

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST THOMAS A BECKET CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Eastbourne, East Sussex

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114578

Headteacher: Mrs Rachel Turner

Reporting inspector: Michael Allcock  
19834

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2000

Inspection number: 225029

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Tutts Barn Lane Eastbourne East Sussex
Postcode:	BN22 8XT
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Martin Thompson
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael Allcock: 19834	Registered inspector	History; physical education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught?
Susan Stock: 9147	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Peter Buckley: 28014	Team inspector	Mathematics; geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
David Langton: 3855	Team inspector	English; equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
Christopher Shaw: 18638	Team inspector	Science; information and communication technology; design and technology	
Jean Thompson: 22768	Team inspector	Art and design; music; special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Thomas a Becket Catholic Junior School is an eight class urban school in the seaside town of Eastbourne in East Sussex. There are 250 pupils on roll, compared to the national average of 226: ten more than when the school was last inspected. Pupils travel from all over Eastbourne and from neighbouring towns and villages to attend the school, at present the only Catholic junior school in the town. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds. 14 per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals, broadly average. Pupils' attainments are about average when they enter the school. There are almost ten per cent more boys on roll than girls. Over three per cent of pupils come from ethnic minorities, none with English at an early stage of acquisition. A further ten per cent of white pupils come from European and other countries, one of whom has just entered the school with limited English and is well supported. There are 37 pupils with special educational needs but none currently has a statement, below the national averages. Over eight per cent of pupils joined or left the school at other times than those usual for admission or transfer, which is quite a high mobility rate.

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

St Thomas a Becket Catholic Junior is an effective school, with many good features. Pupils achieve high standards, due to the good quality teaching they receive. They behave well and are keen to learn. The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. They are well looked after. The headteacher, in partnership with staff and governors, works hard to improve standards further. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards of English, mathematics and science are above average and pupils make good progress.
- Teaching, and therefore learning, is good.
- The headteacher provides very clear leadership: the school is well managed.
- Very good procedures for promoting good behaviour, supporting and guiding pupils and for monitoring attendance produce well-behaved, confident, punctual pupils.
- There are effective procedures for assessing the outcomes of a well-designed curriculum.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, encouraging constructive personal development and relationships.

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

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory, so they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- There is frequent inconsistency within year groups and between classes in the same year, particularly in aspects of teaching and assessment.
- The quality of the reports parents receive about their children's progress.
- Pupils' achievements in design and technology.

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

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

The school has improved greatly since September 1996, when it was judged to have significant weaknesses in pupils' standards, teaching, curriculum, assessment and elements of management and the support and guidance provided for pupils. Pupils' attainments in all core subjects are now above average. Standards and provision for information and communication technology are now satisfactory. There have been substantial improvements in the quality of teaching and the planning and assessment of the curriculum, which have all contributed to the rise in standards. The improvements to leadership and management have included increased governor involvement and detailed monitoring of teaching and the curriculum. There is a culture of reflection and institutional development, which will enable the school to continue this process, backed up by effective action and good teamwork.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	C	B	B
Mathematics	C	C	B	B
Science	C	C	C	C

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

The results from 1999 show that standards were above average in English and mathematics and average in science both when compared to all and similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in science are now also above those expected nationally. Standards have risen steadily over the last four years, at a rate at least equal to that seen nationally. Boys and girls attain standards in tests not significantly different to the national picture. The school's targets have proved unchallenging in the past but careful analysis of performance data is now the norm, so these should correlate more closely to eventual outcomes. Standards of literacy and numeracy are good, following successful implementation of the national strategies. Attainment in information and communication technology meets the national expectation. Most pupils achieve well in relation to their previous attainment levels. However, pupils with special educational needs make only satisfactory progress overall.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They respond well to the tasks they are given to do and try hard to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. There have been no recent exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is very good. They are reflective and mature and demonstrate both self-respect and respect for others. Relationships are good between the vast majority of pupils and all the adults in the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The number of reported absences is in line with national averages. Unauthorised absences are below the national averages.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

*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.*

The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection it was satisfactory or better in over 96 per cent of lessons and good or very good in 56 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in less than four per cent of lessons seen. This shows significant improvement since the last inspection when over 23 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and also in art, geography and music. This contributes positively to the good levels of learning seen in these lessons and the brisk progress pupils make. Teachers show good knowledge of the junior school curriculum, teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy effectively and have high expectations of their pupils. Pupils are organised and managed competently, so that little time is wasted. However, there is considerable variation in some aspects of teaching, including marking and the setting of homework. Planning for activities closely matched to the requirements of pupils with special educational needs does not always ensure their progress or appropriate inclusion. Otherwise, the school works hard to meet the needs of its pupils. This enables them to learn quickly and work productively, with increasing independence.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Made relevant by the stimulating topic approach. Enriched by a good variety of clubs, visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. Individual education plans are broad and non-specific. Pupils make slower progress than others in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Particular strengths in spiritual and social education, within the school's positive, caring Catholic ethos. Good provision is made for pupils' moral and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good support and guidance for its pupils. It is particularly successful in promoting their personal development.

Parents have positive views of the school overall. They are well informed about the subjects their children study. Some regularly promote pupils' learning by their work as voluntary helpers, in classes or with extra-curricular activities. The Parent Teacher Association is a very successful fund raising body. Almost all help their children with reading and other homework set.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Very clear educational direction offered by the headteacher. Strong teamwork has promoted substantial improvement in standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body takes an increasingly effective and active part in the life and management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. A reflective school, committed to self improvement based on careful analysis of strengths and weaknesses, leading to effective action.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Available money well targeted at priorities on the school improvement plan. Governors seek best value for money they spend.

There is a sufficient number of well-qualified staff to meet the needs of the junior curriculum. Management roles are well matched to experience and qualifications. Resources are good overall, with

well-stocked central and class libraries and a well used information and communication technology suite. There are weaknesses in history, especially artefacts, musical instruments and design and technology. The accommodation, inside and out, is extensive and well kept.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good in school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard to achieve his or her best.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision for special educational needs.</li> <li>• The quality of their children's reports.</li> <li>• A consistent pattern to homework.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school. Provision for special educational needs is unsatisfactory and is a key issue. Pupils' reports continue to give rise for concern, as at the time of the last inspection. It is a key issue for the school to consider following this inspection. There are several areas of inconsistency, mainly in teaching, identified in the report, including the setting, marking and following up of homework, which is a further key issue for the school to address.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the last year for which comparative material is available, were above the national average in English and mathematics, and in line with it in science. This judgement is based on a system that allocates points to the levels pupils reach, before obtaining an average score. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was above average in all three subjects. The percentage reaching the higher Level 5 was close to the national average in each subject. Compared to schools with broadly similar intakes, attainment in English and mathematics were above the national average and science close to it. Variations in attainments between boys and girls are not significantly different to the national picture. The school has raised standards since the time of the last inspection, when pupils' attainments in English and mathematics were below those expected but those in science in line. The school's upward trend is broadly in line with that seen nationally but above it each year since 1996 based on an average points score for the three core subjects. Provisional results for 2000 indicate that standards continue to rise. This substantial improvement in pupils' levels of attainment reflects significant improvements in the quality of teaching and leadership and management since the last inspection. The curriculum is better planned, with effective implementation of the national initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy helping promote key skills. Teachers now assess pupils' work more closely, using information gained to plan accurately what individuals, groups and cohorts need to do to improve further.
2. Evidence from current work and lesson observations confirms the above expected standards in English and mathematics but now shows that pupils' attainment in science is also above expectation. The school has consistently set unchallenging targets for improvement, based on the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above in the end of key stage tests. It has overshot the target for the past two years, so much so that the 2000 Year 6 group comfortably attained the English and mathematics targets for the 2001 group, which were set much higher than their own. Evidence indicates that teacher assessment is now more rigorous, with the strategic use of data, received from national and local sources, carefully analysed alongside the school's own to track improvement. A planned move towards individual target setting for pupils will refine this further.
3. Pupils enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment. Key Stage 1 results are above average at the neighbouring infant school, from which the school draws most of its intake. However, not all the 7+ leavers move on to the junior school, as some pupils go into the private sector at that stage. This is repeated at Year 4 and Year 5, when independent school scholarships take several pupils away each year. Pupils make good progress in their Key Stage 2 years and achieve well. This is due to good teaching, a well-planned and relevant curriculum and challenging work, particularly for older pupils. The good behaviour, positive attitudes towards their work and the school that almost all pupils display and levels of concentration and engagement seen in lessons, also make major contributions to this.
4. The increasing success the school has achieved in getting appropriate numbers of pupils to the higher Level 5 result in end of Key Stage 2 tests indicates that higher attaining pupils are adequately challenged, particularly later in the key stage. There are hopes for even higher levels of some pupils in the future. However, the provision for the higher attaining is patchy, with the better practitioners making specific plans for them, others teaching to a middle band with no tasks matched to specific ability. Setting in mathematics is helping Year 6 teachers pinpoint more closely an individual curriculum based on current need. Individual target setting in English, soon to be extended to mathematics, will also promote a more focused approach, to the benefit of pupils of all levels of attainment.

