

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY OF MUSWELL RC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Muswell Hill

LEA area: Haringey

Unique reference number: 102142

Headteacher: Mrs. Margaret Finch

Reporting inspector: Jo Cheadle
23233

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th June 2003

Inspection number: 254817

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pages Lane Muswell Hill London
Postcode:	N10 1PS
Telephone number:	020 8444 9997
Fax number:	020 8444 9997
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Philip Murphie
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23233	Jo Cheadle	Registered inspector	Science, design and technology, educational inclusion and race equality.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What does the school need to do to improve further?
19693	Sally Hall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11982	Ray Morris	Team inspector	English, geography, provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language.	How well is the school led and managed?
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	History, music, provision for children in the Foundation Stage.	
17808	Susan Orpin	Team inspector	Mathematics; art and design, special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
33024	Kate Higgs	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, physical education.	

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, OXTED, Surrey, RH8 0RE.

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	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Muswell is a Catholic primary school for boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 11. There are currently 364 pupils, including 52 children who attend part time in the nursery class. Numbers are rising steadily, and over the past two years a major building project has been taking place to provide more classrooms and better facilities. The work has taken much longer than expected and staff and pupils have had to work in extremely difficult circumstances. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to the national average. Most pupils who need support have moderate learning difficulties. No pupils are supported by statements for their special needs. Although the majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds, a higher than average proportion do not speak English as their home language. The main languages spoken in addition to English are Spanish, Italian, various African languages and Polish. The school is situated in an area where there is some social housing, but largely privately owned properties. However, many of the pupils travel to the school from areas outside the immediate locality. Relatively few pupils are eligible for free school meals, and not all who are eligible claim this support. While sharing the same faith, the school greatly benefits from pupils' diverse social, cultural and racial backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the school is average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Our Lady of Muswell School is a **very effective** school, where pupils attain above average standards overall and achieve very well. Pupils attain well above average results in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The overall quality of teaching is very good. The school is very well led and managed. Governors work very effectively to support and improve the school. The school monitors its work rigorously to ensure consistent good quality of provision. It provides very good value for the funding it receives.

What the school does well

- The school very successfully promotes pupils' academic achievement in harmony with their spiritual, moral, social and personal development.
- Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 is of a consistently high standard.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work, behave very well and are very enthusiastic about school.
- There is an excellent sense of community, built on high levels of respect, and involving pupils, staff, governors and parents in all aspects of the school's work. Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The headteacher leads the school with an exceptionally clear vision of what all pupils should achieve. This vision is shared by everyone and permeates the work of the school.
- Leadership and management are very good. All staff and governors are equally committed to continual development and maintenance of high standards.

What could be improved

- Attendance is not good enough, and some parents often bring their children to school late.

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 June 1997 and the school has maintained the strengths that were noted at that time. In relation to the key issues raised in the previous report, the school has addressed concerns about the curriculum, and learning opportunities are now judged to be good. There are now schemes of work and clear learning intentions in all subjects. There are good ways of checking how well pupils are doing and effective use is made of this information to plan for new learning. The quality of teaching is now judged to be very good overall and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the current inspection. A good number of lessons

were observed where teaching and learning were judged to be very good or excellent. Performance management and teacher appraisal systems are fully in place and effectively supporting whole school developments.

In addition, improvements in the following areas were also noted:

- Many aspects of leadership and management of the school;
- Standards in English and mathematics;
- The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and pupils' achievements in the subject.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A*	A	B
mathematics	A	A	B	D
science	A*	A	A	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The Year 6 English and mathematics test results in 2002 were slightly lower than in previous years. A number of circumstances contributed to this dip in test results, including a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the group, who made good progress in their learning, but some of whom did not attain the nationally expected levels in tests. In addition, serious accommodation issues and staffing difficulties impacted on results. However, the school's records of pupils' progress show that their achievements were at least satisfactory and often good in relation to their starting levels. The school set very challenging but appropriate targets for attainment in 2003 national tests. Targets were exceeded in mathematics. In English, the target was missed by 4 per cent, the equivalent of one pupil. Results are improving in line with the national average trends.

While some children begin school with above average skills and knowledge, attainment on entry is average overall. Children make steady progress through the nursery and good progress in the reception classes and the vast majority are on track to meet the goals for early learning. Some will exceed these goals. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well on their academic starting levels, and by the end of Year 2, standards are above average overall. Pupils continue to achieve well through Years 3 to 6, making particularly good progress in Years 5 and 6. Overall standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils do very well in national tests. Pupils achieve consistently well in their work throughout the school and at the same time make very good gains in their social and personal development. Overall achievement is judged to be very good.

In Year 2, pupils attain above average standards in English and science and well above average standards in mathematics. Pupils achieve well in ICT, design and technology and music and reach above average standards. In all other subjects, pupils attain average standards and their achievements are satisfactory.

In Year 6, standards of work are well above average in English and pupils' achievements are very good. In mathematics, science, ICT and physical education pupils achieve well and standards are above average. In all other subjects pupils attain average standards and make satisfactory achievements. Their very good reading, writing and speaking skills have a significant impact on the quality of work in all other subjects. Pupils use and apply their number skills competently and demonstrate good investigative skills in science. ICT is used very effectively as a tool to extend learning in many subjects.

Throughout the school, the attention given to pupils' social and personal development is very consistent. Equal emphasis is given to achieving good academic standards and high levels of confidence, maturity and respectful attitudes. Pupils' high achievements in these non-academic areas of learning provide them with very relevant skills and attributes for life-long learning. This is a particularly positive feature of the school's work, enabling pupils to make very good achievements overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and show real enthusiasm for many activities. They generally concentrate and participate well in class and their positive attitudes promote good learning. In a few lessons, when pupils have to listen for a long time, or work without supervision, they do not concentrate well enough.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the school's consistent expectations about behaviour and try very hard to do the right thing. Their very good behaviour helps them to make good progress in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships at the school are excellent. Pupils develop high levels of confidence and clearly demonstrate their growing sense of responsibility and maturity. They have an excellent understanding of how their actions affect others and show high levels of respect for other peoples' feelings, values and beliefs.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The rate of unauthorised absence is higher than the national average. In addition, too many parents do not bring their children to school on time. On the last day of inspection, 56 pupils were late arriving for the morning session.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **very good**.

Strengths:

- High quality teaching in a variety of subjects in all year groups means that pupils' learning is consistently good throughout the school;
- Teaching is often very good or excellent. This is particularly the case in English and ICT lessons, where basic skills are taught very well and pupils often make very good progress;
- Teaching in mathematics is good overall and pupils' numeracy skills are well developed;
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is of a consistently high standard. Pupils develop deep and broad understanding of subjects, and learning is made relevant to their lives and experiences;
- All teachers make very good use of questioning to promote pupils' learning and check their understanding;
- Teachers are excellent role models for pupils. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations about behaviour and attitudes, and this encourages excellent relationships and promotes effective learning;
- Many teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons that are really interesting for pupils. When pupils are interested they participate, concentrate and learn very well;

- Teachers are very good at making quick assessments of how well pupils are doing in lessons. This helps them to plan effectively for the next steps in learning to ensure that pupils make continually good progress.

Area for development:

- In some lessons, pace is too slow. This sometimes happens because teachers talk for too long and pupils lose concentration. This is particularly the case when teachers’ subject knowledge is not as good as it could be and they do not pass on information clearly and concisely enough. In some other lessons, pace slows down because teachers do not choose the best activities for pupils to work on independently. In all of these situations, pupils’ learning is satisfactory rather than good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is interesting and meets the needs of all pupils. Very good links between subjects make learning relevant and meaningful. English and ICT are particular strengths of the curriculum. A very good range of extra-curricular activities broadens pupils’ experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Early and effective support is provided for all pupils with special educational needs. The school works well with parents and outside agencies when necessary to make sure that pupils receive the support they need.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils make good progress not only in learning English, but also in other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers speak a variety of other languages, such as Spanish, French, Portuguese and Polish. They support pupils in their own language when this is necessary.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. Pupils’ personal and social development is excellently promoted. The school’s Catholic principles underpin very effective development of pupils’ social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. Pupils have a very good understanding of other cultures who share their Catholic faith and also of those where religions are different. All these aspects support the excellent relationships and sense of value and belonging in school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. There are good arrangements for child protection. Staff, governors, pupils and parents show high levels of care for one another. There are high expectations of good behaviour and an intolerance of bullying. The school does not yet have successful strategies to improve attendance. There are thorough ways of checking and recording how well pupils are doing. The information collected is used well to plan for future learning. The school tracks progress carefully to ensure that pupils’ achieve well.

Parents have very positive views of the school. The school has developed a very strong partnership with them. They are welcomed into school and they are very supportive of its work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher’s vision of what pupils at the school should achieve is outstandingly clear and shared by staff and governors. Her excellent leadership encourages staff to give of their very best. The head and deputy work in very effective partnership and all staff understand their roles and responsibilities very well. The work of co-ordinators is of high quality. There is an excellent shared

	commitment to develop and improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are highly committed to the school and its pupils. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They take an active role in decision-making and plan very effectively for the future. They are knowledgeable, hard working and provide very good counsel for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school monitors the success of its work regularly and very carefully and uses the information to ensure that there is a positive impact on how pupils learn. Principles of best value are faultlessly applied.

Aspect	Comment
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Finances are very well managed to improve aspects of the school's work. In all decision-making there is a clear focus on the achievement of high standards and quality provision. Funding is used very effectively and for the proper purpose. For example, the investment in ICT has made a very effective contribution to improved standards.

