

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bicester, Oxfordshire

LEA area: Oxford

Unique reference number: 123307

Headteacher: Mrs Kate Harper

Reporting inspector: Declan McCarthy
23886

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th May 2003

Inspection number: 248442

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Queen's Avenue Bicester Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX26 2NX
Telephone number:	(01869) 252035
Fax number:	(01869) 252035
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Fr. Michael Stack
Date of previous inspection:	24 th November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23886	Declan McCarthy	Registered inspector	Science History Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
14032	Marion Saunders	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	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?
12764	Wendy Thomas	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14991	Alan Hardwicke	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography	Leadership and management
7336	Lindsay Howard	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	8 - 10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10 - 12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12 - 14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14 - 15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15 - 16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18 - 22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23 - 35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a Voluntary Aided school situated in Bicester, serving the local community and surrounding villages. The school has a strong sense of community enshrined within its Catholic ethos and is popular with parents. It is about the same size as other primary schools, with 241 pupils aged 4 -11 years on roll. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language and the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is below average. Eleven per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs (SEN) register, which is also below average. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs for specific learning difficulties, autism or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy when they start school at four years of age is slightly above the expectations for their age. Pupils are mainly white and there are few pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. Four per cent of pupils receive free school meals, which is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some very strong features. Standards are above national averages, particularly in Years 1 and 2 where they are very high, and pupils are achieving well throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good, which enables pupils to make good progress. The headteacher, who leads and manages the school exceptionally well, is ably supported by a strong senior management team, particularly the deputy headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high and pupils are achieving well because the school's systems for checking and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good.
- Pupils' personal development is very well promoted, especially through the strong Catholic ethos. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to school, behave very well in lessons and have very good relationships with others.
- The curriculum is well planned and provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling pupils of all abilities to be included in all activities.
- Procedures for health and safety are very good.
- The school's partnership with parents, the parish and the community is very good, benefiting pupils especially well.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management and is well supported by staff, particularly the deputy headteacher.
- Governors provide good support for the school, and have developed their role well in shaping the school's direction.

What could be improved

- Although extra-curricular provision for music is good, there is not enough time allocated to music teaching during the day, which limits the achievements of pupils.
- The school library is too small to support pupils' learning.
- New staff are not informed sufficiently about the school's child protection arrangements.
- Statutory requirements in the prospectus are not fully met.
- Although attendance is improving, it is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient procedures for promoting good attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the last inspection in November 1997. In 1999 the school was 51st on the DFES list of the top 100 most improved schools in the country as standards rose dramatically during this period. The key issues identified during the previous inspection have been well addressed. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and this has led to a significant rise in standards throughout the school. The curriculum has greatly improved, with more teaching time allocated to subjects and a much wider range of learning opportunities, particularly provision for information and communication technology. Systems for

checking and recording pupils' progress have improved, and good use is made of assessment information, particularly very good use of test data to guide planning. There has been an increase in computer resources and classroom accommodation has improved.

STANDARDS

The tables show the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Years 6, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Year 6 performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools*
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	A	B	D
mathematics	C	A	A	C
science	B	B	B	C

Key

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

* Similar schools means schools where the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to that in St Mary's Catholic Primary School.

In 2002, by the end of Year 6, pupils' performance in English and science was above the national average and well above the national average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools, pupils' performance in English was below average, although their performance in mathematics and science was average. Results have improved significantly since the last inspection, with further steady improvement during the last three years. By the end of Year 2 in the 2002 tests, pupils' overall performance in reading, writing and mathematics was in the top five per cent of schools nationally and for similar schools. Standards have risen sharply in mathematics and in reading and writing over the previous three years. The findings of this inspection show that standards by the end of the Reception year are above average and standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average. Standards by the end of Year 6 are also above average in English, mathematics and science. Although the national data shows that pupils' overall progress in Year 6 was unsatisfactory from their prior attainment in Year 2, the school exceeded its targets last year and is on course to meet its targets this year. Standards are high because teaching has improved significantly and planning is much better. The school also makes very good use of test data to improve teaching and learning and as a result, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, make good progress. Pupils' achievements in most remaining subjects are at least satisfactory. However, their achievements in music are unsatisfactory because there is insufficient time allocated for teaching the subject during the school day.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; these help pupils to work hard and make good progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and behave well around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils' relationships in the school are very good. They willingly accept responsibility and show consideration towards others.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. There is a high rate of authorised absence and there are insufficient procedures to promote good attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils	Foundation Stage	Years 1-2	Years 3-6
--------------------	------------------	-----------	-----------

Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.

In all but one lesson seen, teaching was at least satisfactory, and in most lessons, teaching was good and often very good. Very good teaching was seen in all year groups, particularly in the teaching of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. More effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and the very strong commitment amongst staff to work hard and improve provision have led to the high levels of good and very good teaching. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, are taught well, which was also confirmed in the analysis of pupils' work. The stronger aspects of teaching are: effective planning with clear learning objectives communicated to pupils; teachers' good subject knowledge; their high expectations for pupils' learning; very good management of pupils; and very good relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are interested in and concentrate on what they are learning. However, in the one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, learning objectives were not made clear enough and the lesson pace was slower. As a result, pupils were unsure of what they should achieve and they lost interest and concentration.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It meets statutory requirements. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and in personal, social and health education, and very constructive links with partner institutions. However, there is insufficient time allocated for the teaching of music during the school day.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Many pupils make very good progress against their targets when supported by staff and the curriculum is well matched to their needs. Although the revised code of practice has been implemented, there is insufficient reference to the Disability Act.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Provision for spiritual development is excellent and enshrined within the exceptionally strong Catholic ethos. Provision for pupils' moral and social development, which is particularly reflected in the strong sense of community in the school, is very good. Provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and its procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The school's systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are also very good. Although procedures for health and safety are very good and there are good first aid arrangements in place, not all staff are made fully aware of the school's child protection procedures.

The school has very good links with parents, who hold very positive views of the school and make a very good contribution to the work of the school and their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management and she is well supported by key staff, particularly the deputy headteacher, who provides very good support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have developed their role well in shaping the school's direction. However, statutory requirements for the implementation of the Disability Act and for the school prospectus are not fully met.
The school's evaluation of	Very good. Information from tests has been exceptionally well used to

its performance	identify where pupils are not doing well, and as a result the school has developed very well chosen priorities for development. There are also very good systems in place for monitoring teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Funding is used well. The school's finances are well administered, and efficient systems for financial control are in place.

Staffing levels are good and there is a very good match of qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff to teach the curriculum. Accommodation and learning resources are good. However, the school library is too small. The headteacher and governors actively seek to achieve best value in their spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children like school; • their children make good progress; • the school is well led and managed; • teaching is good; • their children are expected to work hard; • the school helps their children to become more mature; and • the school is approachable. 	<p>A small minority of parents believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils do not receive the right amount of homework; and • there are insufficient extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team agrees with the overwhelmingly positive views of parents. Pupils do enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to their work. This, together with good teaching promoted by very good leadership and management, enables them to work hard and make good progress. Pupils show a high degree of maturity by the time they leave school as a result of the very good provision for their personal development and the approachability of staff. The inspection evidence does not fully support parents' views on homework: pupils do receive the right amount of homework. Although there is a good range of additional lunchtime clubs and after-school activities to extend learning, there are fewer of these available to younger pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. By the end of Year 6 in the 2002 national tests, pupils' performance in English and science was above the national average and well above the national average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance in mathematics and science was average but below average for English. Furthermore, based on their prior attainment, Year 6 pupils made poor progress in English, unsatisfactory progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in science. However, the 2002 Year 6 group included several pupils with special educational needs due to general or specific literacy difficulties, with related difficulties in mathematics. The poor progress of Year 6 pupils in English is also due to lower results in their writing tests, owing to a lack of experience in writing for different purposes within subjects. The school has identified this from their own analysis of the 2002 test results and has already begun to rectify this. Furthermore, three higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 left the school before the national tests were taken and three other pupils who took the tests in Year 6 entered the school in Years 4, 5 and 6 with lower prior attainment than pupils in St Mary's. These factors account for the differences between standards in English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that the school not only exceeded its targets for 2002 but that standards, which were above the national and Oxfordshire local authority levels, have risen steadily over recent years, particularly in science and mathematics. Therefore this represents good improvement since the last inspection.
2. By the end of Year 2, in the 2002 national tests, pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics was in the top five per cent of all schools nationally and compared to similar schools, which is very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were above the national average. Overall, pupils' achievements throughout the school are good, with no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls.
3. The findings of this inspection concur with the 2002 test results. The school exceeded its targets for 2002 and is on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2003. A number of significant improvements have led to rising standards, including:
 - significant improvements in teaching and learning, particularly in the management of pupils' learning as a result of more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior managers;
 - good improvements to the curriculum, with more teaching time allocated to subjects and the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy;
 - much-improved assessment systems, with effective use, particularly in the analysis of pupils' results, to guide planning; and
 - the excellent ethos in the school which promotes high achievement.
4. Children's achievements in the Reception class are good. Approximately half the children enter the school with levels of attainment just above those expected of children of this age in many aspects of personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. They make good progress in these areas and are beginning to work within the early levels of the National Curriculum. About two-thirds of these children enter with levels of attainment above those expected for mathematical development, and they also make good progress, with many exceeding the expectations for their age and working within the early levels of the National Curriculum. About a quarter of these children enter with levels of attainment above those expected in communication, language and literacy and by the end of the Reception year the majority of children reach the early learning goals in these areas, with some exceeding them in speaking and listening. Most of the minority of children who will not reach the goals in many areas of development, despite making good progress, are the youngest children, who at the time of the inspection had only received full-time education for two weeks. Pupils make good progress in the Reception year because teaching is good, with some very good teaching. The quality of assessment and its use is very good; planning is very good and the Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.