5. The picture is less encouraging with regard to pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The number of pupils identified with SEN is below the national average and there are currently no statemented pupils. However, these pupils do not always receive sufficiently well matched programmes to ensure they make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in English and mathematics. Progress and achievement are satisfactory but with the additional resource of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) there is the potential for the standards of SEN pupils to be raised. The special needs co-ordinator is responsible for the assessment of SEN pupils. She is employed to work with them on a 0.6 contract. Representatives of the county's language support service and liaison tutorial service also provide assessments of individual pupils. The headteacher checks for consistency in placing pupils on the SEN register. Individual education plans (IEPs) for SEN pupils are written and reviewed by the SENCo termly during meetings with class teachers. They are released from class responsibility to allow appropriate discussion time. However, the IEP targets set by the SENCo are too broad and provide no details of focused, achievable and measurable steps to motivate pupils and inform appropriate planning. Consequently, individual pupils do not make good progress. Five SEN pupils in Year 5 have IEPs with identical targets and no individual steps. This is repeated across year groups. There is evidence that some targets are inappropriate. A pupil with specific difficulties has a target "to follow the class agenda and do what is expected of him." This is clearly not achievable. He was fearful of participating in an outside physical education lesson and made notes on the skills being taught with his support assistant. He was unable to cope with the demands of a music session and was supported in the writing of a play script. His needs are being met through the sensitive approach of his class teacher and skilled support assistant. IEP targets for all SEN pupils are unsatisfactory.
6. By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards in English are above the expected levels in speaking and listening and reading, and in line with them in writing. Pupils make good progress, achieving well in relation to their previous attainments. Pupils are given regular opportunities to listen and talk to good purpose in pairs and groups. Well crafted, open questions from teachers cause pupils to think carefully before answering in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils achieve well in reading, due to the systematic teaching of skills and regular opportunities to practise reading from books well matched to their abilities. Strategies to attack unknown words in unfamiliar texts help all pupils, especially the lower attaining, to make sense of what they are reading and progress rapidly. Pupils' attainments in writing are much improved, due to additional teaching time the school devotes to learning and revising key skills. This has raised standards in handwriting and spelling. Pupils now write more grammatically, for a wider range of purposes. The literacy hour has been consistently implemented and helped raise standards in all strands of English. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to practise and extend their literacy skills in other subjects, for example, in their topics in geography and history and their observations and reports in science. Information and communication technology is having an increasing role in pupils' written work.
7. Standards in all aspects of mathematics, including numeracy, exceed those expected by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils are encouraged to think like mathematicians, using suitable mathematical vocabulary and fully explaining the methods they employ to solve problems. All Year 6 pupils confidently halve two digit numbers to 0.5. Many reduce fractions accurately to their simplest forms. Pupils apply their effective numeracy skills in subjects like science and geography but not yet systematically across the curriculum.
8. Standards in science have improved and inspection evidence now shows pupils' attainment to be above that expected nationally. By the time they leave the school, pupils display good knowledge of science, especially in the area of life processes and living things. They describe the functions of major organs in the body and show how the diverse elements in the food chain are interdependent. Pupils consider experimental outcomes carefully and make accurate observations based on them. All know whether a test is conducted fairly. Many consider adaptations to experimental design to provide better results. Pupils make good progress through the key stage.

9. Standards in information technology meet national expectations. This indicates huge improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make steady progress through the key stage. They acquire and refine key skills, based on a detailed scheme of work ensuring progression of learning year on year. Year 6 pupils write a variety of text including poetry, menus and stories. They access data on CD-ROMs, send e-mails and programme a floor robot round a set course. Some mix text and graphics in their documents independently.
10. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainments in the foundation subjects are at the expected level or above. They make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately overall. However, standards in art and design are higher than expected, due to a well-planned curriculum and effective teaching. The very well qualified co-ordinator is having a noticeable impact on standards. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils attain appropriate standards in line with national norms in geography. Teachers' secure subject knowledge and the relevance of the topics they study has gripped pupils' attention. For instance, they study coastal erosion in Year 5 and the effects of the Polegate bypass in Year 6, local issues of immediate concern. Good quality resources stimulate pupils' interest in these lessons. Standards are in line with those expected in history and pupils achieve appropriately. Motivational topics are introduced, linking subjects from across the curriculum, including art and design, geography and religious education. This enables pupils to see the relevance in the history they study and make the sorts of connections, for instance between then and now, that gives them command of what they are learning. Pupils' attainments in music are in line with those expected and they make sound progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their enthusiasm transmits itself to their pupils. Pupils reach standards in line with those expected in physical education and make steady progress as they go through the school. This could be improved if the detailed curriculum map for the subject, indicating which skills should be taught in each year group was more closely adhered to, as there are many able athletes in the school. Insufficient evidence was seen to judge pupils' attainment in design and technology. It is clear that they do not have the time or resources to make the progress of which they are capable and their achievement is unsatisfactory.

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

11. The school has improved upon the pupils' attitudes, values and personal development since the previous inspection. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils reflects the school's ethos and creates a good climate for learning. This is valued greatly by the parents who believe it is one of the school's strengths.
12. Almost all pupils have good attitudes to learning and respond positively to their lessons. Pupils of all abilities try hard to succeed. They show real enjoyment during their lessons, especially when the class teachers have high expectations of their pupils and the lessons are taught with pace and sparkle. For example, when a Year 5 class discussed the plot and characters for their own play. These positive attitudes are evident in many lessons where pupils listen carefully to their class teachers and contribute to lively oral sessions and then settle quickly to their tasks. Only very rarely do pupils not show these good attitudes and are neither interested nor attentive and as a result the class becomes restless and noisy and impedes the learning of all pupils. However, overall these are lively pupils who are keen to learn, who have robust attitudes to school life and are very clear as to the aspects they most enjoy.
13. These positive attitudes are reflected in the good behaviour of the pupils. In lessons, the pupils behave well when they are engrossed by their learning and well managed by their teachers. Very occasionally in some lessons do pupils lose interest and drift off task with the result that their behaviour disrupts the flow of the lesson. Around the school pupils behave very well. At break times and meal times the pupils get on very well together. The pupils are friendly and most willing to talk about their school and interests. They are polite and helpful and show high levels of social awareness and concern for each other. This is reflected by the fact that parents and pupils alike consider that bullying is not an issue in the school. There have been four fixed term exclusions in the previous school year that involved two pupils.

14. There are good relationships throughout the school between the pupils and adults. Pupils have a well-developed sense of community and a particularly sensitive understanding of the needs and values of other people. They co-operate well in lessons not only sharing resources but also listening to and supporting each other in a mature way. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson when pupils explored their own understanding of God and their own humanity. This high level of personal development is a direct outcome of the good rapport that exists between the pupils and their teachers, which enables the pupils to become confident learners. Only very rarely does this rapport break down and pupils cease to demonstrate the high levels of respect found in the vast majority of lessons. The pupils are keen to show initiative and this is seen in their willingness to take on responsibility, such as school prefects helping in the classrooms and participating in fund raising events. The school has recognised the enthusiasm of its pupils and is about to re-instate the School Council, which will involve pupils from all classes.
15. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) relate well to each other in their target groups and in whole class situations. They are keen to share ideas and show that they value the work of peers. Classmates spontaneously applauded the drawing of an SEN pupil in Year 3 and a pastel picture of God as the creator by a Year 5 SEN pupil was discussed appreciatively. They listen attentively to their teachers and are keen to offer answers to questions. They work well with their adult support assistants in literacy and numeracy class sessions and when receiving additional literacy support. The school values pupils with special educational needs and makes every effort to ensure that even those with very specific needs are fully integrated and accepted by peers. In all lessons observed pupils accepted each other in a positive way. Pupils with special educational needs were observed working and playing together in a sociable and caring environment.
16. The majority of pupils come to school and lessons on time, which, coupled with the efficient registration sessions ensure a prompt start to the school day. The pupils' attendance is in line with national averages. The pupils' satisfactory attendance has a positive impact on their attainment and progress.

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

17. The quality of teaching is good overall. It contributes significantly both to the effective learning pupils achieve and to the rising standards. Teaching is good or better in 56 per cent of lessons and very good in 24 per cent of them. Less than four per cent of unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This shows a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when over 23 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. The school has successfully identified areas of weakness in teaching and addressed them through its comprehensive improvement plan. Teachers now assess pupils more accurately overall, so that they can plan more consistently what pupils should attempt next. Higher expectations and more effective pupil management have been achieved by closer adherence to the teaching and learning policy, reinforced by systematic monitoring of lessons and planning by senior staff and co-ordinators, with governors also increasingly involved. Specimen lessons and carefully planned in-service training have enabled the school to improve challenge and pace in lessons by introducing a broader range of teaching strategies.
18. Parents expressed general satisfaction with the quality of teaching their children receive. However, they expressed some concern about the consistency of teaching across the key stage and within some years in their pre-inspection meeting and the questionnaires the school sent out. Inspection evidence broadly confirms this view. Teaching standards are higher in the upper juniors than in Years 3 and 4. Some aspects of teaching, for instance in the way basic skills are taught and the way teachers use ongoing assessment, strongly reflect this. There was little evidence during the inspection of homework being set and marked in Year 3. It figured prominently elsewhere. A particularly good use of homework to extend pupils' experience was seen in a Year 5 class. At the end of a very good music lesson, the teacher asked the class to continue work on a story made up from sounds, painting a musical picture. Following up a highly motivational lesson, this was a particularly relevant homework task. Within year groups,

individual teachers performed differently. In one year, one teacher was seen to teach nothing but very good lessons, many with outstanding features. The teacher in the parallel class was also an effective practitioner but did not match planning as accurately to pupils' specific needs, either the higher attaining or those with special educational needs. Lesson introductions were more extended, less snappy, so that pupils' productivity was reduced. The closest correlation between teachers' teaching standards was seen in Year 5. The two teachers sharing a post in that year group work very closely together to ensure consistency of provision and that no gaps occur at the hand-over point. The three Year 5 teachers also work effectively as a team. All year groups plan jointly and there is some specialist teaching. Teachers exchange classes for information and communication technology (ICT) and writing, both key school focuses for improvement. Two mathematics sets have been identified in Year 6, so that teaching can be more closely targeted on a narrower attainment band.

19. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good. The quality of mathematics teaching is particularly high, with no lesson seen rated other than good or better in Years 5 and 6. This has a significant impact on the good progress pupils make. Teachers work hard to plan and implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, helping to ensure that pupils build systematically on their previous learning. Weaker aspects, for instance in writing, have been earmarked for additional teaching time. More accessible subject matter has been obtained, for instance a biography of Alan Shearer in big book format, to address perceived resistance by some boys to reading.
20. Teachers throughout the school display secure subject knowledge in most areas of the curriculum. Hence, teaching standards are also high in science, art, geography and music. Previous significant weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching of information and communications technology have been eradicated, with soundly taught lessons now the norm. Teachers' confidence, along with their competence, has been improved by high quality provision, including professional development, in this increasingly central core subject. The regular use of computers and programmable roamers is a good feature of the school's work. Pupils' skills are improving as a result. They are applying them widely across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils narrow the range of their Internet searches by using a search engine, effectively promoting the independent research they undertake. The quality of teaching was also satisfactory in physical education. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards of teaching in design and technology and history.
21. In subjects across the curriculum class teachers plan appropriately to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Differentiated tasks for mathematics and English are well prepared and taught in appropriate groups, often with the help of well-qualified and effective support assistants. The individual education plans are not useful in informing planning for special needs pupils but individual target cards have been introduced for all pupils to help develop basic skills in English. There are plans to introduce target cards for mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are praised frequently. They have good levels of self-esteem and are confident while they work. In all lessons observed pupils participated well and maintained good levels of concentration, showing that tasks set by their teachers were appropriate. This was evident even if work was carried out without adult support, showing that pupils are developing good levels of independence. The support assistants have been trained to deliver the additional literacy support programme. The standard of teaching is very good. Resources are used well and a brisk pace is maintained. There are high levels of pupil participation and enjoyment of learning.
22. The additional support provided by the special needs co-ordinator is not effective in furthering the progress of SEN pupils and raising standards of achievement. Planning takes place with class teachers but there is no evidence that tasks include individual targets. The quality of the support teaching is variable and sometimes unsatisfactory. A group of Year 5 SEN pupils were supported in producing a pastel picture for religious education. The teaching of basic skills was not included, opportunities to develop speaking and listening were missed and one pupil in particular appeared disaffected by working on a table away from the majority of the class. Work carried out with a group of Year 4 SEN pupils during a literacy lesson did not build on the skills

of writing a character sketch learnt during a previous class lesson. The management of the support time is sometimes unsatisfactory. During a science lesson 25 minutes was spent without contact with pupils, while the class teacher explained the task. An assessment is made of each pupil in the supported group but comments are brief and generally not useful in informing subsequent stages of learning.

23. Overall, each aspect of teaching is good except planning and homework, which are satisfactory. Year 5 planning is consistently effective. It contains more helpful detail, matches task to pupils' stage and need more exactly and identifies, and uses, assessment opportunities more rigorously. This difference between years is marked. Within years and across the school, much high quality practice exists. To raise pupils' standards higher, the best examples should be the models for all teachers.
24. In most lessons seen there are strong features, which create the good working environment the school aspires to. They contribute to the good achievements of pupils and their positive attitudes to learning. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to behave well. Some pupils, particularly in Year 4, find this more difficult but teachers' management skills are good overall, very good in the upper juniors. They create a calm and purposeful atmosphere in most lessons. Teachers make pupils clear about the learning intentions, often by writing them up at the start of lessons and referring to them again, at least at the end. This gives pupils a clearer insight into what they are being taught. Classrooms are organised in a well-thought out manner, logically planned, so that pupils can quickly become independent, taking responsibility for much of their own learning. This is effectively planned over their time at school, so that Year 6 pupils are adequately prepared for their secondary school. When working on the carpet or in a circle, pupils listen carefully and respond quickly. However, inconsistent approaches to the context within which mental mathematics skills are taught and reinforced are not helpful in ensuring continuity of learning for the pupils over the key stage. When embarking on guided or independent tasks, pupils settle quickly, sustaining a high work rate and concentrating over an extended period.
25. Some teachers do not monitor groups working independently sufficiently, so that less is achieved than should be and progress inhibited. This was evident in a Year 3 literacy lesson, where the teacher did not leave the guided group until near the end of the lesson, to find that several pupils had progressed no further than the title in a writing session. This reduces pupils' productivity, which is also compromised by extended introductions to many lessons, giving pupils too little time to complete tasks and eliminating the possibility of the higher attainers attempting any extension activities that are planned for them. Good use is made of classroom support staff, who make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make. However, the skills and time of the ICT technician are not always well deployed, as in an inadequately planned session, where pupils' learning was unsatisfactory, partially as a result.

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

26. The overall curricular provision of the school, in its quality and range of learning opportunities, is good and has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is broadly based and relevant but not well balanced in the time allocated to individual curricular areas. The length of the teaching day is short and only just meets the nationally agreed minimum number of hours for pupils aged seven to eleven. The time allocated to the teaching of religious education, even for a school of religious denomination, is generous and as a result the time remaining to teach the foundation subjects only meets national minimum recommended times. The subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the omissions in information and communication technology, English and mathematics identified in the previous report have been fully addressed.
27. The curriculum successfully promotes the physical, personal and intellectual development of the pupils. Personal and social education is taught through a range of well-planned opportunities based on the school's policies. The school has specific policies relating to drug awareness, health and sex education and this contributes strongly to the good provision for personal, social

and health education. The curriculum promotes intellectual development by providing increasing opportunities, as pupils get older, for personal study.

28. Policies and schemes of work, albeit that those in the foundation subjects are dated, contribute to systematic and consistent planning across the school and between age groups. Long-term planning provides an overview of what is to be taught half-termly to each age group. Medium-term planning identifies learning objectives and activities that guide the weekly planning. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor these plans. The school has a clear long-term plan of reviewing policies in line with national guidance and the introduction of the revised National Curriculum 2000. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. However, there are still inconsistencies in the delivery of the planned curriculum and teachers' expectations of pupils in different classes in the same age group.
29. Good strategies are evident for the teaching of literacy and the principles of the literacy hour are well established. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced and all pupils have access over time to computer programmes to support these subjects in the recently established information and communication technology suite and their classrooms. The school's planning, while making occasional reference to the use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, does not actively promote it.
30. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Sporting opportunities include football, netball, hockey, tennis and karate and the school competes successfully in locally arranged competitions. The French club and school choir also contribute to this good provision. The annual residential camp for Year 6 pupils supports their personal and physical development through a programme of outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils of all ages benefit from a variety of visits in the locality and of visitors to the school, such as dancers and the mobile planetarium.
31. The school's links with the community make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. The headteacher has a high awareness of the benefit to pupils from community contacts, especially those associated with the church. For example, at Christmas the choir visited and sang carols at Shalom Nursing Home and St Wilfrid's Hospice both in Eastbourne. Pupils raise a great deal of money for charities both national and local. As part of the millennium celebrations, following Mass, pupils planted a tree and buried a time capsule. They gain an insight into education and life in a village in Kenya through sponsorship of a pupil. Relationships with partner institutions are very good. The school has strong links with the feeder infant school on the same site. Most pupils transfer to the Roman Catholic secondary school and very well developed liaison arrangements have been established. Teacher training placements forge helpful links with training institutions.
32. Class teachers select a good balance of teaching and learning styles for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). They are taught in differentiated groups for mathematics and English, and mixed ability groups for other subjects, where they are set appropriate challenges and enjoy learning with their peers. The importance of the personal development of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, is recognized in schemes of work. Art, for example, is seen as "an expression of the inner spirit, to develop self-esteem and allow pupils to express what they have inside themselves." Pupils with behavioural difficulties understand the sanctions used to build moral awareness. These are used appropriately and fairly. The only withdrawal from the classroom is for the groups receiving additional literacy support. This takes place at the beginning of the morning when pupils are alert and receptive. Support assistants provide discreet support to individuals and groups, particularly during the literacy and numeracy hours. Support provided by the special needs teacher is less discreet as SEN pupils, in some classes, sit at a table set apart from the main body of the class. In some lessons observed a separate introduction to the lesson was going on at the same time as that of the class teacher. This causes distraction for the special needs children and other members of the class.
33. The school is committed to offering equal opportunities to all its pupils. Pupils of all abilities have full access to the curriculum and the school makes appropriate provision for pupils who

have English as an additional language. Withdrawal from classes for music tuition and other specialist teaching is managed sensitively and effectively. Teachers are careful to present material in ways appropriate to different genders. Extra-curricular activities are open to all, though the charge levied for some of them may disqualify some pupils. One boy and one girl were selected as helpers in a Year 6 class, and the School Council to be revived after half-term will have one boy and one girl representative from each class. The governors are currently discussing the issue of whether girls should be allowed to wear trousers.