The school has a good number of teachers and support staff to help pupils. Building work has been taking place for the past two years and is long overdue for completion. Owing to the headteacher's very good management in difficult circumstances and the relentless efforts of all staff, pupils' standards have not been unduly affected. However, despite the very best effort of the headteacher, governors, Diocese and local education authority, the accommodation is currently in a poor condition. Staff, parents and pupils have shown great tolerance and understanding while working in very difficult circumstances. Very effective management of the situation by all involved has kept disruptions to pupils' learning as minimal as possible. The school recognises, however, that opportunities available to pupils have been affected by the lack of space and unfavourable working conditions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are happy that their children enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. • Parents believe that teaching is good and that their children are making good progress. • Parents think that the children behave well, work hard and develop confidence and maturity. • Parents feel comfortable to approach the school with suggestions and concerns. • Parents feel they are well informed about how their child is getting on. • Parents say that the school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents felt that there were not enough extra-curricular activities for their children.

Inspection findings support the strongly positive views expressed by parents. Extra-curricular activities were judged to be very good. They include a range of lunchtime, after school and residential visits. There are clubs for chess, dance, tennis, karate, drama and football and a lunchtime ICT club.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards are **above average** overall and pupils achieve **very well**.

Strengths:

- National test results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are consistently well above average;
- By the end of Year 6, standards in English are well above average and pupils' achievements are very good;
- By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics are well above average;
- Pupils speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are very good and enable them to do well in other subjects;
- Standards in science, ICT, music, physical education and art and design are above average throughout the school and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' personal and social achievements are very good.

Areas for development:

- Pupils do not always present their work neatly and standards in handwriting are inconsistent;
- Pupils' achievements in mathematics are not as consistent in Years 3 and 4;
- Standards in design and technology should be higher at the end of Year 6;
- Standards in history and geography should be better throughout the school.

2. Over the past two years, results in national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been at least above the national average. At the end of Year 6, results have been well above average over the past four years. Results have fluctuated slightly, but reasons for this have been clearly established by the school. Tracking of pupils' progress indicates that all pupils, even those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory gains in learning, and most make good progress, although not all attain high results in tests. Such fluctuations in results are not significant however, since pupils at the school do well in tests. This is because; teaching in English is very good; in Years 5 and 6 teaching is consistently of a high standard; learning opportunities are well planned in all of the test subjects and pupils are very interested and motivated by their work; the school very effectively analyses the performance of pupils in tests and uses this information to identify areas where pupils need more support next year; the school superbly develops pupils' confidence and a mature approach to learning.

3. Attainment on entry to the school is average. Children make steady progress in the nursery and good progress in the reception classes and the vast majority attain the goals for early learning in all aspects of their work. Some children will exceed these goals, particularly in language. Through Years 1 and 2, pupils' achieve well on their starting levels and attain above average standards overall by the end of Year 2. They do best in mathematics, where standards are well above average. During Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to achieve well. In English, teaching is of a particularly high quality and pupils achieve very well, so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment is well above average. In general, high standards are maintained over the four years, and very significantly, pupils develop a depth of understanding that ensures their continued interest in work and enthusiasm for school. Alongside good academic standards, pupils' personal and social skills are developed superbly. They show very high levels of maturity, confidence and self-esteem. They are polite and respectful of adults and each other. They are kind, thoughtful and show empathy for other people. Expectations of behaviour and attitudes are very high and therefore the school is extremely successful in promoting academic and personal skills in equal balance, with the result that pupils leave the school understanding the reason for learning and with a thirst to learn more. The school is very inclusive of all pupils, and those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language also achieve very well, because they are supported very well.

4. In mathematics, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make consistently good progress and achieve well above average results by the end of Year 2, achieving very well on prior levels of attainment. They use numbers quickly, confidently and accurately and, for this reason, enjoy solving problems and investigating number patterns. They

know the names and characteristics of a variety of shapes. Their mathematics work is very appropriately presented. Progress is not as consistent in Years 3 and 4, but improves again in Years 5 and 6. The result of this is that achievement is satisfactory during Years 3 and 4 and good during Years 5 and 6, enabling pupils to attain above average standards by the end of Year 6.

5. Pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are developed thoroughly and systematically throughout the school. Above average standards at the end of Year 2 are developed even further during Years 3 to 6 so that, by the end of Year 6, pupils attain well above average standards. Pupils' very good literacy skills are the key to the good standards of work they produce in many other subjects. Pupils are articulate and confident speakers and their ability to talk about their work and investigate ideas through discussion encourages good progress in many aspects of learning. Very good reading skills enable them to access information independently to extend their learning in other subjects. The majority enjoy writing and produce work of very good length, with imaginative content and correct punctuation and use of grammar. At times, pupils' handwriting is not always as neat and well formed as it could be and this is an area where work in English can be developed.

6. In science, analysis of pupils' test results and teacher assessments have led to a priority focus on developing skills in investigating and experimenting. All pupils have a very clear understanding of fair testing and use very specific scientific language to talk about their work. They are enthusiastic about their work and attain above average results by the end of Years 2 and 6, achieving well throughout the school. In ICT there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils use new technology as a tool to support and improve their learning in other subjects. They learn new skills well and are confident in applying them. Pupils attain above average standards in ICT at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.

7. In physical education, art and music pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and their achievements are good. In design and technology, standards are improving and recent developments have encouraged above average standards at the end of Year 2. Standards in design and technology are currently in line with expectations by the end of Year 6 because better subject management and developments in the curriculum have not yet had time to raise the standard of teaching and learning throughout the school. Pupils moving on from Year 2 will take with them well-developed design and technology skills, and so the capacity for standards to improve is good.

8. The major area for development within pupils' work is in geography and history. These subjects have not been priority areas for development over the recent past and, while standards are average overall, all pupils have the potential to do better than this, particularly given their well developed reading and writing skills, which are the key to successful research and recording. Moreover, pupils showed very good attitudes to geography and history work in discussions with inspectors. The school has not yet capitalised on the potential for improvement within these subjects, and links with literacy in particular have not been used consistently enough to raise standards in geography and history. At present pupils do not produce enough work in either subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Overall, standards are **very good** and have been maintained since the last inspection.

Strengths:

- Pupils have good attitudes in lessons;
- Pupils behave very well in and around the school and have a very clear sense of right and wrong;
- Pupils have excellent relationships with other pupils and with adults working in the school;
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility.

Area for development:

- Attendance levels are too low.

10. The pupils' attitudes are good and this has a positive impact on their learning. Parents say that their children love coming to school, and the vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic learners. Teachers are particularly skilled at developing pupils' spiritual awareness and self esteem with the response that some pupils said that '*the best thing about school is the teachers, because they make learning fun*'. These very good attitudes had a significant and positive impact on their learning. In a few lessons, when pupils have been sitting for a long time listening to the teacher, some of them lose concentration and begin to fidget. The pace of learning in these lessons often slows down when the pupils are expected to work individually or in groups without close supervision. They take time to settle and are reluctant to try new work.

11. Pupils' behaviour is very good and this has a positive impact on their learning. The school's excellent provision for moral development and a very strong feeling of community enables the school to operate in a happy and harmonious environment. Pupils know that adults expect very high standards of behaviour and the result is that they behave very well in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy receiving awards and understand the consequences of their actions. They are trustworthy and show respect for property, especially the new Play Village. One pupil whose behaviour was unacceptable was excluded for two fixed periods last year. After support from the school and outside agencies, the pupil has now settled back into the schools' routines. The parent of the pupil was very happy to talk about the effective way in which the school had supported her.

12. The pupils' personal development and relationships are excellent. The school's outstanding provision for social development helps the pupils to become mature and well rounded young citizens. The pupils are eager to take responsibility and willing to help in the classrooms and around the school. Year 6 pupils enjoy acting as 'playground friends' and take responsibility for playground equipment. The members of the school council take their duties very seriously and were involved in the design of the new playground. Because of the school's success in supporting and respecting all members of the school, relationships are excellent. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds play and work together, respecting and celebrating each other's cultures. In lessons, they work particularly well in groups and pairs, sharing ideas and supporting each other. The pupils write sensitive prayers that are used throughout the day. One such example is:

*Thank you for keeping us safe throughout the day.
We have the responsibility to look out for each other.
Please help those who have given up their freedom to save us and give us our freedom.*

13. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. The attendance rate of 89.6 per cent for 2001/02 was well below the national average. The level of attendance for 2002/03 shows considerable improvement at 92.9 per cent, but is still not as good as it should be. The absences of some pupils have a detrimental impact on their attainment and progress. Some poor punctuality was identified in the last report. This has not improved and a significant number of parents are not bringing their children to school on time. On the final morning of the inspection, 56 pupils arrived up to 15 minutes late. These pupils missed an important start to the school day and, moreover, disturbed the beginning of lessons for other pupils in their classes. It was very evident that pupils arriving late felt uncomfortable about doing so.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The overall quality of teaching is **very good**.

Strengths:

- The consistent quality of teaching and learning that ensures good levels of progress throughout the school in most subjects;
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall and the nursery nurse works very effectively to support children in the nursery;
- The quality of teaching in English and ICT is most often very good and sometimes excellent;
- Mathematics is taught well and pupils develop very good numeracy skills;
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is of a consistently high standard;
- Teachers make very effective use of questions to challenge pupils and extend their learning;

- Teachers and support staff work in excellent partnership;
- Teachers are very skilled at checking how well pupils are doing and changing how and what they teach to ensure good progress.

Areas for development:

- In a few lessons, for a number of reasons, the pace of teaching and learning is too slow;
- Teaching of mathematics in Years 3 and 4 means that pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress.