5. Pupils' achievements in English are good overall. By the end of Year 2, pupils' reading and writing skills are developing very well and they have well-developed speaking and listening skills, expressing themselves clearly and showing confidence in answering questions and participating in discussions. Pupils develop their speaking skills as they move through the school and by the end of Year 6 they are more confident and fluent in expressing their ideas, listening well to others in discussions and using a good range of vocabulary to express their opinions. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading and a small number of pupils in Year 2 show aspects of the level expected for 11-year-olds in their reading. Pupils read regularly at home and many use the local library, which enhances their progress. By the end of Year 6, many pupils read enthusiastically for pleasure and are familiar with classical writers. They have a good knowledge of sounds, which they apply well to their spellings. Pupils make very good progress in their writing skills and several pupils enliven their writing with alliteration. However, whilst they write well in lessons, there were very few examples of extended writing seen during the inspection, with little evidence of editing and refining their written work. The insufficient opportunities to write at length and use their skills in context limit some pupils' abilities to reach the higher levels of the National Curriculum, which they are capable of achieving.
6. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good and are mainly due to the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, good planning, more opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics to everyday situations and the very good development of the pupils' mathematical vocabulary by teachers. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident with mental addition and subtraction problems of numbers up to 20; they name and classify flat shapes, sort numbers into odd and even and most pupils use bar charts and pictograms to record data. By the end of Year 6, pupils estimate angles, using a protractor accurately to measure angles, and they show above-average skills in mental arithmetic. A significant number of pupils are working confidently above the levels expected of their age. Although in most lessons work challenges the higher-attaining pupils, on a few occasions, pupils with different levels of attainment do the same work and this limits their progress.
7. Pupils' achievements in science are good overall and particularly good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils achieve well because there is a much greater emphasis on investigative science, teaching is consistently good, pupils are enthusiastic about science and there are good opportunities to extend their learning through extra activities such as the science week. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of fair testing; they name the parts of the body, identify sources of light and develop their understanding of the effects of temperature change on solids, liquids and gases. By the end of Year 6, pupils improve their skills of scientific enquiry, observing, recording and interpreting their results more accurately. They demonstrate good knowledge of living things, such as food chains and photosynthesis, and they have a deeper understanding of the properties of materials and physical processes such as magnetism, electricity, light and sound.
8. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in pupils' achievements in other subjects since the last inspection, which is mainly due to improvements in teaching and more effective planning. In art, in design and technology, and in information and communication technology, pupils' achievements are now satisfactory throughout the school, whereas at the time of the last inspection pupils' achievements in Year 6 were judged to be unsatisfactory. In geography, pupils' achievements by the end of Years 2 and 6 were also judged to be unsatisfactory but now their achievements are satisfactory. Pupils' achievements in history have been maintained since the last inspection and remain satisfactory throughout the school. However, pupils' achievements in music are now unsatisfactory throughout the school, whereas at the time of the last inspection they were judged to be good. There are two main reasons for this: firstly, there is no longer a music room so the teacher must move between classes to teach the subject, which causes slippage of time, and secondly, there is insufficient time allocated to the teaching of music so that pupils are unable to develop their musical skills systematically. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' achievements in physical education were judged to be satisfactory but now they are good in Years 3 to 6 because there are improved opportunities for participation in competitive sports and athletics and the local leisure centre is used to very good effect to develop swimming.
9. Pupils are achieving well in their personal development, which is promoted by the school's provision for personal, social and health education, including citizenship, and by the strong Catholic ethos of

the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets as a result of the very good provision for this group of pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes toward school are very good. They are keen to learn and enthusiastic about all aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided and enjoy demonstrating their achievements. A performance by the Irish dance group was much appreciated by the whole-school community, including parents, at a special assembly. In lessons, pupils quickly settle to their task with good levels of concentration, as seen in a Year 2 class, where pupils were writing poems about the senses.
11. Behaviour throughout the school is good. In lessons it is usually very good and sometimes excellent. There have been no exclusions. Playtimes and lunchtimes are boisterous but good-natured, with girls and boys playing together, including football. Pupils are fully engaged in devising class rules and respond well to the system of rewards.
12. Relationships throughout the school are very good and a significant strength of the school. Pupils work very well together and have learnt to co-operate and collaborate with each other to achieve success. In a Year 1 mathematics class, pupils were able to share equipment and help each other when looking at number bonds. Pupils' personal development is good and they respond well to opportunities to take responsibility. The school council is popular and includes pupils with varying levels of attainment. There is a weekly award for the tidiest classroom and for the cleanest cloakroom and pupils are keen to achieve these awards.
13. Pupils are very trustworthy and have a very good understanding of the impact their actions have on others. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were very respectful, considerate and caring toward each other, demonstrating their ability to respect the values and opinions of others. Pupils are also able to consider other belief systems when provided with opportunities to do so. Throughout the school there are frequent acts of kindness between pupils. This is very much a feature of the school.
14. Attendance at the school for the reporting year 2001/02 was 92.6 per cent. This was well below the national average and is unsatisfactory. There was no unauthorised absence. This does not, however, reflect the pattern since the last inspection, which has been an upward trend, and the provisional figures for the year 2002/3 show a significant improvement. The authorised absence is due to sickness, or to authorised annual holidays, which accounts for a significant proportion. Despite the high absence figures, pupils do well and continue to make good progress because they have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to catch up on any missed work. However, the school does not report on attendance figures in the school prospectus, nor are the regulations relating to the school's right not to authorise absences made explicit. Pupils are generally punctual at the start of the school day and return quickly to lessons after break periods.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This judgement is based not only on lessons observed during the inspection but also on evidence from the inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' written work. In lessons observed, teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. In all but one lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory or better. Teaching was at least good in almost three-quarters of all lessons seen and it was very good in a quarter of all lessons. This represents a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, with a significantly higher proportion of good and very good teaching and fewer unsatisfactory lessons. Day-to-day lesson planning was judged to be unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. This has now been addressed well by teachers, who ensure that learning objectives are clearly displayed in their planning. Teaching was a key issue at the time of the last inspection. However, good or better teaching was seen in all year groups during this inspection, particularly in English, mathematics, science, art, history and physical education, where the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

16. Teachers manage pupils effectively, establishing very good relationships with them, which in turn helps to promote trust and respect. This was seen in nearly every lesson throughout the school, where teaching was at least satisfactory. Where teaching is good, teachers have good subject knowledge, set high expectations for pupils' learning, plan different tasks for pupils, according to their different attainment levels, carefully structure activities and always have clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils so they know exactly what is expected of them.
17. In lessons where teaching is very good, the teacher uses questions skilfully to challenge all pupils and probe their thinking, the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very well promoted and there is very good teamwork with other adults in the classroom. This was particularly evident in the Reception year, in English, science, mathematics and history.
18. Most teachers make good use of resources so that pupils are focused and learn effectively. Teachers are making more use of computers since the last inspection although this is not fully in place for all year groups or all subjects. In English lessons seen there was little evidence of pupils using computers in their work but discussion with pupils and work on display show that many pupils are confident in using word processing. In mathematics, some examples were seen during the inspection of pupils using computers to improve their learning, but there was some variation in practice and in some classes there were missed opportunities to make good use of this technology. However, in science the interactive whiteboard and was well used to support pupils' learning in Years 5 and 6, although there was little evidence of use elsewhere. In other subjects there were very few instances of pupils using computers to improve their learning.
19. Where teaching is only satisfactory, some good features are present such as the good relationships and good management of behaviour. However, the pace of lessons is slow so that pupils have difficulty in sustaining concentration and lose interest. This was seen in a small number of lessons in English. In the one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the learning objectives were not clear enough, which resulted in a slow lesson pace and confusion in pupils' learning.
20. Although teachers often provide ongoing feedback to pupils in lessons, not enough emphasis is placed on targets pupils are expected to achieve and progress against lesson objectives is not always referred to. This means that pupils do not always have a clear understanding of the progress they have made in lessons. Older pupils generally have a better idea of how well they are doing and what they are expected to achieve in their preparation for the National Curriculum tests.
21. A scrutiny of pupils' books from each year group and each subject showed improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. However, marking of pupils' work remains inconsistent and does not usually inform pupils of the next stage of learning. An analysis of pupils' work and display clearly shows that there are some good opportunities to extend their writing skills, particularly in subjects such as history and geography. However, there was little evidence to show teachers' use of extended writing in other subjects. In most subjects, key vocabulary is identified in teachers' planning and usually displayed on the board at the beginning of the lesson. The teacher then rehearses the spelling and meaning of the words during whole-class teaching. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1 and 2 science lesson where literacy was very well promoted. The teacher wrote down key words on the board to describe taste and texture, discussed the meanings of words such as 'sour', 'smooth' and 'crunchy' and asked pupils for other suitable words to describe taste. As a result, pupils began to develop the use of adjectives to describe taste effectively in their science written work. Later in the lesson, literacy was further promoted as pupils were asked to write down simple phrases or complete sentences to describe the taste of different apples.
22. Numeracy is also effectively promoted across most subjects. For example, in science pupils record their results in a table using standard units of measures and draw graphs to display them more effectively; in design and technology, pupils measure and use different shapes when designing and making artefacts. In physical education, dance, and music, pupils keep time; and in history and geography, they develop their understanding of the passage of time and their use of maps for locating countries, cities and rivers in the world.
23. Teaching assistant support for pupils with special educational needs is mostly good and sometimes very good. However, there are occasions when support assistants are not particularly well deployed

and so pupils make less progress. This was seen in a few mathematics lessons. In a very small number of lessons, all pupils, irrespective of their abilities, do the same task and work is not always matched to the particular needs of pupils, for example, in mathematics. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties find the work too difficult and higher-attaining pupils find it too easy, so neither group achieves as well as they should.

