources are more useful than others when finding out about the Victorian poor.
121. The quality of teaching in history is good. It was good or better in over half the lessons seen. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. Less able pupils make good progress as a result of effective support from teachers and classroom assistants, but the most able pupils do not achieve as well as expected because teaching does not provide the additional challenge they need. This has been identified by the co-ordinator as a priority for development.
122. Teachers' planning is clear and objectives are shared with pupils, enabling them to understand the purpose of what they are doing. Pupils' success in using evidence arises from teachers' planning and careful questioning.
123. In general, teachers use resources well. Pupils develop skills and understanding through study of the school and the surrounding area, in relation to historical photographs. Year 4 pupils interviewed some parents about their early lives and why they came to Luton. A well-planned Year 3 visit to a neighbouring school, built early in the last century, created opportunities for spiritual development as well as enabling pupils to make deductions from evidence. Visits further afield, for example to the Tudor manor of Kentwell, also help to bring the subject alive and are vividly remembered by pupils.
124. In most cases, there is consistency between the opportunities offered by teachers of parallel classes. However, there is still a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, where preparation is inadequate and the resources provided do not enable pupils to engage effectively in the task.
125. Most teachers expect a good standard of written work, and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' development in literacy. However, in some classes, work is left unfinished due to pressure of time, which makes it harder for pupils to build up a picture of a historical period.
126. History contributes well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through the range of topics covered and the way that they are tackled. Pupils' response to the subject is generally very good. Teachers' own enthusiasm and perseverance engage those few older pupils who are initially reluctant to join in.
127. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has provided effective support for the development of teachers' skills in the subject. The recently revised scheme of work, which focuses on key questions and on historical enquiry, is a major factor in providing continuity and progression. It also brings out opportunities for the use of ICT in the subject, which is a successful, recent development. Monitoring by the co-ordinator

ensures that plans are consistent and will be extended to include teaching and pupil progress. The co-ordinator recognises that curriculum liaison with the infants' school is another area which needs development in order to enable pupils to make the best possible progress.

128. History was a strength of the school in the previous inspection, and it is still good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

129. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations by Year 6. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was judged to be below expected levels. The majority of pupils across the school, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. For some of the more able pupils, however, progress is restricted by the over-prescriptive nature of some lessons.

130. By the time pupils are eleven they can use large sources of information such as those found on the Internet and on CD ROM. They can conduct searches and explore hyperlinks. They also understand the need for care in framing questions when collecting, finding and interrogating information. In a Year 6 lesson, some pupils were observed searching an art gallery website for pictures that portray movement. They were able to locate quickly many relevant works of art by using their own knowledge of particular paintings as well as clues in titles and written descriptions. Other pupils in the class were seen successfully navigating a CD ROM for similar information. In another Year 6 lesson, pupils were observed preparing a multimedia presentation about the Victorian era. Different forms of information from a variety of sources were effectively combined.

131. Pupils have positive attitudes to ICT. They are enthusiastic and confident and willingly share their knowledge and skills to help each other. They are keen to raise and answer questions and they concentrate well. Movement to and from the ICT suite is calm and orderly and pupils handle the equipment with care and respect. Pupils' behaviour during lessons is very good.

132. The quality of teaching is good, representing very good improvement since the previous inspection when it was deemed unsatisfactory. Through on-going training, all teachers and support staff have developed sufficient subject knowledge and understanding to develop ICT capability. Guided by a very good scheme of work, a balanced programme is provided to ensure that pupils learn to use ICT tools for data handling, investigation, research, control and communication. Although the school has plans to establish links with a school in America, pupils have not had sufficient experience of using the e-mail facility. Lessons are prepared well and pupils are made aware of the learning objectives at the start of each lesson. Expectations are high and, as a result, pupils apply intellectual and sustained effort to their work. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is assessed through effective questioning which also helps to extend their thinking. There is a system for tracking pupils' progress which is at an early stage of development. The good relationships that prevail promote good learning. Teachers organise lessons and group pupils in ways that allow them to engage in discussions and to support and help each other. This is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Good use is made of an interactive whiteboard, which helps to focus pupils' attention and allows teachers to demonstrate procedures. The ICT technician and the learning support assistants are effectively deployed to provide good levels of support for pupils and teachers. Overall, teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to use initiative or to pursue their own lines of enquiry and this inhibits the progress of some pupils, particularly the more able.

133. There is good use of ICT in the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. In Year 4, for example, pupils were working with databases and graphs, tables and charts.

In Year 3 pupils were learning about word processing. Although firm links have been established with other subjects, particularly science, art and history, there is limited use of the computer in some classrooms.

134. Leadership by the co-ordinator is good. She has a clear vision for the development of the subject and she has worked successfully to effect a number of improvements. The policy and scheme of work have been updated and a programme for staff development has been organised. Hardware and software resources have been improved, a computer suite has been established and there is increased use of the Internet. A monitoring programme has been established and this includes lesson observations. At present, there is insufficient evidence to assess the impact of this programme on standards and teaching.
135. Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable improvements in the standards achieved by pupils, in the quality of teaching and in the provision of up-to-date resources. There is now a shared commitment, by all staff, to further improvement and there is also the capacity to succeed.