15. In all the lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when a few lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. In three out of every four lessons, teaching was good. In nearly a quarter of lessons, teaching was very good and in four lessons observed, teaching was excellent. Good teaching was seen in every class at the school. All teachers were judged to have the appropriate skills to help pupils learn very well. Considering that the school has recently, and unusually, experienced a more unsettled period in terms of staffing, it is credit to the quality of recruitment procedures and the good level of support for new teachers that this consistency is evident at the school. The teaching and support staff challenge themselves well to improve and develop their practice, and this is key to maintaining and bettering the already good standards attained by pupils.

16. Over the recent past, the school has experienced difficulties with staffing in the nursery class, which has had supply teachers for some time. At the time of the inspection, the teacher working in the nursery class had only been at the school for two weeks. A student teacher worked in effective partnership with him and demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage. Although the quality of teaching and learning was generally satisfactory at the start of the week, largely due to the structure of activities in the outside area which were not always focussed on learning, development points offered to the teachers were taken on board very well and acted upon quickly. Later in the week, teaching was most often good. The teachers also commented on the good support and guidance they had received from the school. The nursery nurse makes a very valuable contribution to the provision in the nursery class. She has ensured continuity for the children over the time when supply teachers have been employed. Her support and care for children is very good. In lessons seen in the nursery, relationships were always positive between all adults and children. The environment for learning was happy and stimulating. In the reception classes, teaching was most often good and at times very good or excellent. In excellent lessons, teachers understood the needs of individuals and groups of children very clearly and work was excellently matched to their attainment levels. In one lesson, the teacher saw how well a lower attaining child had understood and used this child to be the teacher for other children. As the child asked number questions of others, she consolidated her own learning and helped others to learn.

17. Very good and excellent teaching and learning were most often seen in English and ICT lessons. In English, teachers have made very good use of the national strategy for literacy to develop and hone their practice, so that learning in lessons is often very good. In a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils wrote about a situation from another person's point of view. The teacher began the lesson with a very good discussion about similar stories in different cultures. He used an interactive white board to very good effect to look at a passage from a chosen text, highlighting pertinent words that were evidence of the opinion of the writer. Pupils were challenged to work in pairs to discuss how the character could be made to sound *honourable*. Their ideas were collated on a bullet point slide on the interactive white board. Even when very noisy building work started outside the room, pupils' behaviour was exemplary, because they were so interested and involved in their work. Excellent use of technology was key to their good attitudes and enabled the teacher to keep very good pace in the lesson. In an excellent ICT lesson in Year 6, the teacher's subject knowledge was faultless and ensured pupils' excellent progress in creating a multi-media presentation about their residential journey to the Isle of Wight. Teaching and learning throughout the school is greatly enhanced by teachers' very competent and confident use of new technology.

18. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good, but the best teaching is with pupils in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. Because teaching is consistently good for the younger pupils, they make very good progress through Year 1 and 2 and achieve very well on their starting levels to attain well above average standards in their work. Pupils' progress slows in Years 3 and 4, where teaching in mathematics is satisfactory, but has some weaknesses, and then speeds up again in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is always at least good. The result of this is that even though standards are above average by the end of Year 6, pupils do not achieve as well as they should do over the course of the junior years. In very good mathematics lessons, teachers plan effectively to challenge all attainment groups in the class, provide the resources to support pupils appropriately and keep the lessons lively and interesting. This was

the case in a Year 6 lesson where pupils converted fractions and decimals. In lessons that had weaknesses, pupils were less interested in their work because the challenges set for them were not high enough. In a Year 3 lesson, activities were repeated from an earlier session, and pupils lost interest because they were doing the same work on word problems as the previous day. In the final part of the lesson, learning slowed because the teacher did not give enough time for pupils to answer for themselves, but provided the answers herself.

19. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is of a consistently high quality. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils, provide work that is very challenging and interesting and have very high expectations of behaviour and attitudes. Teachers also reflect on what and how they teach, seeking the best ways to encourage pupils' enthusiasm and best efforts. Pupils are treated with high levels of respect and there is an excellent environment for learning that promotes very good progress and high standards. Through these year groups, pupils make consistently very good progress in most areas of their work. They are ready to move to new schools with a solid base of academic knowledge and understanding, and the skills necessary to make the most of all new learning opportunities.

20. All teachers make very effective use of questioning to check how well pupils have understood and push them further in their learning. Key questions are very effectively chosen and included in the good quality planning which is a common feature of all lessons. Teachers initiate introductory discussion with an essential question, and evaluate pupils' understanding from previous lessons. They consolidate and extend learning through a series of well-targeted questions that support lower attaining pupils and really challenge higher attaining pupils. In a very good art lesson in Year 3, pupils were encouraged to look very closely at a set of photographs, paintings and pictures to observe the details of figures in African costume. The teacher's very good questioning helped them to pay particularly good attention to identifying the similarities and differences between the clothes of two cultures. Pupils observed in silence for a good length of time, prompted only by the questions posed by the teacher. The result was that their own representations were of an above average standard. In a science lesson in Year 3, the teacher's effective questioning led the pupils carefully to new learning. The pupils recorded the changes happening to the plants they had kept in a variety of conditions. The teacher asked questions that really made them think about their initial predictions of what may happen to the plants. They were challenged to examine their ideas and talked at great length with partners about the possibility that their initial predictions may not have been accurate, given the new evidence their observations were throwing to light.

21. There is an excellent sense of teamwork at the school and this is very evident when teachers and teaching assistants work together in lessons. They know pupils very well and understand the best ways to support and challenge them. They share planning, and this means that in the majority of lessons support for learning is very effective. The school values the work of teaching assistants highly because they contribute very valuably to supporting pupils' progress. The exemplary relationships between adults encourage pupils' good attitudes and all staff are excellent role models for good conduct.

22. Teachers are very good at checking how well pupils are doing and using this information to change what and how they teach. This skill was well used during the inspection, because planning was amended regularly, taking account of the outcome of previous lessons. Moreover, quick assessments made during lessons redirected the teachers' questions to individuals and attainment groups to ensure that learning was equally good for all groups. Because teachers' subject knowledge is at least good in many subjects of the curriculum, they quickly perceive when pupils may be confused, or are ready to move to the next step. In a very good Year 3 science lesson, the teacher asked questions of the pupils during the introduction that gave her a clear indication of how much they had learned and remembered from the previous lesson. Her very good subject knowledge enabled her to do this effectively. Making quick assessments of individual pupils, she was able to target them during the independent task and support them towards better understanding, or challenge them to think harder about their answers. As a result, pupils from all attainment groups made very good progress and pupils' interest and levels of concentration were very good.

23. The school is committed to improving the overall quality of teaching and teachers are of the opinion that satisfactory teaching is not good enough. The major area for development is linked to the pace of lessons. In some lessons teachers talk for too long and pupils become restless. In a Year 2 English lesson, the teacher began with a

very good discussion about the use of context cues in reading. The pupils were initially very interested and participated well. However, as the discussion continued and the teacher began to talk about other features of the text that had not originally been part of the learning intention for the lesson, pupils began to lose interest. While they behaved well and appeared to follow the text of the *Big Book*, it was very obvious that their concentration levels had dropped and learning was slower. On occasions, teachers talk for too long because their subject knowledge is not as good as it could be and, in an attempt to explain clearly, more words are used than really necessary. In a few lessons, this happens simply because teachers are teaching new material for the first time and need to practise the best way to present it. This was the case in a Year 4 music lesson, where the teacher wanted to use specific musical terms, but had to correct herself on occasions. In some lessons, pace also slows because the choice of activity for independent work is not interesting enough for the pupils, or does not provide an appropriate level of challenge. In a Year 3 English lesson that started very well, pace and pupils' interest dropped when the teacher asked them to write the order of a sequence of events on the board. They had previously discussed this sequence with a partner and were in fact ready to start independent work. The task became laborious and learning was much slower.

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

24. Learning opportunities are **good** and pupils' develop **very good** spiritual and cultural awareness, and **excellent** social and moral understanding.

Strengths:

- Links between subjects are made very well;
- All aspects of English are covered very well, particularly reading;
- The use of ICT within other subjects is very good;
- Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is excellent;
- The number and range of extra-curricular activities is very good;
- There is excellent provision made overall for the development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding.

Areas for development:

- Learning opportunities in history and geography are not as well-developed as in other subjects;
- Pupils' library skills are not as effectively developed as they could be, as the school does not yet have a library.

25. Issues raised at the last inspection have been dealt with effectively and the school now meets the requirements for the teaching of the National Curriculum and there are policies and schemes of work for all subjects. The school is developing the creative elements of the curriculum well. A new programme of work has been introduced for developing links between literacy and music, art, dance and drama. This is encouraging very good learning opportunities that are interesting and good fun. Teachers are making effective use of the programme and pupils have regular opportunities to develop and use their literacy skills in many other aspects of their work. As yet, links have not been utilised enough in history and geography. The school aims to meet the needs of all pupils and does so very well. Pupils of all abilities and from diverse backgrounds receive suitable challenge and support in all areas of the curriculum. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well established and inspection findings show that they are contributing well to improving standards.

26. English is very well planned throughout the school. Pupils work in a language rich environment, where the development of literacy skills is highly valued. Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are viewed as tools to develop knowledge and understanding in all other subjects. Pupils are given many opportunities to use and develop these skills and they become very confident in doing so. Library skills are currently not as well developed, because delayed building work has meant that the school does not yet have a library.

27. ICT is equally well developed within the curriculum. Planning in most subjects includes the use or development of a specific ICT skill to aid learning.

28. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs such as football, netball, tennis, karate, drama and chess. There are individual music lessons for instruments such as guitar, violin, recorder and piano. There is a very well supported choir and a series of French clubs. Parents pay for some of these activities. Despite the problems with building work and limited space, both indoors and out, the school has not neglected the value that can be gain from extra-curricular provision to improve standards overall.

29. The school's provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is excellent. There is a very clear policy and an extensive scheme of work. The school council and the use of circle time are well established, and the school is now developing class councils and a citizenship link with Portugal. The school is particularly keen to develop the ways in which pupils' attitudes and confidence can support their learning in all areas of the curriculum. Encouraging self esteem and learning to take responsibility are given high importance through opportunities such as, the 'buddy' system, when older pupils taker responsibility for helping younger pupils at lunchtime. Pupils have to apply for such positions, and Year 6 pupils train the successful Year 5 pupils. PSHE includes good provision for drug and sex education, appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils.

30. The school provides very good spiritual development for pupils. Opportunities are planned within assemblies and lessons for pupils to be reflective and thoughtful. Pupils are encouraged to explore feelings and emotions. In assembly, a pupil explained her experience of being a refugee from Ecuador. This was linked to the Hindu God Rama, who was also banished, and also Mary and Joseph's flight into Egypt. The pupils listened and reflected on these events with empathy. In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils reflected on their past and thought about the future expressing themselves very well. Year 2 spoke freely about personal issues during a class assembly.

31. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' moral development, helping them to distinguish clearly between right and wrong and understand the impact of their behaviour on others. They are encouraged to consider moral issues affecting the school community. For example, pupils are encouraged to develop a view about the use and misuse of ICT and sign the 'acceptable internet use policy'. There are high expectations of behaviour and an effective and consistent behaviour policy is in place throughout the school.

32. Pupils' social development is also excellent. The school's strong ethos of working together and sharing permeates all areas of school life. Circle times are used particularly well to explore issues and feelings. During lessons, teachers provide pupils with opportunities to develop social skills through discussions in pairs and groups. Review sessions at the end of lessons give pupils the opportunity to talk about their work and to appreciate and value the work of others. This creates a safe environment for learning in which all pupils are able and willing to participate.

33. The school makes very good provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to explore and consider other people's beliefs and lives. The school is at the beginning stages of a project entitled, 'European Citizens of the Future', which links countries from Europe. The main aim of the project is to create a collective European educational community through the promotion of intercultural understanding. Good use is made of the experiences of people within the school to extend pupils' understanding of other cultures. Pupils have made links with other countries via e-mail. Visitors from different faiths and cultures are invited into school. Recently, the school had visitors from the Islam faith. African traditions and images are displayed in the corridor with artefacts and posters to demonstrate life in Africa. Resources and books reflect a range of different cultures and languages. Year 6 pupils have explored and completed work on Australian Aboriginal art.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. Overall the provision is **good**.

Strengths:

- The high levels of care and concern shown by all members of the school community for each other;
- The high expectations of good behaviour and the intolerance of bullying;
- The vigilance of the staff, and particularly the headteacher and site manager, in endeavouring to maintain a safe and clean environment during extensive building works;

- The very good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress;
- Pupils are very well involved in assessing their own learning.

Areas for development:

- The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality;
- Ensuring that all staff, including those who are not teachers, are fully aware of the school child protection procedures;
- In some subjects, the information that teachers gain from assessments of pupils' work is not used effectively enough to plan for future learning.

35. The school provides very good educational and personal support for its pupils. The school ensures that all its pupils are fully included in all activities. The Catholic ethos of mutual respect permeates all aspects of school life. This is particularly evident in the way that all members of the school community (including staff, pupils, parents and governors) show high levels of care and concern for each other. For example, multi-lingual parents support others whose first language is not English; a well-being meeting is held for staff; and pupils are encouraged to share their experiences of other cultures. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The staff know the pupils very well and any pupils with difficulties are identified and sensitively supported. Volunteer helpers run the 'Pyramid Club' to develop self-esteem. The school's very good links with various outside agencies, such as the Bishop Harvey Family Service, enable the pupils to receive good support and guidance.

36. The school pays good attention to health and safety, and all staff are particularly vigilant during the dirty, noisy and potentially hazardous building work. The headteacher has undertaken a comprehensive risk assessment of the premises, which she constantly updates as the building work progresses. The site manager maintains a very cheerful disposition as he constantly reinforces safety measures. Appropriate procedures are in place for emergency evacuation of the building. Various health and safety concerns relating to the building works were brought to the attention of the school during the inspection. The school successfully promotes healthy living by offering pupils access to water throughout the school day. The school's application to 'Fruit For Schools' pilot scheme enables all pupils and children to eat a piece of fruit each day.

37. The school has satisfactory arrangements for child protection and the school has drawn up a good policy. The head teacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection and carries out her duties very effectively. She and the child protection governor have received relevant training. Nearly all staff are aware of the school's procedures and know to report any concerns to the headteacher. However, some teaching assistants are not as aware of the correct procedures to follow and have not had recent training or advice. The school has appropriate systems in place for pupils in public care. The arrangements for first aid are good. Six members of staff are qualified in first aid and pupils who are ill or injured receive good care and attention. There are very good procedures for recording treatment, informing parents and administering medication.

38. The school's arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Registers are marked correctly and staff follow up any unexplained absences. Attendance levels are very low in comparison with similar schools, and the school works closely with the educational welfare officer when there are significant causes for concern about attendance and lateness. However, the school has not been successful in ensuring that families understand the importance of pupils being in school and arriving on time.

38. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. This is not a highly regimented community, but one where the ethos of treating everyone with courtesy and consideration touches all aspects of school life. Staff have very high expectations of good behaviour and are very good role models. Rewards are effective and pupils enjoy receiving praise, golden time and awards in assemblies. A consistent and effective system of sanctions is in place, but rarely needed.

39. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and the school has a clear anti-bullying policy. Ways of reducing anti-social behaviour are discussed in assemblies and whole-class discussions. Pupils say that rare incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively.

40. The school has improved assessment procedures since the last inspection. Teachers test pupils periodically and record their attainment using computer software, which is very useful in compiling an accurate picture of the progress they are making as they move through the school. It is used effectively to predict future targets in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests in English and Mathematics. In some subjects, teachers do not use the information they gain from assessments of pupils' work to change what or how they will teach in future lessons. This means that not all lessons are planned at exactly the right starting level, or include the right type of work to challenge and enthuse pupils sufficiently.

41. Pupils are also very well involved in assessing for themselves. At the end of lessons they discuss how well they are working, what else they need to do and how they can improve their work. This practice is used consistently and effectively throughout the school with the result that pupils have a very clear understanding of how much progress they have made.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school's partnership with parents is **very good**.

Strengths:

- The school has developed very effective links with its parents and carers;
- It is very welcoming and encourages parents to become involved in their children's education;
- Parents have very positive views of the school and are very supportive of its work.

Areas for development:

- Most pupils' annual reports do not give parents enough information about how their children are doing and how they can improve their work.

43. The way in which the school works with parents has improved since the last inspection, especially with regard to seeking their views and taking account of their suggestions. Parents have made a positive choice to send their children to Our Lady of Muswell and they are very supportive of the school. The school links with the parents are very good. The school works hard to reach out to parents, and staff are generally available to talk with parents at the end of the school day. Parents whose children are about to start school are offered valuable home visits by staff. The school values parents' opinions and endeavours to take their views into consideration through the termly *governor's forum communication* meetings and the annual school improvement plan consultation. Issues such as uniform, a website and better communication are discussed and acted upon. Open days enable the staff to celebrate the pupils' work with the pupils and their families. Although parents were involved in drawing up the home-school agreement, the school does not invite parents to sign it.

44. The information that the school provides for parents is good. New parents are well informed about the school through visits and meetings. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are informative. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about future events and celebrate the school's successes. The school invites parents to a helpful introductory meeting at the start of the school year and sends parents valuable information each term about what their children will be studying. Two consultations each year provide parents with good opportunities to discuss their children's progress with the teachers. The pupils' annual reports are satisfactory. Although they inform parents about what their children can do, there is not enough information about how their children are progressing and how they can improve their work.

45. The parents' involvement in the work of the school is very good. Parent governors are very committed and supportive of the school. The active parents/staff association raises considerable funds for educational purposes as well as organising social events. Parents enjoy supporting events such as concerts and some help with administrative tasks. A working party was involved in the playground development.

46. The parents' contribution to their children's learning is very good. The school values the help offered by parents who assist in the classrooms each week. Others help with trips and after-school clubs. The parents are very interested in their children's education and attendance at parent consultations is very high. Most parents give good support at home by listening to their children read and ensuring that homework is completed.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The overall quality of leadership and management is **very good**.

Strengths:

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by governors and senior staff. The result is a very effective school;
- The school's aims are fully reflected in its work, with a very strong emphasis on pupils' personal as well as academic development;
- The governors ensure that all statutory duties are met. They also look beyond the school's immediate situation and plan how to make the necessary provision for future pupils;
- The school carefully measures how well it is doing, consults widely before deciding on its priorities for development and creates detailed plans to achieve these. This is excellent practice;
- Procedures for managing the school's budget and applying the principles of Best Value are a model of best practice;
- Teachers receive excellent support from the headteacher and senior staff in developing their performance as teachers and managers.

Areas for further development:

- More effective action is needed to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- The support given to new teaching assistants.