24. As a result of mainly good and often very good teaching, pupils' learning is also often at least good. Pupils try hard and concentrate well in lessons, listen carefully to their teachers and follow instructions. They show great respect for staff because teachers maintain good relationships with pupils, and the excellent ethos of the school promotes consideration and kindness towards others. As pupils move through the school, they develop greater independence in their learning, which is particularly enhanced by their very positive attitudes and behaviour in most subjects. Sometimes older pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, through target setting, clearer explanations of learning objectives with opportunities to review progress against these at the end of a lesson and teachers' good use of ongoing assessment information. These features were more evident in very good lessons. Pupils also learn from one another in lessons where paired and group work is evident. This occurs frequently and pupils make good use of such opportunities to improve their learning by exchanging ideas and brainstorming new ideas. Pupils with special educational needs are also learning well as a result of the very good provision made for them, which includes targeted support in lessons, and clear targets on individual education plans which are regularly reviewed with pupils and their parents. However, on the few occasions when teachers do not match work sufficiently to the different abilities of pupils, pupils do not learn as effectively as they should and this limits their progress.
25. Other factors outside teaching also greatly enhance pupils' learning and promote high achievement. These include the very good support and the positive impact parents have on their children's learning. Parents help pupils with their homework, encourage pupils to use the local library and listen to their children read. Parents' active involvement in school activities, such as the French and Spanish clubs, promotes very good learning of modern foreign languages. The Open University Year 5 higher attainers' initiative is already showing promising signs of enhancing pupils' skills as researchers but it is too early to say what impact this will have on pupils' learning overall.

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

26. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant to all its pupils and offers a rich and stimulating range of learning opportunities. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well established and enable pupils to make good progress. The curriculum is enriched by a range of after school activities including sporting, musical and language activities. These are well attended and greatly enjoyed by pupils. The lunchtime Latin club is very popular and all pupils greatly enjoyed the assembly presentation of "Goldilocks and the three bears" in Latin. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and in most cases, appropriate time is devoted to them. However, the time available for music is not sufficient to allow the subject to be taught in sufficient depth and this limits pupils' attainment.
27. The school makes appropriate provision for sex education and drugs awareness. Both are taught in the context of Catholic family values. The school nurse supports these lessons. Pupils also take part in an 'injury minimisation' programme and visit a local hospital to learn about coping with medical emergencies. The curriculum is enriched by a range of educational visits. Year 6 pupils visit an environmental centre in Wales for a week, during which they take part in outdoor pursuits and geography fieldwork. Year 5 pupils also have a residential visit to Alton Castle. Pupils also visit art galleries, museums and other places of interest.
28. There are very good links with other schools. The good links with the pre-school group help to ensure the children settle quickly into the reception class. Arrangements for transfer to secondary school are good. The very good links with the three main secondary schools enable pupils to transfer smoothly from Year 6 to Year 7. The school works closely with other local primary schools. Curriculum leaders meet to discuss developments in their subjects and share good practice. The school is currently bidding for funding with other schools to become a network learning community. The school also

works in partnership with other Catholic schools for the benefit of its pupils, for example, in a bid for Sports College status, which will result in new opportunities for gymnastics coaching. Year 6 pupils are currently taking part in the British Council's East West project, which has increased pupils' awareness of Irish culture and traditions. This involves working with a primary school in Dublin. Pupils have planned a walk round the city of Oxford, focusing on the work of Lewis Carroll, for the forthcoming visit of the Dublin school. They will then visit Dublin and learn about the work of Jonathan Swift on their historic walk.

29. The school regularly invites artists, storytellers and dancers into school to support pupils' learning.
30. Provision for pupils with special educational is very good. All pupils irrespective of their abilities, are fully included in all activities and equally high expectations are set for their learning. Additional support is provided, where appropriate, for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and this ensures that pupils with learning difficulties have full access to the curriculum. This very good curricular provision ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their lessons and towards their individual education plan targets.
31. Provision for personal development is now very good, with good improvement in provision for cultural education since the last inspection.
32. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is excellent. There is a very strong Catholic ethos throughout the school, based on the Christian tenets of love of neighbour, kindness and consideration of others and the idea of seeing God in one another. This emanates from the staff under the excellent leadership of the headteacher and permeates throughout the life of the school as pupils respond with kindness, respect and concern for others. For example, at the beginning of each week, the headteacher meets with the staff and leads them into prayer and reflection following a particular theme. Teachers also reflect on the needs of their class and write down how they will help each individual to do better. Then they promise, publicly, to do this for their pupils in the presence of the whole school. There are many opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection in assemblies, at the beginning and end of the school day and within the regular celebration of the Catholic liturgy, for example, the school Mass. For example, in registration activities, pupils in Year 5 were encouraged to say 'Good morning' to God before reading silently. They joined their hands together and thought of someone special in their lives. Subjects such as Personal, Social and Health Education which is taught through other subjects, art and music make a very good contribution to spiritual development. For example, pupils reflect on the plight of poverty in Uganda, sing hymns during assembly and Year 6 pupils were encouraged to choose and reflect on a famous work of religious art after visiting the National Gallery in London. Many pupils have opportunities to meditate and when pupils pray they do so reverently and with feeling. The school is also particularly effective in developing pupils' self-esteem and building up their confidence as learners, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils now study different faiths as part of their religious education syllabus and teachers use the Internet effectively to show, for example, the Haj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. This increases pupils' awareness of different forms of spirituality and promotes greater tolerance and understanding of other faiths. This well-thought-out, inclusive approach enables all pupils to feel equally valued and participate as equal members of the school community.
33. Provision for promoting pupils' moral development is very good. Staff provide good role models and pupils are taught right from wrong. There is an implicit expectation within the Catholic ethos of the school that pupils will be considerate and kind to one another and they are, which effectively militates against bullying or harassment of any kind while promoting very good behaviour. Very good behaviour is also effectively promoted through the reward system, which includes opportunities to earn house points. Most pupils therefore learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour and help each other. The PSHE curriculum encourages pupils to respect the feelings and value the contributions of others. There are rewards to promote good behaviour such as 'Citizen of the week' for the pupil who has shown the best citizenship by helping others. There are 'Tidy Classroom' and 'Tidy Toilet' awards and the 'Top Table' award for the best-behaved pupils in the dining room. Older pupils act as monitors and pupils in each class elect a representative to the school council.
34. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good and has been maintained since the last inspection. Older pupils are expected to help newer or younger pupils who may be experiencing

difficulties, and assemblies also promote this very well. For example, during a whole-school assembly led by the headteacher, to celebrate the retirement of a teacher, pupils demonstrated the story of the boy Jesus teaching in the temple. The pupils in all year groups were asked to consider how they were teachers and to give examples of how they have taught others by providing good role models or helping one another. As a result, pupils showed maturity as they reflected on ways they could help others. Social development is also very well promoted in lessons where there are opportunities for pupils to take turns in discussion and to share. There are also more opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in classrooms. For example, in art, Year 3 pupils worked in pairs and took turns discussing how they wanted their partners to pose in silhouette to make miniature portraits of one another. Pupils are encouraged to work on their own without help and many pupils do so. For example, in guided reading activities, teachers structure the lesson in such a way to ensure that all pupils read quietly by themselves for a part of the activity, taking more responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are also given opportunities for helping staff and each other, for example, through the school council, where they consider any suggestions or complaints from other pupils, and in helping to clear away the plates and cutlery after lunch. Lunchtime clubs and after school activities also promote turn-taking and sharing.

35. Provision for pupils' cultural development is now good and has significantly improved since the last inspection. There are now more opportunities to experience different cultures. Most classrooms have multi-faith items on display in the quiet areas of classrooms alongside Catholic religious artefacts. Planning for religious education also shows that pupils consider different faiths and religious traditions, such as Islam, Sikhism and Judaism, and this is also evident in pupils' work. In art, the study of the work of other artists is a strong feature, with many examples of artwork created for display in history and geography. Music also promotes pupils' experience of Christian traditions and dance promotes an understanding of Irish and Indian cultures. Year 4 pupils deepen their understanding of Indian culture in their writing about wedding feasts, the story of Gandhi and when they compare schools and family life in India and England. The language clubs enable pupils not only to learn French, Spanish and Latin, but to experience those different cultural traditions. The East West initiative provides good links with a school in Dublin.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The very positive school ethos makes a significant contribution to the care and welfare of pupils. There are very good arrangements in place regarding health and safety and governors are actively involved in risk assessments. Arrangements for first aid are good. Pupils are confident that there are adults in the school with whom they could discuss problems and there is a high degree of trust between adults and pupils which enhances the quality of care provided. Whilst the school complies with the statutory procedures regarding child protection, these are not shared with all staff on a regular basis, nor is there information in the staff handbook. The school does not ensure that all staff receive regular briefings on procedures and training in the identification of child abuse. Furthermore, the school's procedures for child protection are not fully available to staff and parents.
37. There are good procedures in place for promoting and monitoring good behaviour and dealing with unwanted behaviour. Pupils understand how they should behave and have a clear understanding of class rules. Pupils are actively involved in agreeing to a range of behaviours, including specific guidelines for the use of the cloakrooms. There is a range of awards to encourage and reward good behaviour, including the house system. There is very good guidance provided to midday supervisors on handling unwanted behaviour.
38. Attendance is well monitored. However, despite significant improvements in attendance during the last year, the school has only taken limited action since the last inspection to improve attendance. For example, the school prospectus does not make it clear to parents that holiday absences may not always be authorised and should not be authorised above 10 days. Although there are other awards to promote personal development, for example, for tidy classrooms, there are no awards to promote attendance.
39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good and are enhanced by the knowledge that all adults in the school have of individual pupils. The school has in place a system

of recording personal development and the school now intends to develop a more formal system of targets for personal development.

