

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105514

Headteacher: Mr P Devlin

Lead inspector: Mr F Carruthers

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 November 2003

Inspection number: 255811

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary aided  
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 381.5

School address: Culcheth Lane  
Newton Heath  
Manchester  
Postcode: M40 1LU

Telephone number: 0161 681 2779  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Fr A Denny

Date of previous inspection: 1 October 2001

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves the Catholic community in the parish of Newton Heath, Manchester. There are 381 pupils on roll, which is much bigger than most primary schools. Levels of social deprivation, as measured by the proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals, are above the national average. There are 49 children attending full time and 17 attending part time in the two nursery classes. There is a broad range of attainment of the children on entry to the nursery classes. Overall, their attainment is below average and some children have limited skills of communication and language for their age. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and even fewer at the early stages of acquiring English. Most of these pupils are from a mixed white and black Caribbean background. There are 74 pupils on the school's list of pupils with special educational needs and this is about the same proportion as found in most primary schools. Most have moderate learning difficulties and some have emotional or behavioural difficulties. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need. Pupil mobility<sup>1</sup> is about the same as found in most schools. The school has an *Activemark Gold* for physical education and the *Healthy Schools Award*. Religious education is the subject of a separate inspection.

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<sup>1</sup> Pupil mobility signifies the number of pupils who start or leave the school at times other than the start of the reception year or the end of Year 6.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21285	Mr F Carruthers	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Geography History English as an additional language Modern foreign languages (French)
13459	Mrs E Mills	Lay inspector	
23204	Mrs C Wojtak	Team inspector	English Science Information and communication technology
32180	Mr D Sleightholme	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Special educational needs
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school's effectiveness is satisfactory with a number of strengths.** Overall, pupils achieve well but the progress of pupils in junior classes has shown signs of improvement only in the past school year and there is more the school needs to do to consolidate standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 6. Teaching and learning are good and the school is well led and managed. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science, by the end of Year 6, are rising and are now average overall, but there are too few pupils working consistently at higher levels.
- In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils achieve well and standards are above average.
- Children in the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> make good progress and this continues in Years 1 and 2. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and pupils achieve well.
- There are very high expectations for pupils' conduct and the school has good systems to reward and encourage good behaviour.
- Teaching and learning are good and this has led to better achievement in Years 3 to 6.
- Too little time is allocated to art and design, design and technology, geography and music, limiting pupils' achievement.
- The school benefits from very good links with the local secondary school.
- The headteacher leads the school well, focusing on endeavouring to include all pupils in the activities and opportunities that the school provides.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in 2001, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. The standards that pupils reach in English have improved, as has the quality of teaching and learning, which is now good. Levels of attendance have improved, though they are still below the average of schools nationally. Procedures to monitor how well the school and its pupils are doing are much better and procedures to assess pupils' progress are now good. In addition to addressing these key issues from the last inspection, standards and provision in ICT have much improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	C	C
mathematics	C	C	D	D
science	C	E	E	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils achieve well and they make good progress from the start they make in the nursery classes to the end of Year 6.** Standards in the current Year 6 are average in English,

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<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage of children's education at this school is the nursery and reception years

mathematics and science, and this reflects the good improvement that has been made in the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 in the last year. More pupils are on target to reach or exceed the nationally expected level in national tests at the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6 overall and good progress in Year 6 because of consistently good teaching. However, standards of writing and of investigational and problem-solving skills in science and mathematics are not yet high enough by the end of Year 6. Standards are above average in ICT. In recent years, standards reached by pupils in national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 have been well above average.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Levels of attendance are below the average of primary schools nationally but are improving.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good.**

There are good examples of innovative teaching. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of all pupils. The curriculum that the school provides is satisfactory overall, but there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The curriculum is enriched by good provision in ICT, and, for older pupils, French and sports coaching; however, time allocated to subjects such as art and design, geography and music is too little to stimulate learning, and there are few visits and visitors to enrich the pupils' experiences. All aspects of the care, support and guidance that the staff provide for the pupils are good. Links with parents are good and those with the high school are very effective.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are good.** There have been significant improvements in how well the school is led and in the governance of the school. These have resulted in an improved commitment to raising standards and developing the quality of provision. There is a high priority on doing the best for all pupils and including them in the school's activities.

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

Parents are very supportive of the school. They find the staff approachable and have few concerns. Almost all feel the school handles well any problems that may arise. Pupils report that they enjoy school and feel they have a say in what goes on. They know they are listened to.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Pursue the raising of standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum and provide greater opportunities for activities to enrich the pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality of resources in nursery classes.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils' achievement is **good**. They make good progress from the start they make in the nursery classes to the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in junior classes overall and good progress in Year 6 because of consistently good teaching in that year group. Standards in the current Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been good improvement in standards in English because of effective developments in the subject.
- Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and progress is good in Years 1 and 2. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are rising.
- Pupils experience difficulties in mathematics with problem solving activities. In science, investigative skills are underdeveloped.
- Overall, there are too few pupils working consistently at higher levels.
- In ICT, pupils achieve well and standards are now above average.
- The school's achievements in physical education and sports have been recognised with the award of an *Activemark Gold Award*.