48. The school is very well led and managed. Parents clearly value the leadership and management of the school, with 94 per cent expressing positive views in their questionnaire responses. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, which results in high expectations and in the school's aims and values permeating its work. This leads to good academic achievement, very good behaviour and excellent social and personal development. There is an excellent and shared commitment to improvement, and the means for achieving this is clearly conveyed to the staff through a comprehensive school improvement plan and the personal examples provided by the headteacher and her deputy. A very strong ethos of caring and equality supports the achievement of all pupils.

49. The very effective governing body provides a vision that looks beyond immediate concerns in order to prepare the school for future challenges. Their recognition, for example, of the potential for modern technology to transform teaching and learning has led them to invest in the provision of high quality computer technology and in the necessary training for staff in its use. This has resulted in significant strengths in the way teachers plan and teach the curriculum. Governors fulfil all their statutory duties and have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are regular visitors to the school and this, together with the range of skills they contribute to the work of the governing body, results in them providing high quality practical support for the headteacher and staff while fulfilling the role of 'critical friend'. The management of the school's finances, for example, is excellent and has resulted in the school being nominated as a 'Best Practice School' by the Local Authority. Through detailed study of the annual information provided by the government on the performance of the school, the governors are able to make effective use of additional information provided by the headteacher, and to ensure that realistic but challenging targets are set for improvement. The regular 'communication meetings' organised with parents provide particularly valuable opportunities for consultation and discussion about the school's performance and development. Careful comparison with the performance of other schools, setting of challenging targets for improvement, and very good financial management, which ensures expenditure is carefully controlled, demonstrates excellent stewardship of the school's resources.

50. Overall, resources for learning are currently good. The considerable efforts of the governors over recent months have been responsible for the extensive and imaginative development of the school's building. However, at the time of the inspection the adequacy of accommodation for both pupils and adults was poor, and the patience and day-to-day management of the headteacher has been a significant factor in keeping the school open and working in the face of many difficulties. Governors are aware that the continuation of this situation beyond the current educational year will lead to an unacceptably poor learning environment. In addition, although the governors

acknowledge that pupils' attendance is well below the national average, more rigorous action is needed to improve this and to reduce the adverse effect that poor attendance and lateness has on pupils' learning.

51. There is a regular programme of rigorous, formal monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and senior staff, together with careful analysis of the school's academic results. Information from both is used effectively to improve teaching and learning. Individual discussions are held with all classroom staff and targets are set for developing their practice. These focus on improvement in pupils' performance as well as the continuing professional development of the individuals concerned. Although recruitment of teachers is becoming increasingly difficult the school selects its staff carefully and newly qualified teachers benefit from exemplary support and guidance. Other new teachers and, to a lesser extent, teaching assistants are supported through a planned programme of induction. As a result, the school maintains a good match of staff to the demands of the curriculum, but staff turnover and the relative lack of experience of younger members means that this has not yet had full impact on the whole of the curriculum.

52. The school has a regularly updated, comprehensive plan for improvement. The views of staff, governors, parents and pupils are taken into account so that detailed, short term objectives are set in order to achieve the long term vision of academic achievement and personal development. Priorities are established after careful analysis of pupils' academic performance, and are linked with their personal development in the context of the school's very strong Catholic ethos. In the view of one governor "It is the quality of what we do that is important. Academic standards are just one measure of how well we do it. It is more important that pupils take 'The Light' with them when they leave".

53. The school has responded very well to national and local initiatives and developments. In the context of current challenges and high expectations, there has been very good improvement in many aspects of the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In the context of a school with many strengths, the headteacher, governors and staff should now consider the following issue for improvement:

- (1) Devising rigorous and consistently applied procedures for ensuring that parents understand the importance of their children regularly attending school and arriving punctually each morning.
(Paragraphs 13 and 50)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	12	26	13	0	0	0
Percentage	7	22	47	24	0	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 one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	52	364
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	59

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	67

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	37	22	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	35	37
	Girls	20	22	22
	Total	53	57	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (93)	97 (96)	100 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	35	35
	Girls	21	22	21
	Total	54	57	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (86)	97 (86)	95 (96)
	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	13	17	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	9	13
	Girls	17	13	17
	Total	29	22	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (91)	73 (84)	100 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	8	12
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	26	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (86)	80 (84)	93 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	166	0	0
White – Irish	29	0	0
White – any other White background	29	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	16	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	11	0	0
Black or Black British – African	15	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	10	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25:1
Average class size	28.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	172

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25:1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	820,822
Total expenditure	741,262
Expenditure per pupil	2,400
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,137
Balance carried forward to next year	89,756

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5:1
--------------------------------	--------

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	339
Number of questionnaires returned	121

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	24	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	42	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	42	15	2	2
The teaching is good.	63	36	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	37	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	33	5	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	42	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	46	42	11	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	50	43	7	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	41	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	42	20	1	6

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

55. The overall provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is **good**.

Strengths:

- Very good management of the children results in very good relationships;
- There is very good emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development;
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now very good overall.

Areas for development:

- The outside area, which is currently too crowded when used by all children;
- Activities in the outside area are sometimes not structured enough for the nursery children.

56. Planning and teaching for both age groups are now based on the 'Early Learning Goals' and the 'Stepping Stones' towards them. This is an improvement since the last inspection and has enabled the nursery class to run smoothly in spite of staffing difficulties. While the new foundation stage area provides a good space for early learning, at the time of the inspection not all works, including the outside area for reception children, had been completed. This resulted in all children in both the nursery and reception classes using the same area at some times during the day. At times, the reception children were distracted by the nursery children's play activities. On occasions, this was because nursery play was not structured enough and children wandered between activities without being directed to a particular task or focus activity.

57. Nursery and reception teachers work well as a team and during the inspection the overall quality of teaching was good in all areas of learning. In the reception classes, teaching and learning was sometimes excellent. In these sessions, teachers and support staff are clear about what children are intended to learn and they organise activities to achieve this. For example, through excellent questioning, children are constantly challenged in new ways. The pace is sustained through repetition and the use of effective strategies to refocus children with different tasks. Where teaching is sound, but has weaknesses, most often in the nursery class, independent activities lack sufficient focus. In these lessons there is a suitable range of activities giving children appropriate choice, but not sufficiently related to specific learning intentions. This is most often the case with activities planned for the outside area. When children are taught in small groups in the classroom, intentions are more specific and teaching and learning is good.

58. Children enter nursery at the age of three with generally average social and communication skills. Most transfer to the reception classes in September. Not all children who attend the nursery go on to the reception classes. There are good arrangements for introducing children to school, both before they start in the nursery and before they go into the reception class. This means that most are happy to leave their parents and quickly get used to the school routines. Through careful observations and discussions with parents, the teacher assesses each child's particular needs through home visits. The *Entry Booklets* provide a good basis for initial assessment. Children make steady progress through the nursery and good progress in the reception classes. In developing language skills many children make good progress. By the time they go into Year 1, the majority are on line to reach the nationally expected goals for children in the foundation stage and several will exceed them.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Very good emphasis is given to children's development in this area throughout their time in the foundation stage. Children are given very effective help to establish boundaries for acceptable behaviour, through very good interaction with staff. Relationships between adults and children are very good, and this helps to promote children's self-esteem and confidence. For example, small group discussions are organised with good adult support and all

children are encouraged to participate. Children show respect for each others' needs and views, and this is promoted well through encouraging pupils to think about sharing. Children behave very well and respond willingly to requests to stop their activities and be ready to listen. Children are also encouraged to make independent choices, which they do confidently, and most remain focused on their chosen activity. They are beginning to learn to take responsibility for themselves and are happy to help others. For example, one child helped another put on his jacket at home time. They know where things are kept and tidy away at the end of sessions. There are clear expectations, which help children to develop their understanding of right and wrong. Staff also show empathy for the emotional needs of young children, and are very positive about any achievements. Personal and social development is very well promoted in all areas of learning and the well-established routines and the caring nature of the provision in the foundation stage allows all children to feel secure and grow in confidence.

Communication, language and literacy

60. There is a wide range of speaking and listening skills in the nursery and reception classes and most children, including those who speak another language at home, make good progress in developing new skills. The teaching and curriculum for speaking, listening, reading and writing skills is good. In the reception classes, most of the children are confident speakers and these skills are developed well, with many opportunities for them to talk. The children are encouraged to build on their good vocabulary by explaining their ideas both about stories and investigations. All children are constantly encouraged to listen and respond, both in small groups and to the rest of the class. There are many opportunities for children to write, for example making books about '*Who sank the Boat*'. Most have learnt letter sounds and are beginning to decode simple words. They apply their knowledge of sounds to their writing. Those who have not reached this stage are encouraged to write and read back to the teacher what they have written. This early stage of writing is developed to the extent where letters are correctly formed. Most children write their names clearly. The younger children all listen to stories with interest and attention and they all know about books and how to use them. They are introduced to characters in the reading scheme and are beginning to read simple words from these books. Many children exceed the learning goals in this area.

Mathematical development

61. Children in the nursery are encouraged to count by games and by singing a variety of number songs. They develop their mathematical ideas through practical experiences, such as building with bricks and making shape pictures. In the reception classes, children relate addition to counting-on, through a variety of well-planned activities. The direct teaching of mathematics, when working with children in small groups, is often imaginative, and takes full account of children's knowledge and understanding. For example, nursery children count the number of animals that will go into a boat before it sinks. In the reception classes, less able children use a variety of resources to combine sets of up to five objects. The most able count on using a number line and they record their work using numbers and symbols. Classrooms display numbers effectively to encourage children to count and write numbers correctly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. There is good provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of their growing world through an appropriate range of topics. Discussion forms an important part of the work and children are encouraged to be observant and describe what they see. For example, they are given opportunities to investigate and explore which objects float and sink. Some reception children show very good understanding of this and suggest, '*It floats because it has air in it*'. Children are encouraged to think about what they have learnt by answering questions about what they have found out. The children learn how to use computers with appropriate programs, and they are confident when using the mouse and the keyboard. Staff ensure that children are able to use a variety of materials to build and make models, encouraging design skills appropriately. Reclaimed materials, as well as commercial kits are freely available for constructions.