## **MUSIC**

136. Music continues to be a strength of the school and standards exceed the national expectation. There is much good musical activity in class music-making, ensemble work and individual instrumental lessons. In lessons, assemblies and the very large choir, singing, in unison and in parts, is both tuneful and dynamically rich. The vast majority of pupils sing and play with obvious enjoyment.
137. Music forms an important part of the corporate, worship and celebration life of the school. In their lessons, pupils listen to and appraise very carefully both their own and professionally recorded music from a good range of composers.
138. Standards of composition and performance in many classes in the upper part of the school are very good. This was shown particularly well in the upper part of the school through the work on contrasting themes and textures.
139. The school enables many pupils to achieve high standards in individual instrumental playing but insufficient use of these pupils' skill is made in some lessons. Standards of performance in some lessons and settings, for example in some class assemblies, are not as high as they could be.
140. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' response to the wide range of opportunities given to them continues to be very positive overall.
141. The main reason for these high standards is the high quality of teaching, which is often very good and occasionally excellent. All teaching is provided by specialist teachers. All pupils have at least one hour per week which gives sufficient time for them to undertake and develop different aspects of the subject in lessons which are usually planned meticulously, timed and structured very well. Particularly noticeable is that there is really good engagement with pupils: for example, attention is given to careful grouping, to building trust and responsibility, to negotiation over the choice of instruments, to providing coaching of skills and to the provision of time to develop then listen to pupils' views.
142. There is an excellent focus on listening and appreciating each other's work. Pupils seriously evaluate and offer suggestions for improvement with sensitivity and respect. This is very impressive and works well to help all pupils raise the standard of their performance. The main specialist teacher is very skilled at developing this constructively critical approach to learning.

143. There is, however, a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. This stems from insufficient planning in detail for the management of pupils and the development of tasks, some lack of behaviour management strategies, and insufficiently high expectations. Progress slows as a result.
144. There is very good provision of resources and a well-used specialist room, although the present furniture limits its flexibility. The provision of extra-curricular clubs, recorder, choir, orchestra and instrumental teaching is also very good. The subject makes a substantial contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural life of the school. While the subject is well led, the co-ordinator should now work more closely with the other music teacher and set out, where possible, to develop the music teaching skills of other staff.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

145. Standards in physical education (PE) are average overall so that by the time pupils leave the school they achieve in line with national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress. Progress since the previous inspection has been sustained.
146. During the inspection, lessons were observed in all year groups, mainly in games and gymnastics. The school offers all aspects of PE including swimming, which is organised on a rota basis for all classes over the school year.
147. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good and very good teaching was observed, mainly in the older classes where games were being taught. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. In the best lessons teachers use demonstration well to help pupils improve their performance and refine their skills. Good organisation enables time to be used effectively and efficiently and pupils have high levels of involvement. Very effective behaviour management and pupils' very good attitudes enable lessons to run smoothly. Good subject knowledge and high expectations provide appropriate challenge for pupils. Lessons have a clear structure with due regard for health and safety issues. Careful planning ensures that pupils understand the importance of warm up before exercise and this is consistently applied by all teachers.
148. Where teaching is less effective, time is not used well and pupils have insufficient opportunity to practise their skills. Some planning lacks detail and there are no opportunities for pupils to evaluate or discuss strategies or their own performance. Challenge is limited on occasions, particularly where pupils work in single gender pairs/groups.
149. In Year 3, pupils learn to refine their ball control skills in pairs and small groups. This is further developed in Year 4 where pupils work in small groups to develop stick control in hockey and passing in basketball. In Year 5 basketball and football lessons, pupils are taught to intercept, pass and 'dribble'. The support of a coach from a local football club adds significantly to pupils' achievements in PE lessons. In gymnastics, Year 5 pupils work in small groups to plan and execute a sequence of movements involving the use of apparatus. This aspect of their work is not as strong as their games skills.
150. In Year 6, pupils further refine a range of skills and apply them in game situations. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic in their approach and participate well in lessons. In the older classes pupils participate very successfully in a good range of competitive sports with other schools including netball, football and swimming. Teachers organise training and draw on parental support. All this makes a good contribution to the personal development of pupils and enriches the curriculum in physical education.

151. PE is organised in four houses for pupils in Years 4, 5, and 6, so that they can access a range of activities. This frees one teacher, who for the most part oversees pupils not participating in lessons. During the inspection, a significant number of pupils across the school missed PE due to lack of kit. The school needs to address this in order to ensure that all pupils enjoy a full weekly entitlement.
152. Resources are satisfactory overall. The large field and a range of equipment are well used to support the planned curriculum. The subject leader is confident and is clear about the direction the school needs to pursue. She is due to undertake monitoring in line with the school development plan.