34. The school has effective policies for pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language, and for gifted and talented pupils. The school's Mission Statement, the headteacher's vision statement and other school policies are directed towards all pupils having equal access, as indicated in the equal opportunities policy. All parents have the opportunities to attend meetings. The school operates an "Open Door" policy. A suggestions box enables pupils, staff and governors alike to make comments on how the school operates. Provision for the disabled has recently been improved with the addition of a special toilet in the new administration area, and a portable ramp, enabling wheelchair access to classrooms. All statutory legislation is complied with. Overall, there is good provision for equality of access and opportunity.
35. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Particular strengths lie in spiritual and social education. Provision for spiritual development is very good. The school promotes spirituality across the whole curriculum. It is linked to religious education lessons and assemblies as well as topics for history and English, giving pupils good opportunities to express their feelings and reflect on their own and others' lives. The arts promote spiritual growth and evoke a sense of awe and wonder. A good example is in the study of famous artists and opportunity to visit the local art gallery. Involvement in circle time encourages pupils to experience inner stillness. The displays in all classrooms and shared areas reflect the importance the school places on spiritual development. Pupils understand the value and worth of the Mission Statement. By the time they reach Year 6 they are able to write their own interpretations.
36. The positive ethos and values of the school promote good moral development. There is a clear framework of right and wrong and pupils consistently behave appropriately. This is reflected in their relationships with each other, which is an improvement since the last inspection. A good example was seen when a Year 5 pupil showed respect for the truth by owning up to throwing a stone. The headteacher has a particularly good rapport with the pupils, contributing significantly to the orderly ethos. Relationships between teachers and pupils are based upon mutual respect and they show genuine concern for each other. In almost all lessons teachers manage pupils well, setting high standards of discipline. The personal behaviour of pupils is built upon the principles of praise rather than through fear of punishment. Pupils' self-esteem is consistently upheld by this approach.
37. The provision for social development is very good. Pupils have many opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups in a variety of different social contexts. Pupils are sociable and pleasant. They understand the importance of school rules and negotiate their own class rules. They work and play together sensibly and respect each other's points of view. The pupils willingly accept responsibility for doing jobs around the school, as door monitors for example. Good levels of independence are demonstrated. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' personal and social interests and experiences are extended beyond the formal curriculum. They are provided with a variety of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for visits, including residential experience. The school is fully involved in charity work, which helps to promote the skills of good citizenship. The prefects take responsibility for organisation of the annual poppy and cancer appeals.
38. Provision for cultural development is good. A wealth of cultural activities is provided through the curriculum, visits and the use of visitors to the school. A dance company recently came into school to teach African dances which pupils then performed at the local Winter Gardens. The art scheme of work includes the study of other cultures and Year 6 look at cultures of other

countries as a homework topic. The school is also involved in a Millennium project communicating with a child living in Gambia. The library has a good selection of multi-cultural books, including those that develop pupils' knowledge of world religions and different cultures. The school now needs to build a range of resources and artefacts, including music and musical instruments from other countries, to extend pupils' experience of and learning about their own cultural heritage and that of others.

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

39. At the time of the previous inspection several key issues were highlighted for action in this area of the school's work. The school has now acted these upon successfully, although inconsiderate parking outside the school continues to cause problems. The support and guidance provided now enhances the quality of life in the school and has a positive impact on standards.
40. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting the pupils' attendance. All staff members are now aware of the need to record and monitor the pupils' attendance and punctuality and this is done scrupulously. The school works closely with the education welfare officer to ensure that those pupils identified with less satisfactory attendance are tracked carefully. Through school documentation and meetings, parents receive clear messages about the importance of regular attendance.
41. The school has very good procedures for child protection. All the adults in the school have access to regular training in this sensitive area of the school's work, which is very carefully monitored by the headteacher who is the child protection liaison officer. Day to day procedures to ensure the pupils' well-being are good. However, some aspects of the pupils' care are not recorded formally enough: for example, no log is kept of medicines administered to pupils.
42. The governing body and headteacher have worked extremely hard to resolve the health and safety issue raised by the last inspection and have tackled this problem vigorously. However, the difficulties with parking still remain partially unresolved. This is a very caring school and under the determined leadership of the headteacher takes great pains to provide a safe and happy environment for its pupils.
43. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting the pupils' good behaviour. The pupils are encouraged to develop positive attitudes to their work and personal development through a reward system, which celebrates both individual and group efforts. This makes a good contribution to the sense of community, which is obvious throughout the school. Class rules are formulated by the pupils with their teachers and whole school rules are clear and well known to the pupils. These, together with a supportive discipline policy when consistently applied have resulted in the good behaviour of the vast majority of the pupils and very little evidence of bullying. The school is aware that the pupils' good behaviour is the cornerstone of school life and continually assesses this area of its work.
44. Pupils are very well supported in their personal development because of the good relationships, which pervade the school. The adults in the school have created an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, so that pupils are at ease and able to take advantage of the learning opportunities in their lessons and in less formal settings to pursue issues that are important to them.
45. There are effective procedures for assessing how well pupils are doing academically. Some systems have only recently been developed, but already there is greater consistency in quality and rigour, particularly in mathematics and English. There have been many improvements since the last inspection. The assessment co-ordinator has worked hard to introduce systems, which can be used to identify gaps in pupils' learning and inform planning. Detailed action planning has ensured a whole school approach to improve consistency of systems between classes and across year groups. These are followed and understood by most teachers. Teachers use informal assessment as a part of every lesson. Learning intentions are written on the weekly

plans for all subjects and outcomes are recorded to help ensure that all pupils are set appropriate work. This happens in the best cases, whereas other teachers do not plan specifically for the differing needs of individuals and groups. Individual target setting is used for English and is to be introduced for mathematics. This is particularly useful for pupils with special educational needs who do not have focused targets on their individual education plans. Assessment tasks are identified to review and record the progress pupils are making over time in relation to key objectives and to inform the next stage of medium-term planning. A good example of this is in the half-termly assessment carried out at the end of each mathematics unit. Assessment procedures for some subjects, such as art, are in the process of being developed with the review of schemes of work.

46. Detailed analysis of standard attainment test results now takes place to influence practice and raise standards of pupils' achievement. Optional National Curriculum testing has been introduced in Years 3, 4 and 5 and the use of commercial tests throughout the school in English and mathematics. Teachers meet regularly to look at pupils' levels of achievement to improve consistency in judgements. Comprehensive information is now available when pupils move classes to allow them to make progress. There are still inconsistencies in marking. A revised policy is in place but the impact has yet to be seen. Teachers' comments in English celebrate achievement and indicate how improvements can be made. This contributes significantly to teachers' assessments of what pupils know and understand. This good practice needs to be used in all subjects. The quality of reports to parents continues to be variable. The information provided is inconsistent. In English, for example, progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening is not always reported. Targets for improvement are sometimes too general and do not indicate how parents can help their children at home.
47. The procedures for assessment, used for all pupils, are effective in the identification of special needs pupils and the monitoring of progress. Standard attainment test results and individual education plans from Key Stage 1 are used to determine the levels of support required in Year 3. Results of county, national and school tests are used to identify specific needs and place pupils on the special needs register. Discussions between class teachers, parents, the SEN co-ordinator and headteacher ensure that pupils are on the appropriate stage of the Code of Practice. The county language support service and the educational psychologist are also closely involved. Pupils with special needs complete a simple questionnaire, which is discussed with the SEN co-ordinator. This provides an important insight into their attitudes towards learning as well as personal and emotional problems. The SEN co-ordinator and class teacher termly reviews the individual education plans of special needs pupils. Copies are sent to parents, with a letter explaining provision of support. The targets set by the SEN co-ordinator are not specific enough to build effectively on the assessment procedures.

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

48. The school has continued to build on the good partnership with its parents as reported at the time of the previous inspection. There are effective links with parents and carers. This is reflected in the positive views that parents have of the school in many areas of its work. However, parents were right to be concerned about certain aspects of the work of the school, for example, the provision for pupils with special educational needs, the quality of pupils' annual reports and the inconsistent pattern of homework. These views were substantiated by the inspection.
49. The school provides good information about the life of the school and the curriculum through its prospectus, the annual report of the governing body and newsletters, which are detailed and helpful. The headteacher is aware of the need to maintain a productive partnership with her pupils' parents and to this end, together with termly formal meetings, offers parents the opportunity to meet more informally with herself and a member of the governing body. This commitment is echoed in the school improvement plan, where parental partnership is a strong feature.

50. Parents are encouraged to help in the school and a small number have taken this up. They are supported by a very useful booklet, which gives good advice on how parent volunteers may make the most of their time in school to the pupils' benefit. Parents also help with, and run, a variety of after school clubs and on trips and visits. The parents show their support through a very active Parent Teachers Association, which raises large sums of money for the school and which enables the school to enrich its environment and resources.
51. Where the school is less successful is in the pupils' annual reports. These are variable in quality and format. There is a tendency to gloss over the individual pupil's attainment and a lack of helpful information to show parents clearly their children's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve. The setting of homework is also variable. A consistent pattern with clear expectations for parents and pupils alike together with regular marking is yet to be established across the school.
52. Parents of special needs pupils are made to feel welcome if they need to discuss provision informally. They are given the opportunity to make a contribution to special educational needs (SEN) target setting by providing relevant information. The educational psychologist visits the school termly and is available to meet with parents. The regularity of meetings between parents and the SEN co-ordinator has improved since the headteacher became involved in the setting of dates and securing copies of correspondence. However, parents of children with special educational needs are not adequately involved in their children's individual education plans in order to ensure that they are active partners in supporting them to make progress. There are still some parents who are not clear about the provision for their special needs children. In an extreme case, a parent discovered that the support reported by the SEN co-ordinator had not been put in place.
53. Overall, the school has a good relationship with its parents. This contributes to the family atmosphere in the school and gives the sense that the school is at the heart of the community it serves, which benefits the pupils and contributes to their learning and personal development.

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

54. The leadership and management of the school are good overall and are substantially improved since the last inspection. The headteacher provides very good leadership and receives strong support from governors, administrative staff and the recently strengthened senior management team, which now includes the co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy, as well as the deputy headteacher. The school's Mission Statement has clear aims and values including a commitment to equal opportunities and good relationships, supported by a strong Catholic ethos. The headteacher and governors have successfully addressed all the key issues arising from the previous inspection. They have a very good strategic view of the school and its educational direction. This is clearly demonstrated by the way the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced, and by the forward planning indicated in the school's improvement plan. All those who work in and for the school now share a very effective commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed.
55. The governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is gained from the headteacher's reports, from presentations made by subject co-ordinators, from discussions with parents, staff and pupils, and from their own visits to the school, whether on an informal basis, or more formally to observe and monitor the teaching and learning in the classrooms. The present chair of governors, whose role is temporary, pending the election of a new chair in the near future, visits the school regularly to meet with the headteacher. Governors ensure there are clear links between the school improvement plan and the budget. They are increasingly involved in monitoring the school's performance, and their commitment is clearly seen in the long discussions and correspondence involved in resolving the traffic problems at the school entrance – an earlier key issue. Governors play a strong role in shaping the future of the school and meet all their statutory obligations. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.