Physical development

63. Children make good progress in their physical development, as staff encourage them to use the outside area as often as possible. This means that they use wheeled toys with increasing skill and control, and climb and balance confidently. All staff encourage children to be fully involved in play activities. They use the opportunity to make notes about the children's achievements and development. Children use a range of tools, such as scissors,

paintbrushes and pencils, to develop their dexterity. In the nursery class there are good opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills, which include cutting and sticking paper and card and modelling with scrap material and play dough. Reception children have the opportunity to climb and balance on the school's newly-acquired adventure play equipment.

Creative development

64. The provision for children's creative development is good and they make good progress in this area. The staff provide a range of painting and drawing activities which are related to other areas of learning. For example, the children's pictures of symmetrical butterflies followed on from learning about the life cycle of the butterfly and developed their mathematical vocabulary. Wall displays are used well to show work completed by the children, who enjoy talking about what they have done. Children are encouraged to choose their own materials for making individual collage pictures. The role-play fire engine was used imaginatively by groups of children.

ENGLISH

65. The overall provision is **very good**.

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching is good across the school and is consistently high in Year 6;
- The curriculum is very well planned and writing is particularly well used to support pupils' learning in other subjects;
- Pupils' read well and their speaking and listening skills are well developed;
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons;
- Teachers help pupils understand how well they are learning and what they need to do to improve;
- Leadership and management of the subject is excellent.

Areas for Development:

- The pace of learning is variable in a few lessons because the tasks set for pupils' individual work are not always closely enough matched to their attainment levels;
- Pupils' handwriting is sometimes not good enough.

66. In 2002, results in national tests at the end of Year 2 were above average for reading and well above average for writing. When compared with similar schools, results in reading were average and those in writing were above average. At the end of Year 6, results were well above the national average when compared with all schools and above average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in Year 2 was well above average for reading and writing. In Year 6, the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was also well above the national average. Since 1998, results at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated between average in 2000 and very high (in the top 5 per cent nationally) in 2001. At the end of Year 6, results have been consistently high and very high in 2000 and 2001. The school's improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend and there has been no significant difference between boys' and girls' performance. All pupils achieve very well in English. The school makes appropriate provision for those pupils who do not speak English as their home language, to make sure that they achieve just as well as all others.

67. By the end of Year 2, standards of pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. They listen well in lessons and speak clearly and confidently to each other and adults. They talk enthusiastically about books they have read, retell stories and discuss their favourite characters. Teachers provide many good opportunities for speaking purposefully during lessons. They frequently ask pupils to discuss an answer briefly with a friend and make very good use of the final part of lessons when they discuss each other's work and talk about what they have learnt. By the time pupils reach Year 6, therefore, they have developed their skills still further and standards are now well above average.

68. Pupils enjoy reading and standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The continuing improvement in provision for the development of literacy skills is effectively raising standards. From the outset, pupils are taught to read with a range of fiction and non-fiction books and to read with understanding and expression. They use the sounds of letters and groups of letters to build words, and they use clues in the rest of the sentence to help identify the meaning of new words. For example, a high attaining Year 1 girl was able to read an appropriate book about rabbits, using letter sounds to identify unfamiliar words and quickly understood that 'kittens' is the term given to baby rabbits. Pupils are knowledgeable about books, authors and illustrators. Year 2 pupils responded enthusiastically in a lesson when a book by Shirley Hughes was being used to teach about commas. They spontaneously named a string of titles by her and talked of their favourite characters. The school makes considerable effort to develop pupils' interest in books and reading by providing opportunities for them to learn about writers. In the same Year 2 lesson, pupils were using a website to find information about Shirley Hughes. Pupils in Year 5 have learnt about Eleanor Farjeon from an acknowledged expert on her life and work, and contributed to a radio programme about her. By Year 6, therefore, the majority of pupils are confirmed readers who can confidently tackle a wide range of texts. The school currently has no library and as a result some pupils have limited skills for finding books and information. However, they all know about using the blurb or the contents page to help them select an interesting book and many pupils belong to the public library and talk confidently of "looking at different genres" when choosing a book.

69. The standard of writing seen during the inspection was above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by Year 6. The impact of effective teaching and learning in literacy is raising standards in writing. The use of writing in practical situations to support pupils' learning in other subjects is a significant strength. Pupils are taught about grammar and punctuation and have an increasing knowledge of how these should be used. Most pupils in Year 2 know how to use commas to separate words in a list and some are beginning to use speech marks in their writing. They write confidently for different purposes: stories and diaries are written competently, and higher attaining pupils use an interesting range of vocabulary that engages the reader's attention. They write interesting reviews of books they have read and simple but clear instructions for making things. Their handwriting is not always as well developed as their other writing skills and this means that fewer pupils achieve the higher levels than might otherwise be the case. Their writing is systematically developed so that by Year 4 pupils begin to use semi-colons accurately and can discuss the structure of sentences. By Year 5, higher attaining pupils can identify and use subordinate phrases and rhetorical questions in their own writing while adapting a passage from a story so that it is written from a particular character's point of view. The curriculum is planned so that opportunities to write are created as often as possible in other subjects. In geography, pupils in Year 5 write formal letters to protest about a proposed new road. In a series of Year 6 lessons, pupils achieved a particularly high standard when they compared the style of writing used in a text book on the water cycle with that used in the commentary accompanying a video on the same subject. They then prepared and wrote a script for an autocue to accompany their own slide presentation.

70. Twelve lessons were observed during the inspection. In these, the overall quality of teaching was good in Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6. An excellent lesson was observed in Year 6. Teaching is strong because it is based on careful planning and the purpose of the lesson is made clear to pupils at the beginning, and throughout the lesson. Teachers use questions very well to direct pupils' thinking and to check understanding. In a Year 1 lesson, when reading aloud from a 'Big Book' the teacher asked, "Were there any *angry* words in that paragraph?" Teachers understand how pupils learn, so they allow them thinking time before answering and encourage them to refine their thinking by discussing ideas with a partner. They emphasise the use of correct vocabulary so that pupils use it when talking about their work, as seen when a Year 2 pupil talked confidently of a 'phoneme' (the sound represented by a group of letters) when explaining how to read an unfamiliar word. When teaching the whole class together in the first part of a lesson, the rate of pupils' learning is consistently high. Teaching was sometimes less good, however, when pupils were working on individual or group tasks because the activity was not always closely matched to their abilities. When this happened their attention often wandered and the teacher did not take prompt steps to deal with this so as a result the rate of learning dropped. Very good use is made of the final section of lessons to discuss what has been learnt to help pupils understand how well they have achieved and to identify which parts of the lesson have particularly helped or hindered this. Pupils' work is generally well marked with comments directed at the next steps in their learning. A significant feature is the written

evaluation made by the pupils themselves. These are often thoughtful and offer useful insights into their learning. The school is rightly considering the introduction of pupils' own comments on their strengths and weaknesses in their annual report.

71. The leadership and management of the subject is commendable. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and provides an excellent role model for colleagues and pupils. The subject is well resourced with a variety of good quality books for teaching and helpful materials for teachers. The planned library will make a further substantial contribution. The curriculum covers all aspects of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy has been very effectively implemented. Assessment of pupils' progress is thorough and is used to set individual and group targets for pupils. Teachers' analysis of national assessment results has played a significant part in raising standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

MATHEMATICS

72. Overall provision is **good**.

Strengths:

- Pupils attain results in national tests that are well above average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6;
- Teaching is good, particularly in Years 1 and 2;
- There are good ways of checking how well pupils' are doing and the information is used effectively to plan for new learning;
- There are very good resources for mathematics.

Areas for development:

- In a few lessons, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not sufficiently challenged;
- Problem solving and investigational skills are not always developed well enough during Years 3 to 6.

73. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved very well since the last inspection and well above average results have been maintained over the last three years. High standards were confirmed by pupils' work and in lessons seen during the inspection. Most pupils have a secure understanding of numbers up to at least 100, and higher attaining pupils work with larger numbers. Pupils are very confident in adding and subtracting, and use grouping strategies for multiplication and division. They solve problems written in words, and think of possible solutions for themselves, with minimal adult help. They also devise their own mathematical problems for others to do. Pupils record data using tally charts and bar charts and they know the names of simple two and three-dimensional shapes. Teachers and their assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs and ensure that they can take a full part in lessons. Gifted, talented and higher attaining pupils are challenged well and they are achieving the high standards of which they are capable. Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2.

74. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have fallen slightly, but not significantly since 2000. Pupils' work and lessons during the inspection show that the current Year 6 are attaining above average standards, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are particularly capable when utilising their number skills and have a basic understanding of algebra. They have a good knowledge of questions about shape and space, such as reflective and rotational symmetry and the use of coordinates. Although pupils are skilled in solving word problems, they have not yet developed the skills to deal with more complex tasks, nor to be able to produce generalised statements, particularly those requiring mathematical justification. While they can collect and interpret simple data, they are not yet able to compare more complex data. Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory through Years 3 to 6. Pupils make the best progress in Years 5 and 6, because higher attaining pupils are more often challenged to attain high standards. Results in the 2003 tests are the school's best ever.

75. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good, but there are inconsistencies in Years 3 to 6, with the better teaching being in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is very good, teachers are confident in the subject and plan their lessons very well. Introductions are clear and the purpose of the lesson is made explicit to the pupils. In Years 1 and 2, teachers most often match tasks and activities to the needs of the pupils very well. Some teachers

are highly skilled at asking questions that encourage pupils to think, while also providing small steps to help them make progress. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, which was very well planned and resourced, the teacher asked questions and pupils recorded their answers on whiteboards. She then adapted her subsequent questions in the light of pupils' responses. The group activity, using cards displaying single digit numbers, provided a range of tasks that pupils were able to do, but were also finding interesting and challenging. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is sometimes good, but it is less consistent. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the progress of lower attaining pupils slows when an adult does not directly support them. In Years 3 and 4, the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils is often insufficient. This leads to a loss of motivation and higher attaining pupils do not finish as much work as other pupils. ICT is being used very well to classify information and present findings in tables.

76. Leadership and management of the subject are good and there are clear plans and priorities for development. The subject is broad and balanced so that pupils experience a good range of mathematical activities, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Assessment is good and is used well. The school has begun to establish pupil self-evaluation and, although this is still in its infancy, it has already helped pupils to think about their own learning and how they might improve.

SCIENCE

77. The overall provision is **good**.

Strengths:

- Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been consistently high over the past four years;
- There are regular opportunities to investigate and experiment;
- The subject is well led and managed;

Areas for development:

- In 2002, no pupils were assessed as attaining the higher Level 3 at the end of Year 2, although standards of work clearly indicate that many pupils attain above average standards.

78. In the 2002 national assessments for Year 2, teachers assessed all pupils at Level 2. No pupils were assessed at the higher Level 3. There had been close analysis of past test results, which showed that attainment within the aspect of scientific investigation was lower than other areas of the subject. As a consequence, greater priority had been given to developing this aspect of pupils' work. In 2002, teachers' assessed pupils' investigative skills to be their strongest area of attainment. However, despite these improvements, overall attainment was still judged to be at Level 2 rather than at the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence shows that many pupils attain standards in their work that are above average and teacher assessments do not always reflect these good standards. In Year 6 tests in 2002, pupils' results were well above the national average and 60 per cent of pupils attained at the higher Level 5. Such good results have been maintained over the past four years. Overall, standards in science are well above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well.

79. During Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught the skills to carry out simple experiments independently. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils carried out an experiment to find out which materials would be most effective in muting the sound from a musical instrument. They recalled earlier learning about characteristics of materials to make very informed predictions about which material would block out the sound best. When investigating, they were very aware of the need to test fairly. They applied equal pressure to each material when holding them against their ears, and played the instrument with the same force each time. Higher attaining pupils recognised the need to stand at the same distance from their partner when playing. The highest attaining pupils in the class were asked to carry out the experiment with more than one instrument. They quickly recognised that, because of the pitch of different instruments, sounds were easier or harder to hear, even when covering ears with the same material. In Year 2, these skills are built upon well. Pupils learn to record their findings accurately and appropriately. They use a variety of tables and charts to record their work, including computer-generated versions. They use the information they have recorded to answer questions and make conclusions about the test.

80. In Year 3, pupils showed their ability to measure results over time, when they investigated the growth of plants under different conditions. Pupils used very good observational skills to look at the impact of too much water and not enough water, and too much light and not enough light. They recorded their findings very clearly. The most impressive aspect of this learning was the way that pupils discussed their findings with each other and challenged themselves to think about what might have happened if they had started the experiment in a different way. They thought carefully about their original predictions and began to draw conclusions based on growing evidence. In a good lesson observed in Year 4, pupils made effective use of their ICT skills to find out about habitats and how we need to protect the environment. They demonstrated their good knowledge of endangered species and the teacher asked very relevant questions to consolidate their understanding. Pupils used the Internet with skill and confidence.

81. Teaching in science is good overall. Teachers are skilled at developing the appropriate scientific language that pupils need to talk about their work. This supports their literacy and speaking skills very well. Lessons are well organised and learning intentions are always shared clearly with pupils, so that they understand what they are learning and why. Lessons are interesting and relevant to pupils' own experiences. This encourages pupils to be positive about their work. In the lesson observed in Year 3, the level of unprompted discussion between the pupils about the work they were doing was of a very high standard and was evidence of pupils' good levels of concentration, concerted application to the task and real enjoyment of the work they were doing. Because pupils are very interested in their work, they make good progress in lessons.

82. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the subject and committed to raising standards. Leadership and management are good overall. Good analysis has been made of test data, and teaching and learning have been monitored well. She clearly understands her role in ensuring that the results of her monitoring work should impact on overall provision at the school. Standards at the end of Year 6 are improving as a result. The co-ordinator has a very clear plan for further developments.

ART AND DESIGN

83. Overall provision is **good**.

Strengths:

- Teaching is good overall, with some very good features;
- The breadth and balance of the subject is good;
- There are good procedures for assessing how well pupils are developing artistic skills and knowledge;
- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement:

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning.

84. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6, as at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils sketch simple objects and are beginning to use a range of drawing instruments. They have started to use ICT as part of their work and have sound experience of using a range of fabrics and papers for collage, with some good results. They make effective use of bold colour and use shading to develop three-dimensional shape in drawings. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in sketching have developed, so that they are beginning to draw more complex objects, such as rooms and figures. They begin to show movement and action in their work, have studied the effects of perspective and have drawn in the style of Henry Moore. Some of their observational drawing shows greater attention to detail and they are also learning to create through collage.

85. Teaching is good overall, with some very good features, with the result that, throughout the school, pupils are now most often making good progress in lessons. As improvements in the subject are still relatively recent, however, pupils' achievements on their starting levels are currently satisfactory overall. Where teaching and learning is very good, lessons are introduced, planned and resourced very well. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher explained the purpose of the lesson clearly and then used a video clip of the Notting Hill Carnival to illustrate how different cultures use texture and colour in varying ways. He then demonstrated four contrasting techniques for the pupils to explore the different effects they could achieve. As a result, the pupils made very good progress in their skills in the new techniques and they learned about investigating colour and texture very well. Pupils were keen and interested, gasping in amazement at the effects they could achieve. However, this high quality teaching is not yet consistent in all classes and progress is not always good enough to ensure that pupils achieve well over time.

86. Overall, the co-ordinator is leading and managing the subject well. The subject is broad and balanced, and there are good procedures for assessment that are being used well to monitor pupils' attainment and progress

throughout the school. This information is used very well by the co-ordinator to identify areas for development within the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87. The overall provision for design and technology is **good**.

Strengths:

- Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average;
- There are very good links made with learning in other subjects;
- Pupils' thinking skills are well developed through design and technology work;
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning in the subject;
- The co-ordinator has a clear plan for future developments.

Area for development:

- Raise standards by the end of Year 6.

88. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection, but work was observed on display around the school and pupils were asked about their lessons. Standards attained by the end of Year 2 are above expectations and pupils achieve well during Years 1 and 2. The most positive aspect of pupils' work is that they are very well encouraged to evaluate what they produce at various stages of completion, and think carefully about how effectively their work meets original intentions. There is clear evidence in pupils' work that original ideas are amended and improved to be as effective as possible. Pupils are persuaded to think for themselves, allowed to try out their ideas and reach a conclusion about their effectiveness independently. The process of generating an idea on paper, creating something from a plan and testing how well it works is well developed in design and technology work. Pupils understand this process well and develop practical skills effectively that enable them to be young inventors.

89. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with expectations and pupils' achievements are satisfactory during Years 3 to 6. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the design and planning stage of work, but are less sure about the need to evaluate and revise plans during the course of their making. The current situation with building work has had an impact on standards, since storage, display and areas to leave work to return at a later lesson have all been restricted. For this reason, opportunities for pupils to begin work, make a prototype, test it and redesign have not always been possible, because work could not always be left safely to finish later. It is very evident however, that pupils enjoy creating and inventing and are confident to talk about their ideas. In Year 5, pupils have created toys for the nursery children using cams for moving parts. In Year 6, during a project about shelters, pupils gained good awareness of reclaimed materials to plan and build a cover over the access to the school.

90. Good links are made with other subjects that give pupils a purpose for learning. In art and design lessons, pupils in Year 1 made three-dimensional houses, using joining and strengthening techniques. The work also linked well with their science work about materials. Throughout the school there are examples of design work that has complemented and extended learning in other subjects, such as musical instruments made by Year 3 pupils, which supported scientific learning about sounds.

91. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is well organised and has a very clear understanding of where developments need to take place. She has a very relevant plan for improvement and is confident that has an appropriate focus on raising standards. Her subject knowledge is good and she is enthusiastic about the subject. As she is also the co-ordinator for art, links between the subjects are used well in planning and this enables skills to be taught and reinforced more regularly.

GEOGRAPHY

92. Overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Good use is made of ICT to teach the subject;
- In lessons seen, teaching and learning was good;
- Teaching and learning reinforces pupils' literacy skills.

Areas for development:

- Time allocated for the subject, so there sufficient opportunities for pupils to consolidate and apply their learning of more complex geographical skills.

93. As at the time of the last inspection, standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons so the overall judgement on standards is based mainly on a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils and their teachers.

94. In Year 1, pupils begin to learn about their immediate locality. By making a short walk to the local post office, they observe and record local landmarks and write an account of their journey. They write and post letters to their own family and this establishes an understanding of where they live and that their address and postcode is specific to them. This understanding is developed further in Year 2 when pupils study a different environment such as the seaside, or compare their homes in London with those on a Scottish island. They also begin to identify other towns on a map of the British Isles. They are taught the difference between human and physical features in the landscape. The school's Catholic ethos supports this well, as demonstrated when a higher attaining pupil in a lesson on the seaside defined 'human' features as made by man and 'physical' features as made by God. The rest of the class then decided that '*God didn't make windbreaks*', so they must be human features.