#### **Commentary**

1. The first key issue arising from the last inspection was to raise standards in English at the end of Year 6. As a result of concerted effort by the two co-ordinators and the staff to identify weaknesses and eliminate them, standards have risen. In the most recent national test results, they were average when compared to all schools and when judging the pupils' progress over time in junior classes. Reading standards are good. Pupils are beginning to have discernible tastes in fiction. Standards in writing are improving because pupils are better aware of the targets they need to achieve. Pupils' written work is often lively and shows a good deal of originality, especially in narratives. Standards of handwriting are good but some aspects of writing, for example narrative writing, are better than others, such as writing about characters.
2. The majority of children start in the nursery classes with attainment that is below average for their ages and some have low skills in communication, language and literacy. They settle in well and over time make good progress so that by the end of the reception year, most have achieved the goals for learning expected of children at this stage of their development. Provision is particularly effective in the areas of language, literacy and mathematical development in the reception classes, because of the very good teaching evident in sessions of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. This good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2 so that standards are above average. In recent years, results of national tests, as illustrated in the table below, have been well above the average of primary schools generally. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in each of the three subjects has also been above average. In science, almost all pupils achieved the expected Level 2 in teachers' assessments but the proportion achieving Level 3 has been low. Investigative work in science has not been focusing enough on explanations, so that pupils become aware of underlying principles. This is an aspect for improvement in the teaching in junior classes also. Attainment in ICT has improved as a result of developments in provision and staff expertise, and is now above average at the end of Year 2.



### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.2 (16.5)	15.9 (16.0)
writing	15.7 (15.1)	14.8 (14.5)
mathematics	17.8 (17.2)	16.5 (16.7)

*There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Standards are rising in the junior classes and the school achieved its targets for pupils in English in 2003, but not quite in mathematics. This was because too few pupils achieved the higher Level 5. In current Year 6 classes, standards are average overall in both subjects. Pupils have good skills using numbers but the main improvement that the school has to make now is to ensure that those pupils capable of achieving more do so, for example through improving their skills of investigation and problem-solving in mathematics. There is a similar picture in science. Overall, the performance of boys and girls matches the national average but boys have not been doing as well in English and science.

### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (24.8)	27.0 (27.2)
Mathematics	26.2 (26.7)	27.0 (27.0)
Science	27.4 (27.3)	28.9 (28.7)

*There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well, set against their individual learning targets. They make good progress in lessons of literacy and numeracy, where their needs are targeted within the classroom, or during intensive support sessions in small withdrawn groups. The quality of individual education plans is good, and pupils make progress in small, well-defined stages. Pupils attain standards that represent good achievement, in relation to their abilities, and their work is monitored closely and assessed regularly, in order to ensure their needs are being fully met. There are very few pupils who have English as an additional language and these pupils make satisfactory progress. Despite applying for specialist advice from the local education authority, the school rarely receives any. The pupils' progress is dependent on the good support that they receive from teachers and classroom assistants. The very few pupils from traveller families are at school for the great majority of the year, travelling for only part of the summer term. They regularly return to the school in the autumn term and settle back in quickly, receiving additional support from the local education authority's service for these pupils. Their achievement is satisfactory.
5. Pupils make good progress in ICT as a result of improved provision and their attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. They also achieve well in games and sporting activities and are frequently successful in local competitions. Pupils have represented the school at local and regional level in some sports and this good achievement is because of the good provision, which includes regular coaching of a variety of sports by specialist coaches.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Although rates of attendance have improved since the last inspection, they remain below those achieved nationally. The attitudes and behaviour of the great majority of pupils are **good**. The school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and most work hard and behave well.
- The school's efforts to raise attendance rates have been successful, although there is still some way to go before they match national figures.
- There are very high expectations for pupils' conduct and the school has good systems to reward and encourage good behaviour.
- The school does not do enough to celebrate pupils' own cultures and to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.
- Pupils are encouraged to empathise with others, especially those less fortunate than themselves.

**Commentary**

6. The school has worked hard to improve attendance rates, which was a key issue of the last inspection. As a result, attendance rates have risen considerably, although they still remain below those achieved nationally, and the school's efforts are continuing. Most parents support the school well by ensuring good attendance but there are a small number who still do not. The school works closely with the education welfare service in these cases and encourages good attendance through a variety of awards to motivate pupils and parents.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.7	School data :	0.5
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

7. Almost all parents reported that their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree with this view. They can think of little which could be improved. Pupils are attentive in lessons, do their best in their work and behave well. Staff expect high standards of behaviour in lessons and *Golden Rules* operate throughout the school, which are well understood by pupils. *Golden Time* and the *Golden Book* offer pupils a good incentive, with rewards not only for achievement in their work, but also for good conduct. Although behaviour in the playground is mostly good, this is where some parents and children report that instances of misbehaviour are most likely to occur. Only where teaching is less than satisfactory does behaviour in lessons sometimes fall short of that which is expected. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	369	0	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