56. The daily support of pupils and the strategic deployment of staff are very well managed by the headteacher and are making a positive contribution to the raising of standards. The day to day running of the school is very efficient. Good systems are in place for the managing of funds and for tracking school spending and ensuring that the budget is on target. Since the previous inspection there has been much monitoring of teaching and the curriculum, much training, and some very positive appointments of new teachers. This has led to a significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection, with the level of unsatisfactory teaching falling from 23 per cent to under four per cent, and the level of satisfactory or better teaching rising from 77 per cent to 96 per cent. Little mention was made in the previous report of any very good teaching. Now, 24 per cent of the lessons observed are very good. Teachers in year groups support one another well. The school has successfully addressed the key issue of raising the quality of teaching.
57. The planning of the curriculum has also improved since the last inspection and weaknesses identified in the subject areas of English, mathematics, and information and communication technology have been successfully addressed. The school now meets all statutory requirements in these areas. Curriculum planning has been improved through better assessment in English, particularly, and in mathematics and science. The assessment of other subjects is satisfactory but the use made of that assessment to further planning remains underdeveloped. The role of the subject co-ordinator has been strengthened but it is only in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science that co-ordinators are enabled to monitor teaching and learning in lessons. Nevertheless, overall attainment has improved substantially since the previous inspection, with pupils now joining the school with broadly average levels of achievement and leaving the school with levels of attainment above the national average in those subjects. The co-ordinator for special educational needs prepares individual educational plans for pupils, but these are underdeveloped, and this is an area of weakness, still to be addressed.
58. The school's improvement plan is very detailed for the current year, but less so for future years. Action plans for, for example, literacy and numeracy, develop targeted areas in further detail and are excellent devices for taking subjects forward. The budget reflects the school's educational priorities, outlined in the school improvement plan. Clear and well-chosen educational priorities are identified. Decisions are sensibly based on careful evaluations of previous actions and the budget available, and very well supported through the school's financial planning. A good example of authorised expenditure being used to raise standards is the additional funding to enable more learning assistants to hear pupils from Years 3 and 4 read individually. Financial management is good. The school's bursar, who has a good knowledge of and keeps tight control of the budget, makes regular checks. The school keeps to the recommendations of the local education authority by ensuring a carry-over figure of no more than five per cent. There are efficient systems in place for the handling of invoices and ordering of goods, for petty cash and for the school fund, which contribute to the smooth running of the school.
59. The headteacher is working closely with the special needs co-ordinator to improve the focus of targets on individual education plans. A current aim for school improvement is to ensure that objectives for special educational needs (SEN) pupils on the short-term plans are linked to individual education plans. Funding is allocated to allow the SEN co-ordinator to review individual education plans with class teachers each term. Target setting for individuals has not improved sufficiently to have a significant impact on provision for SEN pupils. The headteacher has arranged external support in the setting of targets. The support assistants, employed to work with individuals and groups throughout the school, offer appropriate support and are effective in helping SEN pupils make progress. A room has been allocated for storage of SEN resources, meetings with parents and assessment of pupils by the educational psychologist. Funding has been allocated for the training of the SEN co-ordinator to computerise the SEN forms and individual education plans. The headteacher is working with the SEN co-ordinator to improve consistency in quality of teaching. The SEN governor is fully involved in all aspects of SEN provision. There are serious inconsistencies in the management of SEN that the school will need to address in order for SEN pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

60. The school has an adequate number of teaching and support staff, trained appropriately, and whose special qualifications are very well matched to their responsibilities and the demands of the curriculum. Strategies for monitoring and appraising staff are very good and a two-year programme for staff appraisal is in place. Staff new to the school are very well inducted and supported. The school provides effectively for teacher training, with close links with the University of Brighton. The monitoring of teaching is having a positive effect on raising standards across the school. Management problems with staffing are dealt with squarely.
61. The accommodation is good and is used very well. The practice of placing year group classrooms adjacent to one another is effective for the sharing of resources and ideas. Classroom space has been extended since the previous inspection and a new administration area built, which includes toilet facilities for the disabled. The combined library/information and communication technology suite is a very effective compromise keeping two important areas available to all pupils. The accommodation is cheerful, welcoming and presents a stimulating learning environment. The long-serving caretaker and his staff are to be congratulated on the quality of the cleanliness. There is no sink in one of the Year 3 classrooms and there are some large wall areas with no display boards. Outside, there are three all-weather surfaces, including a newly enclosed area for netball and other ball games, a large sports field, which contribute very positively to the pupils' physical development, and a piece of land scheduled for development into an environmental area. The separate building used for music tuition is useful but requires much maintenance attention. Problems with vehicles at the school entrance, identified as a key issue in the previous inspection, are not fully resolved. However, the governor who has taken responsibility for this problem has worked very hard to try to do so. It would be difficult to say what more she could be expected to do. The situation has improved substantially. Parent pressure is being used to ensure that parents and other drivers are aware of the dangers to children and behave appropriately.
62. Learning resources are good generally but there are weaknesses in history, where there is a lack of artefacts to support the subject, in music, which lacks sufficient musical instruments and in design and technology. A significant amount of information and communication technology equipment has been purchased recently and resources here are now adequate to meet the pupils' needs. The central reference and class fiction libraries are well stocked with books of good quality.
63. Daily acts of collective worship comply with the statutory requirements and are evaluated separately in the Diocese's Section 23 report. The school fulfils its statutory obligations in respect of pupils with special educational needs. Specific grants for pupils with special educational needs, literacy, numeracy, and additional grants for staff development and to improve resources are all used very effectively. "Best value" principles are considered carefully. Three quotations are sought for items of major expenditure and the school shops around for the best local discounts available. National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments are evaluated to ensure that expenditure impacts positively on standards. St. Thomas a Becket Junior school is an effective school, and taking into account the good standards of pupils' attainment overall, the good teaching, good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, the good leadership and management, the school provides good value for money. This represents a considerable improvement over the judgement of the previous inspection that the school was "progressing well towards giving value for money". The overall improvement since the previous inspection is good. Inspection confirms the view of 97 per cent of parents, that the school is well managed.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In their work to further raise standards and improve the quality of education in the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) Improve provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
  - ensuring that their individual education plans are specific to them, with focused, achievable and measurable steps, to ensure that teachers can use them in daily planning to devise well-matched, motivational tasks for pupils\*; (paras. 5, 21, 45, 47, 57, 59, 71)
  - planning more precisely the work pupils are doing when supported in class, to make sure it is targeted on need, sufficiently challenging to ensure that pupils progress and uses time efficiently; (paras. 22, 59, 65, 90)
  - establishing consistent organisational methods to maximise the support pupils receive; (paras. 22, 32, 59)
  - building up the level of partnership with parents that is the hallmark of the school's work in other areas, including parents' active involvement in their children's individual education plans and providing accurate and regular information on how they are doing. (paras. 48, 52)
  
- (2) Provide consistency in provision for pupils in the same year group but different classes, and across the whole school by:
  - planning and assessing lessons in accordance with the school's agreed policies\*; (paras. 4, 10, 18, 23, 45, 68, 70, 71, 75, 81, 112)
  - using broadly similar methods to organise and manage classes; (paras. 18, 24, 75, 76, 87)
  - ensuring that high expectations are set for all pupils; (paras. 25, 28, 74, 76, 87, 114)
  - monitoring groups closely, especially those working independently; (paras. 18, 25)
  - using support staff, resources and time efficiently; (paras. 25, 28, 66, 87, 90)
  - adhering closely to the marking policy; (paras. 46, 51, 71, 78, 106)
  - setting, marking and following up the agreed level of homework, using the homework record regularly as a dialogue with parents. (paras. 18, 23, 48, 51, 67, 78)
  
- (3) Further improve the reports parents receive on their children's progress. (paras. 46, 48, 51)
  
- (4) Ensure that pupils' achievement and provision in design and technology are improved while the school implements Curriculum 2000. (paras. 62, 98, 99)

In addition to the above the following point for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Improve the resources for history and music. (paras. 38, 62, 107, 111)

\*Items already identified for action by the school.

**PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

**Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection**

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	23.6	32.8	40.0	3.6	-	-

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

**Information about the school's pupils**

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		250
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		37

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

**Attendance**

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	21	34	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	18
	Girls	30	29	31
	Total	44	44	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (66)	80 (60)	89 (71)
	National	70 (44)	69 (56)	78 (62)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	15
	Girls	31	31	30
	Total	45	47	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (71)	85 (78)	82 (80)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	215
Any other minority ethnic group	24

*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	2	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)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.0:1
Average class size	31.3

**Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	79

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	424696
Total expenditure	437904
Expenditure per pupil	1678
Balance brought forward from previous year	32451
Balance carried forward to next year	19243

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	261
Number of questionnaires returned	120
Percentage return	46%

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	3	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	42	9	2	4
The teaching is good.	58	38	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	39	9	2	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	20	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	57	33	7	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	30	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	38	4	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	33	6	0	2