95. As pupils move up the school they make comparisons with countries elsewhere in the world and further develop their understanding of maps and how these can be used to find out about our own locality. In Year 4, pupils have been studying an Indian village. In Year 5, the proposal for a Muswell Hill bypass led pupils to discuss the impact this could have on local inhabitants. They competently identified localities on the map that would be affected by the road. They developed enquiry skills when they identified different groups of local people, such as the elderly and shopkeepers, and prepared questions to seek their views on the impact the road would have on their daily lives. In Year 6, pupils quickly acquire a knowledge of the effect of water on the landscape. They know about rivers, use technical vocabulary such as source, tributary and estuary accurately, and they understand the water cycle.

96. From discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, it is evident that teaching and learning in geography is satisfactory overall. In the two lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was good and pupils made good progress. Good features of teaching were the use made of questions to help focus pupils' attention on key points of the lesson, and the way in which teachers held pupils' interest. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher donned a flat cap and played the role of an elderly pensioner living close to the proposed bypass. As pupils asked his opinion about the proposals, the teacher skilfully reflected their questions back, so that they slowly learnt that the way that they phrase a question influences the kind of response they receive. Both lessons were conducted at a brisk pace, and the teachers placed an emphasis on pupils thinking carefully and discussing ideas with each other before making a decision. Learning is well supported throughout the school through the use of ICT. Pupils research information from the Internet and word process their finished work.

97. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The scheme of work covers all aspects of the required curriculum and is enriched with journeys out of school, so that pupils can apply skills in a practical situation. A notable feature of the school's work is the link being made with the new building work and the issue of sustainability and care for the environment. Currently, while time allocated for the subject is adequate overall, there is not sufficient time for pupils to develop more demanding, high level geographical skills in order to attain better

standards. For example, pupils do not develop a good understanding of how very different places can be interdependent. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Although geography has not featured in the school's list of high priorities for development it has nevertheless been good progress in some aspects since the last inspection.

HISTORY

98. Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- There are good links with other subjects and literacy skills are especially well developed through work in history;
- Good use is made of visits to museums and places of historical interest.

Areas for development:

- Pupils' history work lacks variety, as most classes only record their work on worksheets.

99. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, but evidence from pupils' recorded work, teachers' planning and discussions indicates that pupils' achievements are satisfactory. By Year 6, attainment is close to national expectations, though pupils' knowledge of the topics they have covered is better than their skills in interpreting historical events. Standards are similar to the previous inspection.

100. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 compare their own experiences with objects and events in the past. Using time lines, they understand the chronology of events. Pupils in Years 3 understand that there are different views of the past and recognise myths and legends. They compare and contrast the creation stories of Benin with what they have learnt about Bible stories. Their understanding of cultural differences is developed through this work. Year 6 pupils' work has been closely linked to literacy, and pupils understand the implications of World War II on the children who lived at the time. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 showed that they have a sound factual knowledge of a range of topics they have studied, including the Romans and Ancient Greece. They remember details such as Greek buildings and pottery and how this is valuable evidence about a particular period in history.

101. From samples of pupils' work and discussions with them teaching and learning is judged to be satisfactory overall. In one of the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was good and enabled pupils to learn effectively. In this lesson, the teacher's good questioning helped pupils to think things through and reason for themselves. Literacy skills are used well in some classes. For example, when studying children in World War II, pupils wrote postcards home as if they had been evacuated. However, pupil's past work shows that other classes rely too much on worksheets that do not develop pupils' enquiry skills.

102. The school uses the nationally recommended scheme of work with planned links to other areas of the curriculum. Visits to places of historical interest such as the Tudor Kentwell Hall, the Imperial War Museum and the Toy Museum enrich the curriculum. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Despite the co-ordinator having other subjects to manage, teachers' planning, pupils' work and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored and there is good capacity for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. The overall provision is **very good**.

Strengths:

- The standard of pupils' work is above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6;
- The subject is superbly led and managed;
- There are very good ICT resources;
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning;
- ICT skills and knowledge are used effectively to aid learning in other subjects.

Area for development:

- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work to inform future lesson planning.

104. Standards in information and communication technology are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and all pupils achieve well. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and the subject now has a high profile at the school. Although only three ICT lessons were seen during the inspection, it is very evident that teaching and learning are very good, because pupils are very confident in using and applying their knowledge and skills independently and in a variety of subjects for different purposes. In the lessons observed, planning was consistently effective with very clear learning intentions. The very good and excellent lessons seen were appropriately challenging, purposeful and motivating. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, pupils worked collaboratively to structure, refine and present information about their school trip using PowerPoint. This was to be presented to their parents at a later date.

105. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, and teachers motivate them with their own enthusiasm, very good subject knowledge and confidence. When pupils are working with computers, they are independent and not afraid to try something out if things are not working properly. Teachers encourage this through sensitive and effective questioning techniques, where pupils are not afraid to make mistakes. Subject specific vocabulary is demonstrated and modelled well by teachers, and as a result, pupils are competent and confident on using the appropriate language themselves. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, without exception, pupils referred to the flashing line on the computer as the cursor. Lesson summaries were effective, with teachers reinforcing the key learning intentions. Pupils had opportunities to share self-assessments with the teacher as well as their classmates. This developed good skills for future learning.

106. Curriculum planning is very effective. Government guidance is used, ensuring that the full range of experience required by the National Curriculum is provided. Links with other subjects are very good. For example, using the computer suite for linked geography and ICT skills. Teachers also use the class-based computers very well within other subjects. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils took turns to use the computer to listen to a short autobiography by the author Shirley Hughes.

107. The ICT co-ordinator is very knowledgeable, extremely confident and highly enthusiastic. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent, particularly in terms of curriculum monitoring, supporting colleagues and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject. She has provided very good support and training for colleagues to develop teaching skills and ensure good learning by the pupils. She has a clear understanding of where further improvements need to be made. One priority planned is the further development of pupil assessment.

MUSIC

108. Provision for music is **good**.

Strengths:

- Pupils sing well, with there are particularly high standards in the choir;
- Very effective links are made with other subjects;
- There is an effective scheme of work.

Areas for development:

- Some teachers are not confident with all aspects of the scheme.

109. Standards in music are above national expectations overall. Pupils achieve well, and make very good progress in singing. Singing is a great strength of the school, and pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically. Since the last inspection and the introduction of a new scheme of work, pupils in Years 1 and 2 attain standards higher than those expected nationally, not only in singing, but also in composing and listening to and interpreting music. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, but because pupils have not covered the earlier elements of the new scheme of work the more advanced work is too difficult for them at present.

110. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 compose rhythm patterns and show how music can be used to convey mood. When listening to music, Year 2 pupils follow the written symbols and recognise repeated phrases. Their compositions are thoughtful with attention to contrasting dynamics. Year 6 pupils learn to interpret graphic scores and record the sounds made by different instruments.

111. The quality of teaching seen was good overall. Lessons were carefully planned, well structured and well managed. Good standards are achieved through a balance between performing skills, such as playing and singing, and activities to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of music. Lessons are lively and imaginative. Pupils enjoy music, concentrate well and participate whole-heartedly. These positive attitudes enhance learning. Pupils benefit from extra activities such as the choir and Christmas productions. A number of pupils learn to play the guitar, violin or piano, with tuition by visiting teachers.

112. The co-ordinator has worked hard and effectively to ensure that music is an integral part of school life. Leadership and management are good. Pupils are taught all elements of the curriculum through the introduction of a new scheme of work that is linked to the nationally recommended scheme. There are very effective links with other subjects, particularly literacy. For example, songs are based on characters from the books that are being studied in literacy lessons. The school choir inspires other pupils to sing well. At the time of the inspection, activities and resources were slightly restricted by the current building works. The co-ordinator shares her musical expertise with other teachers who are less confident, and skills are gradually improving, as reflected in the good improvement that there has been in music since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. Provision for physical education is **good** overall

Strengths:

- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on and evaluate their learning;
- Pupils enjoy lessons and participate well;
- There are good links with other areas of the curriculum.

Area for development:

- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work to inform future learning.

114. Standards in physical education are close to national expectations in Year 2 and above expectations in Year 6. Pupils now achieve well and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Physical skills and knowledge are taught progressively, and in a structured way to ensure that pupils have consistent opportunities to practise, improve and apply new learning effectively to a specific task or game.

115. In the few lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning was good. Skills were well taught, supported by good teacher subject knowledge and clear communication with pupils. In all lessons, teachers had high expectations of pupils' participation, learning and of their behaviour. The structure of lessons was good. All pupils were aware of the importance of warming up before a lesson, and how exercise affects their body. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used good questioning to extend the pupils' technical vocabulary and their knowledge of the human body. In all lessons, teachers provided very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others' performances. Pupils demonstrated their movements to the class, so that others could learn from this and improve their own work. In dance lessons, pupils created good quality sequences of movements and were encouraged to think about their movements before performing them.

116. Links with other subjects are good. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils read words from cards to direct the mood for their dance. The importance of speaking and listening skills was emphasised in a Year 6 games lesson. Physical education is presented as an enjoyable subject in displays around the school. Pupils and staff have participated in a fun run together, and also are competing against each other in a Fantasy Football League. Sharing these fun events with teachers motivates pupils and helps them to do well. The subject is well led and managed. As

yet, however, there are no consistent ways of recording how well pupils have done, so that future learning can be planned at the right starting point.