40. Overall, the school's procedures for summative assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science are very good. Records are kept of pupils' attainment in a variety of tests and in the national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils' progress and knowledge are tested at the end of units of work in mathematics and science. These results are used to inform curriculum planning, provide well-matched tasks in lessons and set pupils' individual targets. Pupils' targets are revised following assessments in October each year. During lessons insufficient attention is paid to these individual targets or to the learning objectives of the lesson. Assessment for the other subjects is now developing in order to further support pupils' learning.
41. Some teachers make too little use of on going assessment information from work done in lessons to guide curriculum planning and to help pupils improve the quality of their work. Most teachers are not evaluating learning in individual lessons to make appropriate changes to future planned lessons. This contributes to teachers not identifying clearly enough what they expect pupils of different levels of attainment to learn from lesson activities, and, at times, to the work matching the range of pupils' needs.
42. The school's marking policy sets out expectations clearly for all staff. However, the marking of pupils' work is variable across the school and across subjects. Marking celebrates completed good work but comments rarely give pupils clear direction on how good their work is or how to improve it.
43. Assessment for pupils with special educational needs is good. Record keeping is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator monitors the quality of the well-informed specific targets in individual education plans. Gifted and talented pupils are also identified. The curriculum is mostly adapted to take account of the needs of both of these groups, although not all teachers ensure that lesson activities are always matched to particular learning needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The parents have very positive views of the school and the partnership between parents and school is a significant strength. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning both at home and at school. Parents regularly listen to their children read and many parents help in school, in lessons, on school outings, and with swimming lessons.
45. The school provides parents with a good range of information about the school, although the school prospectus needs updating. The school should also ensure that all statutory information is included. Clear information is available about the curriculum for each year group and there are regular newsletters, including a specific one for the Reception class. Reports on pupils' progress are informative and include individual targets and are received positively by parents.
46. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school are very good. The parent-teacher and friends association organises both fundraising and social events and many parents attend class assemblies. There is a very high level of attendance at parents' consultation evenings. The high level of parental involvement has a very positive impact on the standards pupils achieve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The quality of leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff is very good, and that provided by the governing body is good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management and has ensured that the strength of leadership provided by key staff ensures excellent educational direction of the school, and that its aims and values are fully reflected in its day-to-day life and work. The school's strong Christian ethos is very clearly seen in all aspects of its life, and the very good example, in caring and relationships, shown by teachers, governors and other adults is a significant feature of the school.

48. The deputy headteacher is an effective manager, and works very well in partnership with the headteacher. He is also a very good role model, both for effective subject management and successful teaching approaches. Subject managers have become more effective since the last inspection, when the monitoring aspect of their role was found to be underdeveloped. Most have now had opportunities to visit other classes, and so have a clearer picture of the quality of teaching and learning through the school. This process has been particularly effective in English, mathematics and science, and the co-ordinators of these subjects now have a very clear picture of work in their areas. This good improvement now needs to be extended to the other subjects. Because of the national priority given to literacy and numeracy, there has been little time for professional development in other subjects over the last few years. Co-ordinators for other subjects would therefore now benefit from further opportunities for professional development.
49. The headteacher and senior management team have monitored teaching both formally and informally, and the performance management process has been very well implemented. Performance management targets set for teachers include specific action to raise standards in subjects. Discussions on teachers' professional development have been effective, and very clear job descriptions ensure that all are clear about what they are required to do.
50. The governing body has a well-developed system of committees, which is effective in taking the school forward. Governors bring a good range of personal and professional skills to the school's support. They have developed a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the regular meetings of the different committees ensure that they have a 'hands on' approach to management. Individual governors have oversight of different subjects, and this system, together with the headteacher's regular reports, ensures that the governors are fully informed about all aspects of the school's work. As a result, they have been able to support and guide the school towards its goals, taking effective steps to ensure that challenging and realistic targets are set to raise standards. The Governing Body now shows a good standard of effectiveness in acting as the 'critical friend' of the school, and in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities.
51. The ongoing targets identified in the school's improvement plan are well thought through, and firmly focused on maintaining high standards, and what can be done in order to develop further. Targets are well chosen and firmly based on educational principles, and the headteacher, senior management team and governors carefully monitor progress. Actions taken to meet the school's targets are very good. The headteacher's approach has been rigorously focused on promoting high standards, while at the same time remaining sensitive to the needs and feelings of individuals. Financial planning and management in support of the school's educational priorities are very good.
52. The governors and headteacher follow the principles of 'best value', for instance, in negotiating services and ordering resources. The day-to-day administration of the school's finances is efficiently handled by the office staff, and their work makes a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school. Overall, the school makes very good use of the specific grants it receives.
53. There are good levels of staffing and a very good match of qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. Professional development of staff has been dominated recently by the priorities of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. There has therefore been little time for in-service training in other subjects. The school has been very successful in implementing strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills, and this approach could now form the basis for improvements in other subjects. Teachers are given targets to improve particular subjects as part of their performance management interviews, and this approach should be continued. Procedures for the induction of staff new to the school are satisfactory overall, although there is a need for better provision to ensure that procedures for child protection are clearly understood.
54. Accommodation is good, with new classrooms in Years 1 and 2 and a spacious unit for the Reception class. The grounds are also spacious and well maintained. The school is in good decorative order, well maintained and kept to a high standard of cleanliness. Learning resources are sufficient to support teaching and learning in subjects and of good quality. However, the school library is too small, with not enough room for small groups of pupils to sit and read quietly or to use for research within subjects. There are enough books and sufficient computers in school. However, computers are not always used enough in lessons to support teaching and learning.

55. Very good financial management supports the clear educational direction of the school and shows an improvement since the previous inspection. Specific grants and designated finance are well used, for example, spending on special educational needs. The school is making satisfactory use of new technology in the management and administration of the school. Application of the principles of best value to all purchases is good, and the school is starting to compare its expenditure with similar schools.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement, the governors, headteacher, senior staff and teachers should:

- i. ensure that sufficient time is allocated to the teaching of music during the school day;
(Paragraphs 26, 121, 117 and 118)
- ii. improve accommodation for the school library in order to promote greater use for teaching and learning, the development of research skills and reading for enjoyment;
(Paragraph 54)
- iii. develop and implement procedures for promoting good attendance by working more closely with parents to reduce absence due to holidays taken during term time; and
(Paragraphs 14 and 38)
- iv. make all new staff fully aware of the school's arrangements for child protection by including this in their induction arrangements and ensuring procedures for child protection are clearly written into the staff handbook and relevant school policies.
(Paragraphs 36 and 53)

Minor issues for consideration in the governors' action plan:

- Continue to improve the management role of subject co-ordinator.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment in lessons and computers to support teaching and learning.
- Ensure that marking of pupils' work is carried out more consistently and informs pupils of what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that statutory requirements are fully met by implementing the requirements of the Disability Act and updating the prospectus.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

44

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	11	21	11	1	0	0
Percentage	0	25	48	25	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	249
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
---	---

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	20	19	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	38	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (94)	97 (88)	100 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	19
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	37	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (94)	95 (94)	97 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	19	12	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	19
	Girls	9	11	11
	Total	25	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (92)	97 (92)	97 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	19
	Girls	12	11	11
	Total	28	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (92)	94 (92)	97 (97)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
192	0	0
6	0	0
2	0	0
5	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
6	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff: YR – Y7 (including SEN Unit)

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	541,084
Total expenditure	509,081
Expenditure per pupil	2,112
Balance brought forward from previous year	43,177
Balance carried forward to next year	75,176

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	221
Number of questionnaires returned	94

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	15	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	30	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	31	2	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	41	11	3	1
The teaching is good.	73	22	3	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	32	5	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	23	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	30	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	37	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	20	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	27	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	33	10	5	8