8. Staff work well to help to develop pupils' personal qualities and they genuinely care about pupils. They treat pupils with respect and expect the same in return. Relationships throughout the school are good and pupils of different ages, gender and ethnic backgrounds work and socialise together well. A notable feature of the school is the way in which pupils are encouraged to think about others less fortunate than themselves. As a church school, Christian values permeate the school. Pupils are reminded about the effects of their actions and respect the feelings of others.
9. There have been some improvements in the provision made for pupils to understand and appreciate their own and other cultures, especially in music, dance and art and design. There are pockets of good practice in the school, where pupils develop a good understanding, but this provision is still limited by the lack of sufficient visits out of school and of visitors to school. Many pupils do not display sufficient knowledge of cultural traditions and are not as well prepared for life in a multicultural society as they could be.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Strengths include the quality of teaching and learning, the care, guidance and support for pupils and the effectiveness of links with parents and high schools. There are weaknesses in some elements of the curriculum.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is now more good teaching than there was at the time of the last inspection.
- The strong commitment to further improvement is reflected in the high quality of many classroom environments.
- Pupils are consistently engaged by vivid, real learning experiences that take account of different learning styles and the staff are beginning to promote independent work habits.
- Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the learning and emotional needs in each teaching group when they plan 'learning steps', and they encourage pupils to measure their work against learning targets.
- Innovative techniques have been introduced in English and are helping to improve the quality of boys' narrative writing and help pupils' ability to express themselves.

- The thorough assessment procedures provide valuable information which enables teachers to group pupils so that they can benefit from the next stage of learning.
- The headteacher discusses targets and progress with individual pupils in Year 6 and their parents.
- In some lessons, time is not used as efficiently as it might be and the pace of learning slackens.
- A few teachers lack experience of particular year groups and this has an adverse impact on learning.

## Commentary

10. The good improvement in teaching since the last inspection is a direct result of a clearer focus on improved teaching skills and systems that track pupils' progress. The commitment to high quality learning is strong, peppered with enthusiasm and energy. The school has had a number of recent changes to staff and, despite difficulties, has improved teaching and learning. As a result, approximately two-thirds of lessons are good or better and there is very little unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is consistently good in Year 6. Many classrooms are vibrant learning spaces and particular care has been taken over communal teaching areas, such as the ICT suite. In spite of the constraints imposed by the accommodation, teachers work hard to provide opportunities that promote pupils' independent work habits.
11. Teaching is often imaginative and inspiring and uses pupils' own experiences to illuminate concepts. This engages pupils in lessons and continues to capture their imagination and interest. Teachers have a clear understanding of how pupils learn and the steps they need to take. The support staff are skilled. Some very good examples of team teaching were seen in the infant classes, when teaching assistants worked in tandem with the teachers to draw out more of the learning potential from the lesson. This was achieved in a natural, seamless way, either through 'deliberate mistakes' or picking up on individual pupils who needed a little extra boost. A good example was seen in Year 2, where the teaching assistant operated the interactive whiteboard so that the teacher's full attention could be given to the class.
12. Pupils are often engrossed in their work because of the range of strategies used, such as role-play in history and geography. One welcome innovation is the focus on narrative technique, termed *narrative therapy*, which gives pupils techniques with which they can explore the world of story. This enables pupils to analyse stories and compose their own work with boosted confidence and competence.
13. The development of independent work habits has improved, although there is scope for more development. The grouping of pupils by prior attainment for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is enabling more of the pupils' needs to be met. The school places a well-chosen focus on learning targets and pupils are becoming more familiar with the criteria for them. The assessment co-ordinator and other key staff check learning and progress, and the headteacher also holds individual conferences with Year 6 pupils and their parents to check on progress. Teachers' planning for individual lessons shows that careful thought has been given to how well pupils have done in previous lessons, with alterations being made if the rate of pupils' learning was different to that anticipated. During lessons, teachers use questions very well to assess pupils' understanding as explanations or tasks proceed. Questions increase in difficulty, thus building on pupils' confidence. Teachers' marking is of a very high standard, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Its strength lies in the manner in which teachers praise effort but then give clear indications of how to improve. Pupils enjoy reading the comments that teachers have made when marking work.
14. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. It is satisfactory in the nursery classes where a teacher new to the age group is working closely with experienced support staff to develop her expertise. Teaching in the reception classes is good, often very good. Significant features include how well the children are managed, the effective deployment of the teaching assistants, who assess what the children can do as they are working.

15. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for short periods of time to work in small groups to boost their skills and confidence. For example, a number of pupils are following a reading programme to help them develop their understanding of the sounds that letters make. This intensive support ensures that pupils have greater confidence to tackle work across the whole curriculum. Teachers plan activities well for pupils of all abilities and ensure these are closely matched to pupils' needs. This contributes to the good progress that pupils with special educational needs make.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	16 (27%)	24 (39%)	16 (27%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

16. A few lessons had an aspect in need of improvement, which reflected inconsistencies in the way in which teachers manage the time available for lessons, plan the steps in learning or deal with behaviour. In an unsatisfactory lesson, the pupils were not clear about the boundaries for behaviour in the classroom because of inconsistent expectations. The teacher spent too long on discussion so that writing was rushed and the quality suffered. Occasionally in lessons, explanations became too lengthy and pupils' attention wandered. The isolated unsatisfactory lessons were not characteristic of the majority of teachers' work and were often linked to a lack of experience in teaching a particular year group. In the nursery classes, the expectations of the teacher were sometimes too challenging for the children.