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

**ENGLISH**

65. Standards of attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average in reading and speaking and listening, and broadly in line with the national average in writing. This is a substantial improvement from the previous inspection when most pupils attained average standards. In both the 1999 Standard Attainment Tests (SATs), and in the more recent tests this year, the number of pupils achieving Level 4 and above, was above the national average. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was close to the national average. These scores reveal a considerable improvement over the last three years, and exceed the school's set targets. The school's level of attainment is also above that of comparable, similar schools, and above the average level for East Sussex schools. As with the national trend, girls outperform boys but not significantly. Over the last four years boys' attainment in English has been slightly below the national average, and girls' slightly above. Standards of attainment observed during the inspection confirm these results. Pupils join the school with standards broadly in line with the national average, and leave with standards broadly above. Almost all pupils are making good progress across the school and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. Standards of literacy are good across the school and there is an effective action plan for developing the subject.
66. By the time they leave the school, most pupils' standards in speaking and listening are above the national expectation. Pupils are encouraged to develop these skills in paired and group work, in class discussions and through the effective use of teachers' open-ended questions. Pupils think out carefully considered answers, for example, in a Year 5 class, "Why do you think that...?" "What else do we need to know...?" Subjects other than English are well used to develop pupils' skills of oracy. For example, in a Year 6 geography class pupils debated the advantages and disadvantages of the construction of a local bypass and distinguished between formal and informal language. Pupils engage in conversation easily and confidently with visiting adults, whether casually at the lunch table, or more formally, in interview. They use a wide vocabulary and are generally articulate speakers. In almost all of the lessons observed, pupils listened attentively to their teachers and to one another. During some lessons, when "carpet-time" was rather long, they showed very good powers of sustained concentration. The pupils' listening abilities contribute positively to their learning.
67. Standards of reading are above the national average. Criticisms of the previous inspection, that reading skills were not taught systematically, that there was an ill match of text to pupil ability and that there was too little reading being heard by class teachers have all been rectified. Those pupils sampled during the inspection to read to inspectors individually read fluently, with confidence and understanding, in relation to their attainment. Texts were well matched to pupils' abilities. Good additional timetable provision has been made daily for reading and for teachers to hear readers, as well as during each literacy hour. Parents hear reading at home regularly and there is a home-school diary and reading record book to enable dialogue between teacher and parent. Reading records are sparse, however, and the use made of these and the effectiveness of the comments is variable across the school. The school has identified areas of weakness in reading, for example, in boys' performance generally and among Year 3 pupils. Successful action has been taken to raise standards through the provision of extra staffing to hear readers in Years 3 and 4 and the provision of more books likely to stimulate boys' interests. Year 3 pupils are taught appropriate strategies and by Year 6, pupils are familiar with terms such as "glossary, blurb, and syllable". A below average reader was able to use his skills to build correctly the word "rhododendron". Pupils are familiar with the reference library and know how to retrieve information. Each class has its own class fiction library. Appropriately graded fiction is readily available around the school and there is a high profile of English and literacy display areas in all classrooms. Many pupils belong to local libraries. Good use is made of dictionaries and thesauruses. The school assesses pupils' reading regularly and makes good use of that information to identify areas for support.

68. Standards of writing have improved substantially since the previous inspection and are now broadly in line with the national average. The school has rightly identified writing as an area of relative weakness. The additional timetabling for extended writing is doing much to raise standards. Year 4 pupils change tenses from past to present and select words carefully in their descriptive writing – “waves *bob* about”, “seagulls *float* over clouds”. Year 5 pupils build up a large bank of synonyms, graded with shades of meaning, for example “chilly, cold, freezing”, and use good metaphors in their poetry – “The sun is an orange dinghy...It is a golden coin. The moon is a still, silver plate”. Year 6 pupils write imaginatively and with well -considered vocabulary when commencing a story entitled “The journey”. They use complex sentences with subordinate clauses. Their handwriting observed was of a high standard. All pupils showed a good awareness of the use of paragraphs. Year group teachers plan lessons together but there can be considerable inconsistencies in the delivery of those lessons. The teaching of handwriting skills receives due attention. Specific time has been provided within the timetable for handwriting for all pupils. This is good practice and is having a positive effect on raising standards. Pupils are encouraged to write for a variety of purposes and are well skilled in note taking, drafting and editing before completing their work. Standards of presentation are good, with pupils of all ages neatly underlining headings and dating their work. Standards of spelling are good, with different levels of words being set for pupils of different abilities, and regular testing of pupils. Spellings learned progress from “jerk, term”, in Year 3, to “chronological, autobiographical,” in Year 6.
69. The pupils’ attitudes to the subject are good overall and often very good, especially in the upper key stage, where pupils show a mature approach towards their studies and willingly volunteer for classroom duties and responsibilities. In only one lesson observed were attitudes and behaviour less than satisfactory and this was due to poor class management skills. Pupils listen well to one another and their teachers. They work well together in pairs and in their small groups within the literacy hour. They show good application to their written tasks when working independently and know not to bother the teacher when she is working with her group. An especially effective practice is that of pairing able and less able pupils together in Year 6, as “response partners”. All pupils have been well taught to take a pride in the appearance of their work and presentation is good across the school. Pupils respond particularly well when teachers make use of humour.
70. The quality of teaching observed is good overall, sometimes very good in Years 5 and 6, and never less than satisfactory. The previous inspection reported that one in three lessons were unsatisfactory or poor. Now, over half of the lessons are at least good and almost one in four lessons are very good. This is a substantial improvement since the previous inspection and the biggest single factor contributing to the higher standards now being achieved in the subject. The best teaching observed included high expectations of task and conduct from the pupils, clear learning objectives displayed and well reinforced at the end of the lesson, and the use of a variety of teaching methods. For example, teachers in Year 6 reinforce pupils’ learning effectively by making deliberate mistakes themselves in grammar, spelling and punctuation, for pupils to identify. The introduction of “premiership words” has successfully encouraged greater interest and motivation from boys. Varied tasks are set, appropriate for pupils of different ability levels, but the provision of such planning is underdeveloped and inconsistent. Some teachers set extension work for higher attaining pupils but insufficient provision is made for the largest group of “average” pupils.
71. Teachers are also inconsistent in their use of assessment in class. A Year 5 teacher was observed assessing and recording the performance of her small group of readers and a small number of teachers revise their planning, having assessed their pupils’ performance from the previous lesson, but these good practices are not consistent across the school. More formal assessment however, and the use made of that assessment is good. Work is sampled, levelled against national criteria and recorded. Reading, spelling and writing are assessed regularly and areas for development identified and improved. The quality of marking is also inconsistent, with some very good, supportive and helpful marking noticed in the upper key stage. Upper key stage pupils have target cards, which include targets set by their teachers and themselves. This is good practice. Teachers set regular homework, which is helping to improve pupils’

learning. The provision for teaching pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory, and these pupils often make no more than satisfactory progress, though they may make good progress within the literacy hour when working as a small group with one adult. The quality of their individual education plans gives teachers insufficient guidance to best meet the needs of these pupils. This is an area of serious weakness. The quality of pupils' learning closely matches teaching. Good use is made of the plenary session for teachers to ensure that pupils leave lessons well aware of what they have learned.

72. The school has made very good use of its accommodation to maintain a well-stocked reference library within the new information and communication technology suite. Resources for the subject are good, easily accessible and well used. Little use of drama was observed during the inspection. This is an area for development but all age groups perform a production for parents during the year. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support the subject. All pupils are taught word processing skills and these are practised regularly in class lessons. The subject is well led. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator is well qualified and has positive plans to take the subject forward. The subject has a high profile in the school improvement plan. The literacy hour has been fully implemented and is having a substantial impact on raising standards. Teachers make very effective use of the additional time made available for the teaching of reading, handwriting, spelling and extended writing. Much monitoring of the subject has occurred in recent years by the headteacher, senior management staff and the governors, as well as advisers from the local education authority. There has been a very marked improvement in standards since the previous inspection. The subject contributes well to pupils' social, moral and cultural development. There is close liaison with the adjacent infant school and with the secondary school, promoting good progress and continuity of pupils' learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

73. Standards in mathematics seen during the inspection are above national averages and confirm the school's results of the most recent national test for pupils at the age of eleven. These 1999 results showed considerable improvement over the previous year's. Provisional figures for the year 2000 suggest a further rise in standards. There is no significant difference in test results over time between boys and girls. Since the previous inspection attainment in mathematics has improved and the school has exceeded its own targets. The main factors that contribute to improved standards of attainment are the quality of teaching, planning and assessment, all identified as needing attention in the previous report.
74. The teaching of mathematics is good overall and shows a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school has benefited from the expertise and influence of the subject co-ordinator, local in-service training as part of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the monitoring by the co-ordinator and headteacher of the teaching of mathematics. This has also contributed to teachers' mathematical confidence and their secure knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching. However, although planning is consistent throughout the school and between year groups there is still variation in the delivery of lessons and expectations of teachers.
75. A significant factor in the standards achieved by pupils, is the priority that staff across the school give to encouraging and requiring pupils to think mathematically and use appropriate mathematical vocabulary to discuss ways of working. A good example of this is the way in which teachers use the introductory mental mathematics work in each lesson, asking pupils to explain the strategy used to reach the answer. For example, lower attaining Year 6 pupils could halve two digit odd numbers to 0.5 and explain their method. In a Year 5 lesson, most pupils understand one-tenth and the first decimal place. Year 3 pupils, following on from a mental mathematics activity, select two odd numbers between 1 and 9, place them in order, find the difference and carry on the number pattern. In the best examples of mental mathematics work, pupils are clearly focused, for example by sitting closely together on the carpet, and respond to quick fire questions by holding up the answer on simple 'instant' recording devices. This provides the teacher with quick feedback about individual performance and the class as a whole.

In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher recorded significant assessments as pupils answered. However, in some lessons where these strategies are not used the mental mathematics session became lack lustre as only individuals were asked the question and assessment opportunities were missed. Time spent on quality mental mathematics work is improving pupils' number facts and multiplication tables at all ability levels, as well as their enjoyment of mathematics. It also makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills.