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56. The Foundation Stage comprises the children in the Reception class. Children enter the school after their fourth birthday and attend part-time until the term in which they are five and then become full-time. They enter the school from a wide variety of pre-school settings, including the neighbouring community school nursery class.
57. About half of the children enter the school with levels of attainment just above those expected of children of this age in many aspects of personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. They make good progress in these areas and are beginning to work within the early levels of the National Curriculum. About two-thirds enter with levels of attainment above those expected in mathematical development. They make good progress in mathematics; many exceed the early learning goals for these areas and some are already working in the early levels of the National Curriculum. About a quarter of the children enter with levels of attainment above those expected in communication, language and literacy. By the end of the Reception year, the majority of children reach the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy; some exceed them in aspects of reading and writing and most exceed them in speaking and listening. Most of the minority of children who will not reach the goals in many areas of development, despite making good progress, are the youngest children and at the time of the inspection had only had full-time education for two weeks.
58. Teaching is good overall, with some that is very good. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. The teachers provide a range of appropriate activities that help the children learn the skills they need. They teach the basic skills needed for literacy and numeracy very well. Medium-term planning to meet the early learning goals is good. Weekly planning is very good. The adults plan well together and work very well as a team. This is a particular strength of the class. Teachers have a good range of teaching methods: they work with large and small groups and individuals on planned tasks, they interact with children working on self-chosen tasks and they move children on in their learning through skilful questioning. All adults have high expectations of the children's behaviour and learning. They manage the children very well: children are taught the rules and systems of the class which they quickly learn and to which they are eager to conform.
59. The quality of ongoing assessment is very good. Each child has an individual profile containing all the 'stepping stones'. These are noted and dated when a child reaches them. The profile for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is very detailed and enables teachers to track children's attainment and progress in every aspect of these areas. Observations made during the day are also used to inform children's profiles. All this information is used to inform curriculum planning that meets the needs of all the children, enabling them to make good progress and attain well. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. All the adults provide good quality education in a well-planned setting that enables all the children to reach their potential. Resources for all areas of the curriculum are good. The safe area for outdoor learning is particularly well used. However, there is no shade in the summer and no covered, sheltered area to use in the colder, wetter weather.
60. Children have very good attitudes to learning. They achieve well and make good progress overall. They quickly acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. Children make lots of effort to learn. The children are very interested in all the activities, learn to concentrate for increasing lengths of time and become independent. Many children work independently at self-chosen tasks while the teacher works with one group. For example, when the teacher is teaching a literacy or numeracy group, the remainder of the children are able to play co-operatively with small-world toys, role-play in the florist's shop or paint pictures of Jack and the beanstalk. They access the resources they need independently, concentrate on their chosen task and interact well with each other.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Children rapidly feel safe and secure in their new environment as a result of the caring and supportive environment created by the adults. Children make good progress and soon gain confidence to relate to adults and to co-operate with one another. Children learn to take turns and share through playing together in the shop and with construction toys. They wait patiently for their turn in a board game or on the outdoor equipment such as bikes. Most children listen carefully to adults and try to comply with instructions. They can dress and undress themselves with help and reminders. They go to the toilet independently and remember to wash their hands afterwards.

Communication, language and literacy skills

62. Two-thirds of the children will attain the goals for communication, language and literacy. About two-thirds of these will exceed the early learning goals, with a small group achieving some aspects of Level 2 in the National Curriculum. Children develop their skills in listening and speaking through planned opportunities in lessons and a range of role-play activities. They are able to listen to stories with understanding and enjoyment. They recount their personal experiences at length when discussing what they do out of school. They interact well with adults and other children, using appropriate language, and some use sophisticated language such as 'germinated' and 'multi-coloured'. Most pupils enjoy looking at print, pictures and books. All children are aware that print goes from left to right and recognise familiar words, such as their name. Most children know all the phonemes and some high frequency words. Many can read simple repetitive texts and are keen to practise their skills. They use both contextual and picture clues to decode new words. A minority are fluent readers of simple texts and are able to anticipate story endings, talk about the plot and describe characters. All children write simple sentences, spelling many of the regular words correctly and making recognisable attempts at irregular ones. More-able children can write more complex sentences using the word 'and'. For example, one child wrote 'A boy cald (called) Jack went to the owld (old) lade (lady) and sold the cow.'

Mathematical development

63. Nearly half of the children will exceed the goals in mathematical development and about half of these will achieve a large proportion of the requirements of the National Curriculum Level 1, especially in number. Children just reaching the goals for number count accurately to 10 and recognise the written symbols for these numbers. Some of these children know what is the next number without counting on. Children who are secure within the goals can sequence the numbers to 15. They accurately count written objects and write the number symbol correctly. Children who are exceeding the goals can count backwards and forwards in twos to 20, fives to 50 and know that some numbers are even while some are odd. The most able mathematicians are beginning to know the number bonds of six and that five plus one is the inverse of one plus five. A significant number know the names of two- and three-dimensional shapes, know which line is longer or shorter, which parcel is heavier or lighter and understand position words such as 'above', 'behind' and 'alongside.'

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children come to school with some experience of the natural world and of places near and far and have an idea of the past. This is built upon by the topics that form the basis of the children's work in this area of the curriculum. During the inspection, children were engrossed with the seeds they had planted and the mini-beasts they saw in the school grounds. They quickly learnt the names for parts of a plant and were able to draw and label the bean that they had planted a few days earlier. They extended their vocabulary when they collected natural items and then sorted them according to their properties. For example: thorny, prickly, smelly and soft. They enjoy using the computers, are skilled at moving the mouse and are able to use simple programs that require them to select and click on icons.

Physical development

65. Children are aware of their bodies and their mobility from using a range of equipment such as tricycles and scooters. They can make these vehicles move very fast but are adept at avoiding crashes and can stop quickly by dragging one foot on the ground. Their gross and fine motor skills are developing satisfactorily and so is their co-ordination. They enjoy taking part in a range of physical

activities such as outside and inside role-play. Most are confident enough to travel around the complex climbing structure without help. The fireman's pole on this structure is challenging for all children. They need to have the confidence to move their hands from the horizontal bar to the pole itself while suspended two metres above the ground. Gradually over the year most children have mastered this feat while others keep practising. During the inspection one child managed to slide down unaided for the first time and excitedly rushed out to tell her mother at the end of school. The class also uses the hall for more formal lessons. These provide them with opportunities to move in time to music. They work well with a partner, clapping hands, bending knees and skipping in time with each other. Almost all children have good manipulative skills, handling small objects with skill and care. They use scissors, pencils and brushes well, although a small minority hold pencils and brushes wrongly.

Creative development

66. Children enjoy drawing and painting and demonstrate care in such activities. They paint their own interpretations of well-known stories, such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They paint daffodils, looking carefully at the colours and shapes of the flowers. They design mini-beasts, choose appropriate scrap materials and make them, paying attention to their original design. They use scissors well, trying to cut carefully along the lines, and are able to glue small pieces of paper accurately onto card. Children enjoy music lessons. They build up a repertoire of simple songs and learn the names of a range of untuned instruments. They clap in time to the music but some find it hard to sing and play an instrument at the same time.

ENGLISH

67. Standards in English have shown steady improvement since the last inspection. In the 2002 national tests, pupils in Year 2 attained standards in reading and writing that were well above those attained by pupils nationally. These are also well above average when compared with standards attained by pupils in similar schools. At the age of 11, pupils' attainment in English in the 2002 tests was above average, although below the attainment of pupils in similar schools. However, the Year 6 group for this year included several pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and three higher-attaining pupils left the school just before the tests were taken as their families moved from the area. The school's analysis of pupils' results shows that pupils make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 but that progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, mainly due to limited opportunities for extended writing within other subjects which the school has rightly identified and is now addressing. Inspection evidence confirms this. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.
68. When pupils start school they are confident in speaking and have good listening skills. Many have already attained the nationally recommended early learning goals for five and six-year-olds. Their reading and writing skills are developing very well. Pupils are confident in answering questions and are keen to take part in discussions. They have well-developed vocabulary and express themselves well. For example, in a Year 2 lesson when pupils were asked to think of lines for a poem on the senses, one suggested, "I like the look of daisies, dazzling in my dandelion garden". As they progress through the school, pupils develop their speaking skills in a variety of situations. Pupils enjoy talking to visitors about their work. By the age of 11, pupils are confident and fluent in expressing their views. They listen well to each other in discussion and use a good range of vocabulary to express their views.
69. Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading and make good progress in developing their skills. They read regularly at home with family members and many are members of local libraries. Seven-year-old pupils recognise a good range of words on sight and have good strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. They sound out words, split them into smaller parts or use picture clues and context to check that their reading makes sense. A small number of pupils already show aspects of Level 4 in their reading, the level expected of 11-year-olds.
70. By the age of 11, many pupils read enthusiastically for pleasure. They are confident in using libraries and are easily able to find the information they need from books and other sources. Pupils talk about a good range of books and authors. In addition to enjoying popular fiction by authors such as Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson, they are familiar with classical writers such as Shakespeare and

Dickens and happily discuss the texts they have studied in their English lessons. They have a good knowledge of sounds and apply this well in their spellings. They are beginning to use dictionaries to help with their spellings. Several pupils have a good grasp of how to make their writing interesting by using alliteration. For example, when writing a poem on the senses, one pupil wrote "I like the taste of toothpaste tingling on my tongue". Pupils make very good progress in their writing skills.

71. By the time they are 11, pupils have a good understanding of grammar and punctuation. In lessons they are able to use different forms of writing appropriately, for example, in writing factual accounts. They understand that they need to use formal or informal language for different purposes, such as writing a letter of complaint or when writing a letter to a friend. Whilst pupils write well in lessons, there are very few examples of extended writing for a range of purposes. Pupils do not regularly edit and refine their work and there was little evidence of pupils drafting their work. Work in pupils' books shows that most of them have the writing skills they need to attain the levels expected for 11-year-olds. However, they are not given enough opportunities to write at length and use their skills in context. This means that some pupils do not reach the higher levels in writing of which they are capable.
72. Teaching of English is good throughout the school. The best teaching observed was in Years 2, 5 and 6. In one lesson teaching was unsatisfactory. Most teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They take care to develop pupils' vocabulary and to extend their knowledge and understanding of the structure of language. They ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them and review learning well at the end of lessons. Teachers use a rich and wide vocabulary to promote pupils' interest in new words. They teach pupils the correct grammatical terms and insist that they use these correctly. This encourages pupils to explain their ideas accurately. Teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves and to explain their ideas clearly. They use a good range of strategies to ensure that pupils remain focused and attentive and have good relationships with pupils. In the lessons observed there was little evidence of pupils using computers in their work but discussion with pupils and work on display show that many pupils are confident in using word processing. Teachers encourage pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects, for example, in Year 6, pupils' work on biography was linked to their history topic, the life of John Lennon.
73. In the small number of lessons where teaching was less successful, the pace of the lesson was slow which meant that pupils found it difficult to sustain concentration. In one lesson the teacher did not take enough account of pupils' previous attainment and the tasks were not well matched to pupils' capabilities, limiting their achievement. In another lesson the learning objectives were not clear enough which meant that the pace of learning was slow and pupils were confused.
74. Management of English is good. At the time of the last inspection there were two subject leaders for English. A new subject manager was appointed in September 2000 and since September 2002 she has had responsibility for English throughout the school. She has very good subject knowledge and is active in supporting less experienced colleagues. She has monitored colleagues' teaching and regularly reviews their planning. With the headteacher she has analysed pupils' test results in English and the school has identified writing in Years 3 to 6 as a priority for development.