**The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. This judgement reflects a balance of some strengths and some significant weaknesses. The curriculum includes all the required subjects of the National Curriculum and the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for older pupils is enhanced through specialist teaching in French, ICT and sports coaching.
- The English curriculum is well developed, offering pupils good opportunities to improve speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The music curriculum is limited by lack of expertise, so teachers have too little support in planning their lessons well.
- Too little time is allocated to foundation subjects, such as art and design, design and technology, geography and music, limiting achievement in some subjects and providing too narrow a range of experiences in others.
- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in activities outside the school day to extend their learning. The lack of planned visits and visitors also limits pupils' chances to link learning in school with the world outside.
- The accommodation is cramped and this limits achievement in some lessons, as does the quality of resources in the nursery classes.

**Commentary**

17. Specialist teaching is provided for pupils in Year 6 in French as part of a local initiative for primary schools. Similarly, pupils receive specialist teaching in ICT at the high school and the use of its facilities. Through the local authority's specialist sports coaching initiative, pupils benefit from the chance to try a number of sports throughout the year. In these aspects, the

school has enhanced pupils' education through taking up chances to broaden opportunities to learn.

18. The English curriculum is well developed, particularly in chances to improve speaking and listening skills. The school has implemented a range of innovative programmes aimed at improving English skills, such as *narrative therapy* and *talking partners*. These have helped to motivate pupils. The school also provides well for pupils who have special educational needs because they have opportunities to take part in the full range of curricular activities. Individual education plans are clear and give good direction on how to achieve targets. School and visiting staff are knowledgeable in supporting pupils towards their goals.
19. The school has concentrated correctly on the development of English, mathematics and science since the last inspection, but time for the other subjects has been squeezed, resulting in a narrow curriculum. While all subjects are planned and taught, the limited time results in a narrow range of experiences and limited achievement. On some days, only one hour at the end of the day is devoted to subjects other than English and mathematics, and this is unsatisfactory. The music curriculum is underdeveloped. It suffers from lack of allocated time in the week, and lack of specialist support for class teachers, who have little musical background and find teaching the subject difficult. Although a useful published scheme has been purchased, there is too little time to implement it effectively.
20. There are suitable chances for pupils to participate in some team sports after school, mainly netball and football. There is a choir and brass instrumental tuition during lesson time on a weekly basis. Pupils who participate benefit from these activities. However, too few opportunities are provided overall to enhance pupils' learning through joining a club or activity outside the school day. This also means that opportunities are missed for pupils to develop new skills and enhance their social skills. Very few visits and visitors are organised to enrich pupils' experiences. Many opportunities are missed to inspire and motivate pupils through practical experiences, linking learning in school with the local and wider community and the rich city environment in which they live.
21. The accommodation is cramped and lacks facilities in some classes, and this has an adverse effect on progress in some subjects. For example, in art and design, there are too few surfaces big enough for large paper for the whole class. With no water and washing facilities in most classes, time for clearing up eats into the already short lessons. The site supervisor, however, has helped to improve the quality of classrooms, for example by constructing effective, space-saving platforms with safety rails. These are designed so that younger pupils can reach up and operate the interactive whiteboards, which would otherwise be out of reach. Resources are satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in the nursery classes, where equipment is shabby and does not help to motivate the children to learn.

## Care, guidance and support

The school has good procedures in place to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare. It provides **good** support, advice and guidance and has satisfactory measures in place to involve pupils in its work.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and pupils throughout the school are good and staff provide good personal support for the pupils.
- A caring, family ethos pervades the school and pupils feel secure and happy.
- The level of supervision of older pupils in the playground is inadequate.

## Commentary

22. The school has good arrangements to make sure that health and safety measures operate well and parents are confident that their children are well cared for. Staff know pupils well, are aware of their personal circumstances and cater well for their individual needs. The headteacher has a pivotal role in this and is heavily involved in the support for pupils and in their care and supervision. Teachers are vigilant, relate well to their pupils and genuinely care about their wellbeing. Several instances were seen during inspection where pupils who were unwell or upset were dealt with in a sensitive and caring manner. Pupils are confident to ask for help when they need it and know that their concerns will be taken seriously.
23. Parents report that the school helps their children settle well into nursery. The personal development of pupils is tracked well and recorded in pupils' annual written reports.
24. Although supervision of pupils during breaks and at lunchtimes is of high quality, the way in which midday supervision is arranged, coupled with the awkward layout of the play areas, sometimes means that older pupils do not have the same level of supervision as younger pupils. Some parents and pupils have voiced concerns about this and about instances of misbehaviour which sometimes occur during these times.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established a **good** partnership with parents and with the local community. Pupils benefit from the very good links with other schools.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good relationships with parents.
- Parents have positive views about the school and its work.
- *Planners* provide a very good means of communication between home and school.
- Provision for pupils is improved by the very good links with the local secondary school.
- Members of the local community provide valuable assistance in school.