76. In most lessons, teachers' management and organisation of pupils is of good quality and they respond accordingly. In one Year 4 lesson pupils, after a clear explanation, settle quickly to the task of adding consecutive numbers to determine whether the answer is always an odd or even number. They look at other patterns against the statements 'always true', 'sometimes true' and 'never true'. However, many pupils in the parallel class, taught with less clearly focused management and organisation, initially failed to understand the task and the pace of the lesson slowed as pupils became restless, resulting in a marked difference in pupil progress between the two classes. In most lessons teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve are high. Good questioning skills are used effectively to develop mathematical thinking and strategies. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils responded very well to the teacher's questioning to help them understand a numerator and denominator and the equivalence of proper and improper fractions. In the better lessons teachers not only pace their lessons well, but also pace their questioning to allow pupils time to think and reflect on their answer or strategy. An example of this was in the plenary session of a Year 3 lesson, when pupils demonstrated to the class on the white board the difference between two odd numbers and how they had followed on the number pattern with the same difference.
77. Achievement in mathematics is good and pupils make good progress. Teachers monitor progress well and use their assessments to plan for pupils of different prior attainment. This contributes to the good quality of learning for pupils in the majority of lessons. Pupils take a pride in the presentation and organisation of their work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons when they are supported by the learning support assistant.
78. Pupils' work is regularly marked but comments are often limited to encouragement rather than how pupils can improve. Individual short-term, achievable targets in mathematics are being introduced for each pupil to contribute to their self-knowledge of their learning. Mathematics homework is a well-established feature of the subject although there is inconsistency in its use. There is some evidence of the use of mathematics in, for example, geography but its use is not systematically planned across the curriculum.
79. The subject manager has a well-formulated improvement plan for the subject. This includes the continued analysis of national test results for each pupil, the monitoring of teaching and development of the use of information technology. These strategies have a clear focus on the continued raising of standards in mathematics.

## SCIENCE

80. Attainment in science is above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. A higher proportion of pupils reach the expected National Curriculum Level 4 or above and this judgement is broadly supported by the results of national tests in 1999. The 2000 results, when confirmed, should show a slight improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum Level 5, which in 1999 was slightly below average. Achievement is now good across the ability range in science. Pupils generally have good all-round knowledge of science, particularly in the area of life processes and living things. Pupils are able to describe the functions of the major organs of the body or show how different elements in a food chain each depend on the other. Pupils are also good at making observations and drawing conclusions from experiments. Higher attaining pupils can say how experiments could be revised or adapted to provide better results, whilst even the lower attainers can say whether a test was being fairly conducted or not. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys or girls. Unlike the national picture, however, over the last few years boys and girls have taken turns to outperform each other by a small margin.

81. The majority of teaching is good, sometimes very good and never less than satisfactory. The teachers' careful planning, high expectations and the variety of methods used to convey scientific concepts contribute to the good achievements that the pupils make. Teachers take care to review and build on the pupils' prior learning and to reinforce their understanding at key points during the lesson. In the best lessons, there is a high level of creative interaction between the pupils and the teacher and between pupils themselves, leading to a very good development of knowledge and understanding. In the few lessons where learning is only satisfactory the teacher may fail to maintain the attention and interest of particular pupils. This is mostly due to not carefully matching the task or pace to the ability of the pupils. This can occur with the higher or lower attainers. However, the teachers usually make sure that pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate additional help and make satisfactory progress.
82. The pupils' attitudes to science are good. They enjoy learning, especially through the practical experiences. The majority of pupils take pride in their work and its presentation. Pupils are expected to write up the results of their experiments or research 'in their own words', using the correct scientific vocabulary. Pupils tackle this with enthusiasm and this contributes to the good progress that they make.
83. Since the last inspection, the school has made good improvements in science. Attainment has risen from average to above average and teaching moved from satisfactory to good. Coverage of the National Curriculum continues to be good for all pupils. Some use is made of information and communication technology, such as CD-ROMs and word-processing, although it is not yet up to the level expected by the new National Curriculum. Pupils now have more freedom to contribute to the development of experiments, although the higher attainers would benefit from more opportunities to pursue their own lines of enquiry or devise their own experiments. The co-ordination of science is shared between two teachers but has proved very effective in carrying out the school's commitment to raising standards by developing teaching and learning in the subject. They have carried out an exhaustive review of the pupils' performance in the national tests, enabling particular areas of the curriculum to be reinforced or revised. They have reviewed their own assessment practices to make them more accurate. They have monitored teaching in order to share good practice. These measures will enable them to set individual pupil targets with the expectation of improving attainment still further.
84. The pupils enjoy a good variety of experiences in science due to the good quality and deployment of resources, including the teaching and non-teaching staff. The accommodation is generally spacious making experiments much easier and safer. The curriculum is also enriched by visits to a variety of study centres.
85. As with other areas of the curriculum, science makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Cross-curricular work in particular helps pupils understand how other people in different parts of the world live. They learn to co-operate and value each other's ideas and opinions in class and the good teaching provides invaluable spiritual experiences when the pupils explore the world around them.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

86. The pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when the amount of ICT work taking place was too small even to make a judgement on attainment. By the time they leave school, pupils can write a variety of word-processed text in different styles and layouts, for example, poems, plays, menus and stories. They can explore data on CD-ROMs or in simple databases, send an e-mail and devise a sequence of instructions to control a floor robot. Higher attaining pupils can extract text from different sources and incorporate pictures in their document.

87. The teaching of ICT is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good. There is also some unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject and the school has made use of grants to make sure that teachers have been trained in the newest technology. The pupils' achievements are usually satisfactory because the lessons are appropriately planned and structured, with clear objectives so that pupils know what they will learn. In the best lessons, work is well matched to the pupils' ability, teachers build effectively on learning that has taken place previously and pupils make good progress in the development of skills and understanding. Lessons are less successful when the teacher fails to anticipate potential problems or fully research the software to be used. Not all teachers provide work at different levels for pupils of differing ability, but most teachers set a good challenge and know the level at which pupils should be able to perform. Each class has at least one special ICT lesson a week in the well-equipped computer suite. This is still something of a novelty and pupils can get quite excited. The only unsatisfactory lesson occurred here, as the teacher had difficulty in managing some challenging behaviour and failed to make effective use of the technical assistant.
88. Pupils enjoy using the computers and work well in pairs, taking turns or collaborating on a task. On the occasions when pupils had been sent to work on their own in the computer room, they were well behaved and got on with their work with the minimum of supervision.
89. The acquisition of sufficient hardware, including a good Internet connection and appropriate software plus the development of a scheme of work, have all contributed to the good improvement in standards since the last inspection. The scheme of work for ICT, based on the national scheme, was brought in this term and provides a sound basis for ensuring continuity of learning and progression through the attainment levels. Teachers make informal judgements on pupils' attainments, to help write reports. The co-ordinator is trying various schemes for a more structured approach to assessment, which will help inform future planning for the subject.
90. The co-ordinator has ensured that the topics covered include opportunities for developing learning in numeracy and literacy. However, not all teachers take advantage of the opportunities provided by ICT for enhancing learning in other areas of the curriculum, for instance in science. This is partly due to the recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Most ICT lessons have to be squeezed into the afternoon slots, leaving many computers idle for most of the mornings. All pupils have opportunities to use the computers, but the school does not use ICT specifically to help pupils with special educational needs who make unsatisfactory progress. Where ICT is used in cross-curricular topics, such as in the study of African dance or in expressive poetry, the pupils enjoy good spiritual and cultural experiences. Some work combining word-processing and painting by pupils in Year 4 was particularly exciting and expressive.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

91. By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards of attainment in art and design exceed the national expectation. Observation of lessons, interviews with pupils, scrutiny of work, displays around the school and photographic evidence all show that pupils make good progress. The success of pupils with special educational needs is particularly notable. These pupils have good self-esteem and work very hard during lessons, delighted with their achievements.
92. Standards in drawing and printing are good and pupils achieve better than expected for their age by the time they leave the school. They draw what they see carefully and with appropriate regard to detail. The Year 5 pencil drawings of buildings in Old Town, Eastbourne, are of high quality, with depth and perspective incorporated well. The charcoal images showing body movement, created by Year 6 pupils, after studying sport and leisure activities in the media, are another good example. Pupils of all abilities record from experience and imagination with a good range of first-hand observations. The use of sketch-books is being introduced throughout the school. These show that pupils are able to explore ideas and develop their work. Good examples of silk printing are on display.

93. Pupils use their artistic skills and expertise well to support their work in other subjects, such as when illustrating written work in English, history, geography and religious education. They use art to express their feelings, for example, Year 4 produced paintings while listening to Mussorgsky's *Night on a Bare Mountain*. The art and design work for topics is often imaginative. A good example is a jointed figure for a gymnastics project. Three-dimensional art work is well developed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Use of information and communication technology for composing pictures is still limited.
94. Pupils show a positive attitude to art and they are motivated and enthusiastic when expressing opinions about their work. They demonstrate enjoyment when engaged in practical tasks and handle resources responsibly. Pupils respond positively to instructions and sustain concentration.
95. The teaching of art is good overall and sometimes very good. A Year 3 teacher's excellent subject knowledge meant that the explanation on drawing techniques to make a composition showing the relationship between two figures was accurate and clear. The pupils' confidence in their own ability to succeed was significantly raised. The teacher's own enthusiasm for the subject inspires and motivates pupils well.
96. Planning is effective, ensuring all aspects of the art curriculum are taught during the key stage. There is good emphasis on the work of artists, leaving pupils with a lasting impression of how they can use what they know about the work of other artists to influence or make improvements to their own work. A Year 5 teacher used the paintings of Lowry to generate class discussion on movement and mood. Pupils sketched groups playing outside and the teacher took photographs to extend the lesson over the following weeks.
97. Art is well led and managed by the co-ordinator, who has only been in post for two terms. There is already a detailed action plan, which includes introduction of a revised scheme of work and assessment procedures. There will need to be a substantial increase in the purchase of resources to ensure effective delivery of the new scheme and arrangements made for storage. The co-ordinator has insufficient opportunity to monitor lessons and consequently is limited in her ability to help and support colleagues or to influence teaching and learning to any great degree. She does, however, see pupils' work, is building a portfolio of examples and has clear direction for improvement in the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98. No design and technology lessons took place during the week of the inspection and there were no examples of pupils' work available to look at, so it is not possible to provide a judgement on attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. By looking at a small number of photographs and talking to pupils and teachers, it is clear that pupils' achievements in design and technology are unsatisfactory.
99. Several factors have contributed to the worsening of standards since the last inspection, when, despite limited evidence, there was some indication that attainment and progress were satisfactory. The emphasis on literacy and numeracy, a new co-ordinator, a limited budget and a well-below average allocation of time for teaching design and technology have all taken their toll. In addition, the displays show a bigger emphasis on art and design. Some fine woven and painted textiles are good examples. Talking to the co-ordinator and pupils, and looking at photographic evidence, shows that pupils explore mechanisms and structures, often linked to work in science, electric powered models, packaging design and simple food manufacture. However, little evidence could be produced to show that pupils achieve appropriate design and evaluation of their products. The photographs did indicate that the standard of finish and imagination used in some of the models are above average. The budget for design and technology is not properly linked to the curriculum or the development plan and resources are inadequate to meet the needs of the subject.