MATHEMATICS

75. Standards at the ages of seven and 11 are above those expected nationally, and pupils achieve well throughout the school. The school has been successful in maintaining good standards overall since the last inspection, both in terms of the high results achieved in national tests, and the good progress and high standards achieved in the subject as a whole. Over the last few years the overall trend of test results has been of steady improvement.
76. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully adopted and implemented by the school, ensuring that pupils of all abilities are given a wide range of mathematics. The curriculum is broad and well balanced, and all areas are given appropriate coverage. Work has been done to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to use and apply mathematics in all areas of the curriculum, such as when they use graphs to record and display their results in science investigations. This was seen in a Year 2 science lesson, when pupils used pictograms to display and interpret the results of

investigations about taste. They also understand and use correct mathematical language, and their teachers are very good at encouraging this.

77. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers are good at gaining and maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of pupils of all abilities, and classes are very well managed. There is a consistent, shared commitment to achieving high standards. Teachers' approach to lessons is to make mathematics fun and interesting, to provide a good variety of worthwhile activities, and to ensure that all their pupils are well motivated, and consequently make good progress. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils played a quick-fire number game. They had to guess a number through asking questions such as 'Is it odd?' and 'Is it less than 50?' Everyone is fully included, and they work enthusiastically to find the right answers. The teacher shows very good knowledge of the subject, and is good at using correct mathematical language. Because of the good teaching, all pupils make good gains in learning.
78. Work is well planned at all stages, based on official guidelines. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace, although there are some lessons where activities go on far too long and pupils become bored. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed, and can make very good contributions to the learning of individuals and groups. There are occasions, however, where they are not actively involved in some parts of lessons. Better planning is needed in some classes to ensure that the best use is made of their skills. Teachers praise and question their pupils well, and thus keep everyone interested and involved. They give good opportunities for their pupils to explain their thinking, and practise what they know by working together. In most lessons they provide a well-structured and varied range of activities for the different ages and levels of ability in their classes. In some classes, however, earlier work seen showed pupils of all abilities doing the same work, with those of higher or lower ability completing more, or less. More appropriate work for differing ability groups would provide a better match for their needs, and so enable them to make better progress. In most lessons, however, the work challenges the higher-ability pupils, and, in conjunction with learning support and teaching assistants, sustains and includes all those pupils who need extra help.
79. In the Infant classes, pupils learn well. When they first come to school, pupils generally show levels of attainment above the national average. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils have been given a wide range of mathematical experiences. They are confident in working out mental addition and subtraction problems with numbers up to 20, and can name and classify two- and three-dimensional shapes. Most pupils can also understand and use bar charts and pictograms to communicate data. They can use Venn diagrams to sort numbers according to their properties, such as those which are odd or even.
80. Learning is also good in the Junior classes. Year 6 pupils can recognise and estimate angles, and can use a protractor to draw angles accurately. They can also use the correct language applicable to angles. A significant number of pupils are already working confidently beyond the levels expected for the end of the year. They show above-average skills in mental arithmetic, and are enthusiastic in answering their teachers' questions as quickly as possible.
81. Some examples were seen during the inspection of pupils using information and communications technology to help with their work. There is some variation in practice, however, and in some classes opportunities were missed to make good use of the computers. The school needs to develop the use of information and communication technology so that present examples of good practice are shared more consistently throughout the school.
82. Throughout the school, pupils and teachers have very good working relationships. This together with the good teaching they receive gives pupils very positive attitudes towards mathematics. Group activities and discussions make a good contribution to pupils' basic language development, while learning to work together, sharing and co-operating well make a very good contribution to their social and moral development.
83. Resources for the subject are good, and funds have been effectively allocated, in line with the school's priorities, to update and replace books and equipment as required. The subject co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject, and of standards and the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. She has observed lessons throughout the school, and discussed issues

relating to effective mathematics teaching as part of her monitoring role. The use of targets is developing well, so that pupils know what they need to do in order to improve. Management of the subject is good overall. Teachers use day-to-day assessment well. They often look at progress made at the end of one lesson, and amend their plans for what needs to be done next. Good use is also made of more formal assessment information. Strengths and areas needing further work are identified, and appropriate action taken. The school's accommodation provides good facilities for all aspects of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

84. By the end of Year 2 pupils' attainments in science are very high, in the top five per cent of schools nationally, which is very good improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be above the national average. By the time they enter Year 1 from Reception, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the world and they make very good progress from this position by the end of Year 2. As they move through the school, pupils build on their prior learning so that by the end of Year 6 their attainments are above the national average. Although this may appear to be satisfactory achievement, it is in fact good achievement over time because, three higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 left the school prior to taking the national tests and other pupils entered the school in Years 4, 5 and 6 with lower prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress over time, some of them achieving Level 4, the average level nationally for pupils of the same age. Therefore, taken together, pupils of all abilities show good achievement by the time they leave school. Pupils made good progress in science lessons seen during the inspection because teachers' planning provided a much greater emphasis on investigation work, teaching is good, pupils are very enthusiastic about science and they behave very well. All staff in every science lesson observed during the inspection promoted very good relationships with pupils, which resulted in positive attitudes and very good behaviour. As a consequence, pupils' learning was very good, they worked very well together, listened to staff and followed instructions immediately.
85. There are no significant differences between the attainments and achievements of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are also achieving very well in science because they receive good individual support in lessons and their needs are accommodated more effectively through better planning. Teachers make very good use of pupils' particular learning difficulties to provide different tasks or use different resources to ensure these pupils are fully included in the lesson and make the same progress as other pupils. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers ensure that their learning is extended sufficiently.
86. With greater emphasis on practical investigations in science, pupils throughout the school make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and their properties and physical processes, using skills of observation and scientific enquiry. For example, pupils in Year 1 investigate various materials to determine whether or not light will travel through them. They identify sources of sound and everyday objects that use electricity and investigate the sense of taste, sampling different varieties of apples, recording their findings of taste and texture in a results table accurately, and plot these on a pictogram. By the end of Year 2, pupils further develop their knowledge of living things by, for example, naming the main parts of the body using correct scientific language, and recording the longest human bone as the backbone and the shortest as the wrist. They identify common sources of light and classify materials as opaque, translucent and transparent. Pupils also develop their understanding that matter can change its state as temperature varies through their investigations of melting ice under different conditions. Higher attainers, who have a good understanding of fair testing, plot accurate graphs and read these accurately to record the exact point at which the ice melted fastest. Lower attainers record their results on a graph correctly.
87. As pupils move through the school, they continue to make good progress. For example, in Year 4, pupils investigated the flow of liquids and concluded that bubble bath took longer to flow than washing-up liquid because it was thicker. In Year 5, pupils have a good knowledge of the main structure of the plant and show good understanding the processes of photosynthesis, pollination, fertilisation and germination. Through their observations, they know that plants need sunlight, water,

and nutrients to grow. Higher attainers know that chlorophyll in the leaves traps the energy from the sunlight, converting carbon dioxide and water into glucose. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a good knowledge and understanding of living things, properties of materials and physical process as they improve their skills of scientific enquiry. They analyse particular colours and reflective surfaces in order to select the most appropriate material to wear in order to be seen at night. They write up investigations more scientifically with labelled diagrams, methods, apparatus used, results table, graphs and conclusions. They show a good understanding of food chains using the terms 'primary consumer' and 'predator' correctly. They have a deeper understanding of melting and freezing points and of solubility, and use evaporation and condensation to separate solutions. Pupils also show good knowledge of forces, electricity and magnetism, for example, in measuring various forces in Newtons and in identifying areas in a magnetic field which are the strongest.

88. Teaching is consistently good and this was also confirmed from pupils' written work. High expectations, very good relationships and good subject knowledge ensure pupils learn effectively, concentrate, follow instructions, listen carefully to staff and try harder to improve their work. Pupils' enthusiasm for science, respect for others and their very good behaviour in lessons also promote their learning and achievement. Pupils' personal development is also very well promoted in lessons. For example, in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class, moral development was well promoted as pupils were reminded to handle a knife safely when cutting apples for an investigation into taste, and were made aware of the importance of washing fruit and vegetables before eating them. Social development is also very well promoted as teachers always create very good opportunities for pupils to work together or to share ideas. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils worked together very effectively in small groups during an investigation into reflective surfaces. They exchanged ideas on which materials would reflect light most and not only learned from the teacher but also from each other. The teacher reminded pupils to work faster with only half an hour of the lesson remaining and this promoted greater responsibility amongst pupils for completing their work to a high standard, which they did.
89. Teachers and support assistants effectively promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills within the subject, particularly speaking and listening, writing for different purposes, measuring and handling data. For example, there was much evidence of this in pupils' written work where pupils wrote up their conclusions in sentences, tabulated results and drew accurate graphs to scale using standard measures. In lessons key vocabulary is always displayed on the board and teachers spend time rehearsing these in terms of word structure and meaning. For instance, in the Year 5 class, key words such as *water vapour*, *condensation* and *evaporation* are clearly displayed alongside their meanings.
90. The curriculum is good, and fully meets legal requirements, and basic skills are now very well promoted in science. Information and communication technology, particularly the use of interactive whiteboards in Years 5 and 6, is well used to support pupils' learning. In one lesson, pupils were shown how to use the overhead projector to create and investigate shadows before logging their results in a database. However, more use could be made of computers, such as the newly purchased digital microscope, which has not yet been used. Science is well led by the co-ordinator who has thoroughly reviewed the curriculum to ensure that more opportunities are provided for investigative work, and organised a very successful science week to promote enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject as well as develop skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils made water bombs, developed a wild life area and developed their concepts of what a scientist is, moving away from the more stereotypical view. The co-ordinator now follows the published national guidelines and has also introduced mini SATs, analysing these and making good use of findings to improve teaching and learning by concentrating more on data handling to promote the skills of scientific enquiry. Whole-group targets are set for science and the co-ordinator rightly sees the development of monitoring of teaching and learning of all science lessons as the next priority. Resources are sufficient for the teaching of science. However, the library is too small to promote research in science or to encourage the reading of science books for pleasure.