## Commentary

25. Parents are very supportive of the school and work well with the school. Few have concerns and the vast majority feel that the school deals well with any issues that may arise. They view the school as friendly and staff as approachable. The headteacher is well known to parents and respected by them. Parents are well informed about school issues and about the progress of their children. Information provided for parents in the annual written reports has improved since the last inspection, when aspects were unsatisfactory. The reports now contain sufficient information about pupils' progress in all subjects.
26. An additional means of communication between school and home has recently been introduced in pupils' *planners*, which are appreciated by parents and by the pupils themselves. These planners are used well to record homework, to exchange messages and to provide general information to parents.

27. The school has good links with the local community and with the parish. The parish priest is the chair of governors and both he and other governors, some of whom have been involved with the school for many years, provide good support. Members of the local community provide valuable assistance in school, both in lessons and in administrative roles, and their presence in the school provides considerable benefits to pupils.
28. The school has particularly good links with the local secondary school, which not only benefit pupils in Year 6 as they transfer, but also improve the provision of the curriculum. The local high school provides a science club for older pupils and staff from secondary schools provide technical assistance, French tuition, and extra lessons for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils in Year 6 visit the high school for lessons in ICT.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good**. The headteacher and key staff work effectively to bring about school improvement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher leads the school well, focusing his energies on continuous school improvement.
- The staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; they know what to do, and are committed to bringing about improvements.
- There is a clear vision for the work of the school that is shared by all members of the school community.
- The school analyses pupils' performance in tests very well, and takes effective action to bring about improvements in standards of attainment.
- The school places a high priority on endeavouring to include all pupils in the activities and opportunities that the school provides.

### **Commentary**

29. The leadership of the school is good, and is a crucial factor in the drive to raise standards. Standards are now improving gradually in Years 3 to 6, following on from the good performance of pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school has a clear vision and sense of purpose, central to which is that all pupils should do their best and be included in all activities. The headteacher and key staff know what they need to do to ensure that pupils of all ages, groups and abilities achieve their potential because they check on what is happening in the school. For example, the co-ordinators of English and mathematics have spent time in colleagues' classrooms, identifying strengths and areas for development in the teaching of their subjects. They use this information to devise appropriate training for staff. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Further, the headteacher has worked hard to fulfil his ambition to improve sports facilities and to develop the parish hall for the benefit of all. Work on the new development is due to begin early in 2004. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed, and these pupils make good progress in learning. The school works closely with the community, and values parents as partners in their children's education. The headteacher is always about the school and is readily available to pupils, staff, parents and governors.
30. An effective school improvement plan has played a significant part in determining the school's educational direction. The headteacher, ably assisted by key staff and governors, has implemented school improvement priorities, and with key staff, monitored them closely to secure improvements in standards, assessment, and the quality of teaching and learning. The monitoring and assessing of pupils' academic development have improved significantly since the last inspection, because the school has put in place a very good system to track pupils' progress, especially in English and mathematics. The school analyses the data available from



pupils' performance in national and optional tests very effectively, and uses this information to improve programmes of teaching and learning. The leadership of literacy and numeracy is very good, and these key staff make a significant contribution to the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum. For example, planning in numeracy now includes opportunities for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. This provides pupils with opportunities to talk with partners about the strategies they might use to solve a problem.

31. The governing body is effective, and does everything it should to fulfil its duties. The chair of governors works very hard to support the school. The governors monitor the work of the school well, for example, in relation to provision for pupils with special educational needs and implementing the policy on race equality. The governors know what is happening in the school, what its strengths and weaknesses are and why particular action is being taken. They have recently embarked on a course of training to improve their effectiveness, and this is contributing to a greater awareness of responsibilities, and involvement in influencing the direction of the school. The larger than average balance in the budget is to provide expenditure for the planned alterations to the parish hall and nursery accommodation, which is being partly paid for by a successful bid for funding from *Sport England*. All aspects of the day-to-day management of the school are carried out smoothly. In this, the secretary plays a very significant part.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,005,232	Balance from previous year	89,500
Total expenditure	1,036,067	Balance carried forward to the next	84,370
Expenditure per pupil	2,514		

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** overall. This is similar to judgements made in the last inspection. Children are admitted to the two nursery classes in September or January, when they are in their third year. There are currently 49 children attending the nursery classes full time and a further 17 attending part time. The oldest children then join the two reception classes in September or January of the school year in which they are five years old. Altogether there are 27 children in the two small reception classes and more children will join them from the nursery classes at the start of the spring term. The nursery classes are housed separately from the main school, one in the parish hall and the other in a purpose-built classroom next to it. Building work on the parish hall, which is due to start in the first half of 2004, aims to improve the accommodation for one of the two nursery classes and to provide a link corridor between both classes. The classes have their own very spacious outdoor area, which is also timetabled for use by the reception children. The reception classrooms are cramped but imaginative use of a shared outdoor area means the children have ample space for creative and other activities, including water and sand play.