100. The development plan for design and technology and the commitment and vision of the co-ordinator would suggest that, given appropriate time and resources, there is a sound capacity for improvement.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

101. Standards of work seen in geography are in line with that expected of pupils of a similar age and by the age of eleven pupils acquire sound knowledge and skills. Most can interpret maps of different scales, understand symbols on maps and use a key competently. They have an understanding of physical processes such as coastal erosion in their local study.
102. The teaching of geography is good and from teachers' planning and scrutiny of work there is evidence of a clear emphasis on the use of the locality. Teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of the subject ensure that pupils acquire sound factual knowledge while skilful questioning encourages geographical enquiry. For example in a Year 5 lesson studying coastal erosion, pupils listen carefully and ask relevant questions while noting down key vocabulary such as; "moving shingle", "rising sea levels" and "groynes" from which to write a factual account. Pupils are well managed and organised. They listen as a class, work together either collaboratively or by themselves and participate fully in discussions. In a Year 6 lesson looking at the effects of the imminent building of a local bypass, individual pupils represent the views of interested parties such as farmers, shopkeepers and motorists. They respond very well to questions from the class and show a capacity to see the viewpoint of others and a real empathy with the issues. These positive attitudes enhance pupils' learning. In both these lessons, photographs of erosion on the Eastbourne coast and maps and photographs from the Highways Agency were relevant and enhanced the quality of the lesson.
103. Standards in geography have been maintained since the last inspection. In the school improvement plan, geography is identified as an area for development. Although the school has a topic plan that shows areas of study for each year group, it is dated and does not reflect national guidance or identify a progression of skills. The co-ordinator, recently in post, is enthusiastic about the development of the subject in the school.

## **HISTORY**

104. No history lessons took place during the inspection. Because of the way the topic cycle operates, all classes were involved in geographical studies. This means that no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. However, evidence from last year's completed work, together with a scrutiny of planning and displays and discussions with pupils and teachers, indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress and reach the expected standards. This matches the findings of the last inspection.
105. Year 6 pupils describe in detail the main features of their previous year's topics. They remember key personalities and events of their work on the Tudors: for example, King Henry VIII's appearance and character and the names and fates of many of his wives. His daughters, Queens Mary I and Elizabeth I, and their fragile relationship are mentioned. The growth of the British sea power, including the defeat of the Spanish Armada, is acknowledged as a major influence on the way the nation's future was shaped. Pupils understand the concept of chronology and define accurately the structure and function of a timeline. Individual topics completed by older pupils effectively promote key research skills, including the use of computers and the employment of a search engine to narrow down tasks on the Internet. These mini-topics often feature historical research, as this year when pupils choose to write biographies on figures as diverse as Leonardo da Vinci and Anne Frank.
106. Pupils show positive attitudes to history. The workbooks of pupils of all levels of ability are tidily kept. Work is neat, well presented and attractively illustrated. Some younger pupils in Year 3 have used information and communication technology to accurately draw a desert scene, including pyramids, to support their work on Ancient Egypt. Their knowledge of the period has been successfully applied to making colourful board games. A disappointing feature is the lack

of diagnostic or evaluative comments by teachers seen in some books. Some are not marked at all.

107. The recently appointed co-ordinator has a very clear view of the needs of the subject, within the framework of the school's improvement plan. He has audited resources and identified many deficiencies, with artefacts in woefully short supply, as was identified at the time of the last inspection. Otherwise progress since 1996 has been sound. Good links are made between history and other subjects, one of the strengths of the topic approach. For example, attractive displays produced in art lessons support Year 6 pupils' work on the Tudors. Visits to the numerous local sites of historical interest, including Singleton Open Air Museum and Eastbourne's Old Town, and the contribution visitors to the school make to pupils' historical understanding are helpful features. Visitors include an actor working with Year 5 pupils on their Tudor topic and the Rainbow Theatre presenting history based drama to the whole school. Monitoring has already begun and a portfolio of pupils' work is being built up to help teachers more carefully assess how pupils are doing. The co-ordinator has had no specific training in history. As he takes the school through the introduction of the new curriculum formulating its policy and schemes of work, relevant training will be a necessity.

## **MUSIC**

108. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are attaining the standards expected for their ages and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils throughout the school sing a range of songs with confidence. The songs become more complex and pupils sing in two parts, maintaining a good balance. Pupils have experience of composing and performing, devising a musical accompaniment to animal stories, for example in Year 3. Pupils in Year 5 are able to accompany their singing using a selection of percussion and tuned instruments. They explore sounds and rhythm and engage in composing. They evaluate their own work and that of other composers. Their use of musical vocabulary is limited.
109. Pupils talk about their past and present work enthusiastically and with good recall of what they have done. They concentrate well in lessons and listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They are generally co-operative. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The music curriculum is extended for many pupils by after school choir club and instrumental lessons provided by county teachers. There are frequent opportunities to perform.
110. Only two music lessons were seen during the inspection, both in Year 5. The quality of teaching was good in one and very good in the other. Effective planning gives good direction to lessons and teachers are clear about what they want pupils to achieve. Pupils are given opportunities to talk about their work, and encouraged to express their views. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their own enthusiasm for the subject results in increased pupil interest and motivation.
111. The new music co-ordinator has a clear direction for improving the subject. The policy and scheme of work will be reviewed and assessment opportunities included. The quality and range of musical instruments will need to be improved to raise standards further.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

112. By the end of the key stage, pupils' standards are in line with national expectations. This is as was found at the last inspection. However, pupils' progress was judged to be good in 1996, now it is satisfactory. Not all teachers plan lessons to build progressively on what pupils can already do, so that they achieve well. This was seen in hockey lessons for Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils with virtually the same content, despite a detailed scheme of work for the different skills to be taught in each year, provided by the co-ordinator. Year 4 pupils use their sticks safely, most with the correct grip, though some have the right hand above the left, restricting control and striking power. A minority use the back of the stick, not the face, if it is more convenient, lacking the co-ordination to reverse the stick to present the face to the ball. Some Year 5 pupils

persist with an incorrect grip. This limits them to pushing the ball along, taking ages to reach the goal. Most Year 6 pupils are confident and have good control of the ball at speed, as they travel through a slalom course. Some use the back of the stick or even their feet in the excitement of a two against two game. The higher attaining, many of them members of the school's successful hockey team, have very secure skills, using the reverse stick at speed when dribbling.

113. Year 3 pupils build steadily on their previous skills, extending their range of passes in basketball, including the ability to move into space to receive an accurate bounce pass from a team mate. Year 4 pupils show standards above those expected in a very energetic aerobics lesson. They make enthusiastic links in their learning to their ongoing science topic on the heart. The majority are able to sustain the rhythmic movements throughout, though not always at the teacher's brisk rate. However, about a quarter of the class display less control, move sluggishly and are stationary for too much of the time. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, work purposefully to produce improvement in their levels of skill. They use opportunities to practice, repeating skills, for instance in dribbling round a set course or in relays, to refine performance. When given the chance, they analyse their own or classmates' performance to aid improvement. Almost all change quickly and dress in the school's preferred kit, identifying their house. One or two persistent offenders regularly do not bring their kit, so miss much valuable exercise. A good feature in the best lessons is that pupils not able to take part are required to make notes to enable them to keep up with skills taught.
114. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Much of it has good features. Not all teachers dress appropriately to present good models to pupils but all demonstrate skills, showing appropriate subject knowledge. Most plan carefully and manage lively pupils in exciting work. However, expectations of appropriate behaviour are not always high enough, so that lessons are noisy and frequently interrupted for disciplinary matters, particularly in the lower juniors. In a very good indoor lesson of great pace, a Year 4 teacher effectively related the health aspects of movement to ongoing topic work, showing very high expectations of her pupils. They responded accordingly, on task throughout vigorous activity, with pulsating music, for an extended period. All teachers are careful to build an appropriate period of warming up exercises into their lessons, though cooling down sessions are rarer.
115. The co-ordinator is a physical education specialist. She has produced a very well balanced programme, addressing all the key elements of the subject over the four years a pupil is in the school. A hierarchy of skills in all strands should ensure their progressive acquisition and increasing knowledge, often related effectively to ongoing work in other subjects, as the pupils move through the school. Resources are adequate. The accommodation, both indoor and outdoor is very good, with the provision of fenced courts next to both upper and lower junior playgrounds useful at other times than physical education lessons. Detailed planning for outdoor and adventurous work within the grounds is extended by activities undertaken by Year 6 pupils during a residential visit. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and a profitable link with the renowned Chelsea School, part of the University of Brighton Faculty of Education and Sport, have helped maintain the subject's high profile, despite the competing interests of core subjects in a tightly scheduled timetable.