ART AND DESIGN

91. At the time of the last inspection standards in art were satisfactory for seven-year-olds but below expected levels for 11-year olds. Improving pupils' attainment in Years 3 to 6 was an issue for improvement. Although only a small number of lessons was observed during the inspection, work on

display and in pupils' sketch books shows that by the age of 11, pupils now attain satisfactory standards in art and design. Pupils aged seven also attain the expected levels in art. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection.

92. In Years 1 and 2, pupils experiment with a range of media such as pastels, wax crayons and coloured pencils. They observe carefully and practise drawing details of faces using different media to show texture and skin tones. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils used their sketches of the school grounds to begin a landscape painting. They have previously studied landscapes in contrasting styles by artists such as Constable, Turner and Hockney. Pupils realised that their sketches should be very light as they provide a guide to painting. This was their first attempt at using watercolour paints. Pupils enjoyed working on a practice piece, experimenting with different shades and tones of colour.
93. Sketchbooks are now used throughout the school. Pupils use these to record their ideas and try out different techniques. Work on display shows that pupils study the works of different artists. Older pupils have painted portraits in the style of Picasso and younger pupils have made clay models of 'mother and child' based on the work of the sculptor Henry Moore.
94. The quality of teaching in the few lessons observed throughout the school was good and promoted effective learning. Particular strengths of teaching include: good subject knowledge, clear expectations, good management of pupils, good relationships and effective interactions with pupils about their work.
95. Pupils visit the National Gallery to study paintings of the life of Christ in art and paintings of Old Testament stories. This links well with their work in religious education. They have also visited Claydon House to look at architecture and paintings and studied the works of Arcimbaldo at Woodstock Museum.
96. At the time of the last inspection there was no scheme of work for art and this limited pupils' progress. The school is now using national guidance for art. Teachers' planning shows that this is used consistently. Teachers' plans now have clear learning objectives and the requirements of the programme of study are met.
97. The curriculum is enriched by visits to galleries and also by professional artists working in the school. Year 6 pupils recently worked with the local sculpture society to make twisted willow sculptures. Pupils in Year 4 also had a sculpture workshop. The school is currently working with local schools towards an arts week later in the term. As yet there is little evidence of the use of ICT to support the art curriculum.
98. Management of art and design is sound. The subject leader has begun to monitor colleagues' teaching and is developing a system for assessing pupils' attainment in art. There is planned professional development on assessing pupils' work in art against National Curriculum criteria.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Pupils attain satisfactory standards at the ages of seven and 11. This is an improvement over the last inspection, when standards at the age of 11 were found to be unsatisfactory. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, but there was a good range of other evidence available, which enabled judgements to be made.
100. In the infant classes, pupils are given a range of experiences, often as part of cross-curricular topics, which contribute to their understanding of all aspects of design and technology. When working, for instance, on a topic on homes, Year 2 pupils undertook activities which gave them opportunities to cut and join materials in a variety of ways. They also learned about different types of houses, and how they are built.
101. By the age of 11, pupils have continued to develop their understanding of the design process in a satisfactory way. In Year 6, for example, they design and make a fairground ride which incorporates a pulley and drive-belt mechanism. Most pupils are able to make their own decisions about aspects of the process, such as the best ways to join materials. The practical nature of the work makes it

appealing to pupils of all abilities, and everyone is fully included, including those with special educational needs. The teacher also encourages pupils to use the interactive whiteboard for computer tasks related to the work. The teacher uses questions well to check on pupils' understanding. He uses technical language well in a class discussion on how pulleys and drive-belts work.

102. Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The quality of working relationships is very good. More could be done, however, in both key stages to teach the skills of design and technology in a more systematic way. While pupils do have the necessary experiences, these are not structured in a progressive way, so as to enhance and develop techniques purposefully.
103. The subject is well managed, and the co-ordinator has clear views, both of her role and of what needs to be done to develop the subject. Although she has only been in post a short time, she has already made a good start on the work. Because of the national priorities of literacy and numeracy there has been little time for in-service training in design and technology over the last few years. For this reason the subject has had something of a low profile. The adoption of the official guidelines for the subject should, however, ensure that it is given the required attention. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall, and due attention is paid to safety issues.

GEOGRAPHY

104. Only one geography lesson was seen during the inspection, but there was a good range of other evidence available on which to base judgements. Standards are in line with expectations at the ages of seven and 11, and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress overall. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when standards in both the Infant and Junior classes were found to be unsatisfactory.
105. In the Infant classes pupils learn about the human and physical features of different places. Links with other subjects are good, such as when a story about the fictitious island of Struay and the lives of its inhabitants, leads to questions such as 'What is an island?' and 'Where is Scotland?' The use of words needed to describe geographical ideas makes a good contribution to pupils' basic language development. By the time they are seven pupils show awareness of places beyond their home area. They are beginning to express views about environmental issues, such as how the environment is influenced by people.
106. By the time they are 11, pupils have experienced a range of geographical activities. In Year 4, for example, pupils work on a cross-curricular topic on India. Part of this involves looking at a range of maps and atlases to find where India is in the world, and identify some of its features, such as cities and rivers. In a lesson seen during the inspection these pupils searched for cities and rivers in atlases, and then added them, in the correct positions, to their own maps of India. The pupils found this work interesting, and worked well in their groups. The use of new atlases contributed to the quality of learning, and the teacher's use of both the Indian and English names of cities, such as Mumbai/ Bombay made a good contribution to pupils' cultural understanding. By the age of 11, pupils can recognise and describe a range of human and physical processes, such as erosion and pollution, which affect the environment. They know how people can cause damage, or improvement, to the environment.
107. Co-ordination of the subject is effective. The co-ordinator has only been responsible for the subject for a few months, but has made a good start to addressing issues such as resources and standards. Much new equipment, such as wall-maps and atlases, has been acquired recently, and checks have been made on the suitability of older resources. There has been little in-service training in the subject recently, owing to the necessary priorities of literacy and numeracy. The potential for developing the subject, within the context of cross-curricular topics, so as to teach common skills more efficiently is an area for development. The school undertakes regular residential visits for Year 5 and 6 pupils, which provide a very good range of opportunities to develop geographical understanding.

HISTORY

108. Attainment in history is in line with average expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6, which is similar to the last inspection. Pupils' achievements in history are also satisfactory throughout the school because the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory throughout the school. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. In Year 1, pupils follow a theme based on now and then, which this term is 'Seasides'. They look at pictures and photographs of the seaside in 2003 and from the turn of the twentieth century through to the 1950s and identify the differences such as changes in fashion, customs and transport. By the end of Year 2, pupils have further developed their understanding of the passage of time by comparing Saxon and Tudor homes and looking at how things have changed in modern homes with the use of radio, telephones and washing machines. They consider different forms of evidence as told in stories, by observing buildings in the locality, and by looking at pictures of changing fashions. As pupils move through the school they deepen their understanding of the passage of time. For example, pupils in Year 5 learn about Victorian England and compare Victorian Board Schools with schools in modern times, using artefacts as an aid to writing about Victorian times. They know that the development of the railways improved transport and communication. Pupils also have a clear understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence. For example, in their project work on the history of the football World Cup through the decades they accurately compare the differences between 1966 and 2002. By the end of Year 6, pupils have studied Ancient Greece and demonstrate their ability to provide good reasons for the causes of main events and changes in this period, interpreting why such changes occurred, such as the birth of democracy. They learn about Greek poetry and express their views about the conflict between Athens and Sparta. They also carry out a history investigation by looking at the life of a significant person in the 20th Century – John Lennon. Pupils research the life and times of John Lennon, such as housing, fashion and music, using the Internet, and original artefacts. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs and higher attainers achieve equally well because work is matched to their particular needs, with enough opportunities to provide support and extend pupils' learning.
109. An analysis of pupils' work shows that the quality of teaching and learning in history is at least satisfactory in all years and in the two lessons seen it was very good. A wide range of topics is now taught which is having a positive effect on achievement. Teachers have appropriate knowledge of the subject, and make good use of artefacts and lesson time to provide a rich variety of strategies to keep pupils interested. They also promote basic skills very well, particularly literacy and numeracy. For example, different groups of pupils in a Year 1 lesson were finding out as much information as they could, through discussion and the sharing of ideas, to sort pictures into two groups 'now' and 'then'. Pupils used key words such as 'past', 'present' and 'old fashioned' with increasing confidence. This not only promoted skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing very well but also enhanced pupils' personal development in providing a very good opportunity for pupils to collaborate in historical research. In a Year 6 lesson, a very good question-and-answer session about the Beatles challenged pupils' thinking and also promoted thoughtful debate and discussion on the differences in fashions and housing in the 1960s compared to the present day. This led to the idea of generating a biography of the life and times of John Lennon which would be followed up in the next lesson.
110. The co-ordinator is providing satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. She has recently observed lessons to look at different approaches to teaching history in the school, especially the use of computers in lessons and the range of strategies used to support different ability groups. Planning has improved to ensure the systematic build up of knowledge, skills and understanding. Good use is made of visits to local places of historical interest such as Claydon House which provides pupils with opportunities to observe original Florence Nightingale artefacts and compare these with modern times. Assessment has also improved to include the recording of pupil progress against the published objectives and there are plans in place to create a whole-school strategy for assessment in history across all year groups. Resources for teaching history are satisfactory and include a well-used range of artefacts, which contribute to the achievement of pupils in the subject and the co-ordinator rightly intends to complete a full audit of resources in order to develop these further. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. Standards are in line with those found nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was found to be below the national average

at the end of Year 2. Recent improvements in the school's provision of resources for information and communication technology are beginning to have their impact on work and standards, and this, together with the New Opportunities Fund training undertaken by teachers, has addressed many previous shortcomings. During the inspection little teaching of information and communication technology was seen, but evidence from other sources, such as pupils' previous work, displays and discussions with teachers and pupils, enabled judgements to be made.