Levels of attainment are below those typically found among children of their age when they start in the nursery and in some areas of learning, such as communication skills, they are low. In all areas of learning, the children make good progress and most achieve the expected levels by the end of their reception year. This is evident, for example, in the results of the end-of-reception assessments last year.

Since the last inspection, there have been changes in staffing. A newly appointed co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage has had good training for the role and teaches one of the reception classes. The new nursery teacher, who formerly taught in infant classes, takes responsibility for planning work in both nursery classrooms and leading the team of nursery nurses and classroom assistants. The teacher is receiving good quality training for the role and benefits from the assistance of experienced teaching assistants and the support of specialists from the local education authority. Teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in the nursery and good, often very good, in the reception classes. Significant features include how well the children are managed, the effective deployment of support staff and the way that they assess what the children can do as they are working. The information is used to form a record of achievement, helping the staff to identify quickly any children who have difficulties. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory but resources in the nursery classes are unsatisfactory because many are old and worn out. The school has kept aside funding to help with forthcoming renovations to the nursery accommodation and much new equipment is required to replace the old.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good in both age groups. The children learn to become independent and to enjoy the activities.
- Children make good progress and achieve the goals expected of children in this age range for this aspect of their development.
- Effective motivational strategies, such as *Golden time*, encourage the children to behave well, including the few who find difficulty in making relationships, or concentrating and sharing things.

#### **Commentary**

32. Good teaching and a well-organised environment mean that the children make good progress in this aspect of development. There are good procedures to settle the children when they start in the nursery classes. Each morning, they are encouraged to register that they are present before the classes come together to take the daily registration. When the children are given choices of activities, they display good levels of independent behaviour. They settle quickly to what they have chosen and remain at the task for a good length of time. *Circle time*, when the children sit in a large group and share thoughts and ideas with each other and an adult, helps the children to concentrate and to take an interest in each others' views. The children who attend the nursery classes full time know to wash their hands before eating at lunchtime. There is a happy atmosphere as the children sit chatting and eating their lunches.
33. This good progress continues in the reception classes. By the end of the reception year, almost all children have achieved the early learning goals in this aspect. The children show good levels of self-control, they respond well to the instructions of adults and they know the classroom routines well. They tidy away resources and equipment quickly at the end of lessons. Children love being chosen as the class *VIP* for the day, carrying out various jobs and thereby raising their self-esteem. The teachers make effective use of *Golden time*, which is a weekly session of freely chosen activities, including one key activity, which the children vote to have included. The children are keen to take a full part in these activities, which may include, for instance, simple cooking or the whole group playing together with a parachute. The few children with behavioural difficulties are motivated to work hard and behave as best as they can so that they do not 'lose' any minutes in the session.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reception teachers make very effective use of elements of the National Literacy Strategy to promote interest in books, reading and writing. As a result, the children make good progress.
- There are weaknesses in the methods used for teaching writing. Insufficient emphasis is given to encouraging the children to 'play write' and make marks of their own in the nursery classes, and too much is given to copy writing and tracing.

### Commentary

34. Good quality teaching leads to the children making good progress and most achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. A strength is the way that the teachers in the reception classes use elements of the National Literacy Strategy to help the children's progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. At the time of the inspection, children in reception classes showed confidence in speaking to a group. For instance, they asked questions when the teacher dressed as a character in a fairy story. Through using resources, such as *listening centres*, the children develop good skills of listening and responding. They learn the sounds of initial letters in words, recognise simple words and use the pictures in books to help them to understand the story.
35. Strengths of the provision in the nursery classes include how much the children enjoy sharing books with adults, especially ones that they have heard before and can contribute to by joining in with repeated phrases. Progress in writing, however, is hampered by focusing attention on tracing and copying letters, words and patterns. Hardly any time is given to teaching the children to make marks and write for themselves. Older children start to write in workbooks but examples seen were copied and traced. It is clear that some children struggle with these exercises and their value is questionable. Examples of poorly executed work were seen, indicating that the children are missing a stage in their development before they start to use pencils with accuracy. Opportunities to use the post office play areas for the purpose of play

writing are also not fully taken up. There is more encouragement in the reception classes for the children to have a go at writing and examples are displayed in rooms.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Through many stories, rhymes and fun activities in both the nursery and reception classes, the children make good progress in learning to count and understand what numbers mean.
- Reception teachers make very effective use of elements of the National Numeracy Strategy to help mathematical development.
- Some of the mathematical activities in the nursery classes are pitched at too difficult a level for the children.

### **Commentary**

36. Good teaching provides many opportunities for the children to become aware of numbers in everyday life. Staff in both age groups play games with the children to help them recognise numbers and to do simple calculations. Children in the nursery classes know simple rhymes and songs and some can count building blocks accurately up to 15. The staff make good use of routine opportunities to promote mathematical understanding, such as asking the children one-by-one a simple mathematical question from a *Lift-the-flap* board before they put their coats on to go out to play. However, there are occasions when the teaching is not pitched at the correct level for the children and is too difficult. This happened when the teacher introduced three-dimensional shapes, such as triangular prisms, and asked questions that were too demanding for the children, instead of letting them explore how the shapes rolled or fell over in certain positions.
37. Good progress continues in the reception year so that by the end of the year, almost all children have reached the early learning goals and carry out simple calculations well. Effective use of good quality resources helps the children's learning, and the teaching assistant makes a very good contribution in this respect, keeping the children on task. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are introduced into lessons well. During a mathematics lesson, the teachers plan other activities, such as water and sand play, which are appropriately related to the main focus of the teaching.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff in both age groups make very good use of the nursery outdoor area to encourage the children to explore the environment. The use of the wider environment, including the locality, is less well developed.
- The children's skills using computers and other electronic equipment are developed well and the children have the opportunity to visit the computer suite for lessons.
- Resources for designing, making and constructing in the nursery classes are unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

38. The spacious outdoor area, which includes sloping lawns, trees, both large and small, soft play area, tracks, pathways and simple climbing equipment, is used very effectively by staff in both age groups to promote the children's curiosity about the natural and man-made environment. Opportunities to investigate plants and minibeasts are taken but there are fewer examples of staff using the locality, for instance visiting a post office, to enrich the children's imaginative play in the role-play areas.
39. The children's competence in using electronic equipment develops well. Children have access to the computer suite and the nursery-aged children use simple art packages to help them to learn how to control the mouse to make pictures. In addition to a computer in each classroom, the reception children are able to use an interactive whiteboard. They learn, for example, how to point at and then drag a symbol across the board. Resources for constructing and building imaginatively in the nursery classes are mostly old and in need of replacement. They limit the quality of the work possible.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many good opportunities for the children to develop their physical skills through sessions in the nursery outdoor area and lessons in gymnastics, dance and games in the school hall. As a result, the children achieve well.
- Many of the large wheeled toys need to be replaced because they are old.
- Throughout the Foundation Stage there are good opportunities for the children to use small tools to cut, shape and join materials.

## Commentary

40. Provision is good and sessions outdoors in the nursery play area are well planned to promote the children's physical development. For example, at the time of the inspection there was a course devised for children to jump, hop, walk and skip from tree to tree, following picture instructions. Children can push, pull and pedal large wheeled toys around a circular track but many of the toys are old and there are a few that require co-operation between the children to make them work. Climbing frames and tunnels help the children to develop physically. These facilities are used each day and reception-aged children have timetabled sessions four times a week. Reception children also have lessons in the school hall where they develop good balance and co-ordination, as was evident in a very good dance lesson. At the time of the inspection, the children were well on the way to achieving the early learning goals in their physical development. The children have good opportunities to use waste and other types of materials to make models. As a result, they develop satisfactory skills of cutting and joining, using small tools.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities to create, paint and make music
- Resourcing for imaginative play in the nursery classes is underdeveloped.

## Commentary

41. There were only a few opportunities to observe specific sessions in this area of learning but in each classroom there were creative activities going on. For example, paper, paint and play dough were in use in all rooms. Children in the reception classes were learning to explore colour mixing, lightening and darkening the colour red. Displays show portraits, collage and printing. A very good music lesson was seen in one reception class, which was very well led and organised by the teacher, and the children participated with enthusiasm and excitement. Children have been taught signals for starting and stopping. They know how to respond to a given signal to alter the dynamics of their voices or the percussion instruments they play. Progress in this lesson was very good and children are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals in music.
  
42. A good example of children enjoying imaginative play was evident in outdoor sessions for the nursery classes, when the children enjoyed visiting the *Fast food Drive Thru*. Some children took the role of serving while others dealt with cash or visited in their wheeled toys. At the time of the inspection, the role play areas in the nursery classes were devoted to post offices but in only one room was the area adequately resourced. In the other, few children visited the area because it provided too little stimulus. In the reception classrooms, one was a tourist agency, the other a post office and these were better equipped.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH and FRENCH

#### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good improvement in English standards because of effective developments in the subject. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average and pupils achieve very well.
- Standards in reading are above average because of the emphasis that teachers place on thorough assessment procedures and learning targets.
- Good teaching includes innovative techniques such as *narrative therapy* used for teaching pupils about narrative structure.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very efficient and effective.
- Thorough assessment procedures lead to well-planned lessons and interventions which are effectively removing barriers to learning.
- The new system of grouping pupils for the subject is beginning to work well.
- In the infant and lower junior classes, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in geography and history.