112. By the age of seven most pupils can use the computer confidently to organise and present information in a variety of ways. They can find and save their own work and can use text and images appropriately, cutting, copying and pasting their work as required. They are taught techniques such as selecting and changing fonts, when working at word-processing tasks, and most are good at working co-operatively at the computer, even when the teacher is not close by.
113. Year 6 pupils have continued to develop their skills appropriately and, in some areas, such as the use of the Internet for carrying out research tasks, they achieve levels which are above those found nationally. Overall, however, their attainment is in line with national expectations. In a lesson observed, Year 6 pupils were working on multi-media presentations about the death of John Lennon. The teacher made very good use of the interactive whiteboard, and this enhanced the quality of teaching and learning. After revising the use of a search engine, pupils continued their work, accessing information from a variety of websites and adding it appropriately to their previous work. The presentations included text, graphics and sound. Because the work was practical, interesting and enjoyable, and because of the good provision of hardware and software, pupils of all abilities made good gains in learning. The use of two additional adults to work with individuals and groups was very effective and ensured that all pupils were fully included and appropriately supported.
114. The use of information and communication technology to support work in other subjects is variable. Some good examples were seen during the inspection, but there were also many occasions when opportunities were missed. In these lessons the computers were either switched on but left unused, or not even switched on. The value of the resource which computers represent was therefore not realised, and pupils' learning was less than it could have been. In other lessons, however, good use was made of computers. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, where pupils were learning about directions and the points of the compass, a group of pupils used the 'Roamer' programmable toy to work out routes and angles of turn. This was a worthwhile addition to the lesson, and good use of information and communication technology to enhance learning.
115. When they are working on the computers, pupils show very good attitudes. They enjoy the activities and work hard at their tasks. The need to work together, to share and take turns, all make good contributions to pupils' social and moral development. Teachers generally are good at using the correct vocabulary when talking about the work, and they expect the pupils to do the same. This makes a good contribution to pupils' basic language development. The use of electronic mail is underdeveloped at present. Although all the necessary hardware and software is available, the potential of e-mail in a variety of contexts is not being realised. Ways should be found to develop this aspect.
116. The subject is exceptionally well managed by the deputy headteacher. He has a clear view of how the subject should develop, and has already done much to address issues such as the provision of resources, and teachers' confidence and subject-knowledge. The issue of the difference in approach between classes, as affected by the varying confidence of different teachers, is an area for development. The introduction of interactive whiteboards has been well managed, and their benefits are increasingly felt. New hardware and software have been acquired, and are beginning to have an impact on the ways in which teachers work. In-service training has been effective, and has gone some way to give teachers more confidence in making good use of information and communication technology. Assessment procedures are developing, and a portfolio of assessed work is being produced. The room used as an ICT suite is rather small and poorly ventilated. It is also inconveniently located for some classes, particularly those in Years 1 and 2.

MUSIC

117. The previous inspection report judged standards in music to be above average for both seven and 11-year-olds. This is no longer the case. There have been changes in the way music is planned and taught since the last inspection. There is no longer a music room which means that the teacher has to move to different classrooms to teach music. In practice this results in some time slippage so that lessons are sometimes cut short. Whilst the specialist teacher still works for a day and a half each week, one half day is used to provide cover for the newly qualified teacher. This means that the time allocated for music is less than at the time of the previous inspection. Classes now have only half an hour each week for their music lessons. This is not sufficient to enable pupils to develop their musical skills systematically and not all of the programme of study can be covered in this time. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.
118. Timetable arrangements meant that no music lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, and only two lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6. Further evidence was gained from listening to pupils' singing in assembly and from tape recordings of pupils' recent work. In all year groups pupils' singing is not always tuneful and they do not show an appropriate awareness of dynamics. In lessons pupils try hard but they are not helped to develop accuracy in pitch through carefully structured aural games and exercises. The lessons observed were both singing lessons. The teacher was preparing pupils to take part in a forthcoming festival with local schools. As time was short the emphasis was on learning the songs and there was not enough time to develop pupils' singing skills. In Years 5 and 6, pupils attempt to sing in two parts but find this very difficult to maintain. In the recorded extracts heard, pupils added instrumental accompaniments to songs but these were very simple and mostly consisted of keeping the pulse rather than developing an understanding of different rhythmic patterns. There was no evidence available of pupils recording their compositions in graphic form or standard notation. The school has a computer programme for music but there was no evidence available of how this is used.
119. Teaching in music is satisfactory. The teacher has good subject knowledge but the time allocated to music does not enable her to develop pupils' skills appropriately. Music is taught according to national guidance but because of the time factor several elements of the programme of study are not taught in sufficient depth and assessment systems are not fully in place. The arrangements for the part-time co-ordination of music are unsatisfactory and this has had a clear impact on the development of the subject.
120. The school provides a good range of extra curricular opportunities in music. Forty-four pupils currently learn to play instruments with visiting specialist teachers from the local authority. Pupils learn a range of instruments including flute, violin, guitar, recorder, clarinet, mini clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, cornet and keyboard. A further 12 pupils sing in the after-school choir. Unfortunately the choir takes place at the same time as some instrumental lessons which means that many pupils are unable to take part.
121. There is not a regular singing practice but practices take place in order to prepare for specific events such as the school mass. Pupils sing carols for a local residential home for the elderly at Christmas and also take part in local festivals with other schools.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. At the last inspection attainment was above expectations by the end of Year 2 and in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. Standards have risen so that by the end of Year 6 pupils' attainments are above national expectations, although pupils' attainments in Years 1 and 2 remain satisfactory. This reflects the good quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 and greater opportunities for pupils to engage in dance and sporting activities in these year groups. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is also good and there were no differences seen in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
123. As they progress through the school pupils are given the opportunities to acquire and develop new skills and techniques and apply them to their own performances. By the end of Year 2 pupils warm up well playing the game of touch ball; they are keen to join in and respond well. Pupils develop their tactics of playing team games and their basic skills of movement, balance and control, appropriately. In Years 3 to 6, pupils increase their skills, becoming more competent in team games and

competitive sports. For example, in 2002, pupils have won Bicester schools' championships in Bench Ball (an invasion game), Under-11 girls' football, and indoor athletics. They also attain very high standards in swimming as a result of the very effective use made of the local sports centre by pupils in Years 3 to 6. Many pupils are awarded certificates demonstrating their very good achievements in swimming. For example, 90 per cent of Year 4 pupils swim 25 metres and a third of pupils swim 100 metres, achieving the competence stage for the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 6 a third of pupils swim over 150 metres and one pupil achieved 1000 metres. The school's template for swimming galas is also used as a model of good practice by other local schools. By Year 6 nearly all pupils can apply skills, techniques and ideas accurately. Most are able to comment on their own performances and suggest ways of improvement. Many pupils are able to show a good degree of precision, control and accuracy in their work.

124. The quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good and was good overall. Satisfactory teaching occurred in Years 1 and 2, with consistently good and sometimes very good teaching in Years 3 to 6. During this inspection lessons were usually well planned and well resourced and in lessons where teaching was good or better, the subject knowledge of teachers was secure, the pace of lessons brisk and tasks set for different ability groups of pupils were challenging yet possible to attain. It was noticeable that the standard of teaching of physical education was better in the upper part of the school and this reflected the greater enthusiasm of older pupils towards the subject and greater opportunities to develop their skills through dance, and participation in competitive team games.
125. Provision is good, as is improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have access to a very good range of extra-curricular sporting and dance activities including netball, football and cricket, athletics and Irish dancing. This has a positive impact on their achievement. Well-conceived residential trips take place to outdoor activity centres where older pupils engage in adventurous activities such as canoeing, climbing and life saving. The school has already been nominated as a partner school with the local Catholic secondary school in its bid for Sports College Status, with good plans to develop gymnastics, which is currently under-developed. Resources for teaching physical education are good and also contribute to the overall achievement of pupils in this subject. They are easily accessed and cover all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study for physical education. The school's accommodation, which includes a good-sized hall and large sports field, is used well and also contributes to the development of pupils' skills in physical education. The subject leader has a clear view of how the subject should continue to develop within the school and has ensured that all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study are covered in each year group. Assessment is presently used to formally track pupils' progress in the subject, although monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject by the co-ordinator has not yet taken place. Standards of attainment have risen in Years 3 to 6 because of consistently good teaching, very good extra-curricular provision for sport, parental support, the school's ethos for high achievement and the enthusiasm of pupils for the subject.