#### Commentary

43. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above average by the end of Year 2 but below average by the end of Year 6. Standards are now much higher because teaching has improved and the development work led by the co-ordinators has been very effective in pinpointing strengths and improving weaknesses. Results in national tests for Year 2 in 2003 show that standards were very high when compared with those in similar schools and well above average when compared to all schools. Reading standards in the current Year 2 continue to be very high and writing standards are above average at this stage in the school year. Achievement is good. Standards in writing in Year 6 are average, reflecting the standards attained in national tests in 2003 but standards in reading are above average. Although achievement is satisfactory, the amount of progress seen in lessons, particularly with the new grouping arrangements, which are based on the prior attainment of pupils, indicate that standards are rising.
44. The research into different learning styles undertaken by the school has helped teachers to focus on the quality and amount of teacher and pupil talk. A range of strategies such as *hot seating* and role-play enable the majority of pupils to become confident speakers and active, attentive listeners who achieve well. Standards are above average and achievement is good. Teachers are very good at directing specific questions at pupils with specific learning needs, who take a full part in lessons. Pupils in Year 1 are still learning that they are expected to listen to each other but sometimes they forget and lose concentration. Pupils in Year 2 are more willing to listen to other pupils and carefully phrase their contributions in class discussions. There are some excellent planned opportunities throughout the curriculum for pupils to talk but some teachers occasionally slip into non-standard English when they are modelling speech. By Year 6, pupils are developing empathy with characters in fiction and projecting similar feelings when they engage in role-play.
45. Reading standards are high and achievement is very good because teachers spark a love for reading when pupils are young and this continues throughout the school. Fun lessons with *Pip the puppet* give younger pupils the confidence to learn strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Records of progress are thorough and group reading is of a high quality. Teachers give a good level of attention to each class group and develop skills through modelling, questioning

and explanation. By Year 6, pupils have discernible tastes in fiction, often inspired by texts encountered in lessons, such as *The Hobbit*. Pupils described drawing the hobbit and going on to read the book. Pupils have sufficient skills to research information but there are too few opportunities for some year groups to visit the library to improve their skills.

46. Pupils' writing shows a good range of work. Teachers plan work particularly in terms of the content that might appeal to boys in order to engage them. Pupils know their targets and marking is often very good. There is still a little variability in marking styles but most teachers give points for development following a positive comment. The style of pupils' writing is lively and varied and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. One of the strengths of writing is the originality of the content. Descriptions of character are less well developed, however, than clear narrative structures. The structuring of writing is good and there is a good emphasis on editing and redrafting. Standards of handwriting are good. All teachers do not, however, insist on the same standards in other subjects. In the infant and lower junior classes there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in geography and history. By Year 6, the writing of a majority of pupils is well organised, and pupils are able to use writing as a tool; in note-making, writing scientific reports or a vivid description. Standards are higher than last year and achievement in writing is satisfactory at this point in the year.
47. In lessons where the teaching is good, it is imaginative and inspiring. Strengths in teaching include: the engagement of pupils in lessons; interactive methods that encourage pupil talk; the use of ICT; and using pupils' own experiences to illuminate concepts. Preparation and planning are of high quality and support staff use their initiative in lessons to aid learning. Direct questioning of different pupils is good and there is a focus on learning targets. There were no unsatisfactory elements that were common in lessons. Some shortcomings were linked to a lack of experience of teaching a particular age group. There was one unsatisfactory lesson in which the pupils were not clear about the boundaries of behaviour in the classroom because of inconsistent expectations. In a few lessons, time was an issue, either because pupils spent too long sitting and listening or because time ran out before the end of the lesson. The thoroughness of assessment procedures is a strength, in particular the use of this information to create teaching groups and to plan the next steps for groups of pupils and individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.
48. There are two co-ordinators for the subject, one of whom is a recent appointment. A lot has been achieved in a small space of time. Leadership is very efficient and effective. The checking of pupils' work has resulted in precise analysis and a relevant development plan. Both co-ordinators have a shared vision and focus on learning. Both are good role models for staff and pupils.

**Example of Outstanding Practice – Year 6 – The Suitcase Kid – Jacqueline Wilson**

This lesson was outstanding because not only were pupils' literacy skills advanced but their personal development was cultivated extremely well. In response to a reading of the class text, *The Suitcase Kid* by Jacqueline Wilson, pupils imaginatively experienced another personality and appreciated the emotive feelings of jealousy, hatred and hurt as they explored how the different characters in a step family might feel. The organisation of hot seating early in the lesson enabled the whole group to enter into the spirit of the experience so that later work in pairs was more meaningful, giving rise to contributions such as "I felt my heart had been ripped into a million pieces" and "I feel the size of an ant." The resulting writing was rich, vivid and real, and many pupils managed to write a letter to an agony aunt and a reply from the agony aunt. In one hour they moved forward and were changed by the experience.



## Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. English skills are used frequently across the curriculum to extend learning in subjects such as history, geography, ICT or science. Reading skills are used in research in history, geography and science and pupils use the Internet as well as the library. Pupils' own writing is under-used in geography and history, however, in infant and lower junior classes.

## French

### Commentary

Since the last inspection, curricular provision has been enriched by the addition of a weekly, half hour lesson in French for pupils in Year 6, taught by a specialist teacher from the associated high school. Activities in the lesson are predominantly oral and pupils achieve very well in a short period of time because of the very good quality of teaching. Pupils are well motivated and enjoy the lessons, in which they learn through games, songs and rhymes many key features of the language. The lessons not only provide the pupils with a good introduction to learning a modern foreign language but also give them a good start when they transfer to the secondary school. Pupils also find out more about life in another modern European country. Resources for learning are good and the teacher makes very good use of the school's interactive whiteboards in lessons. Currently lessons are taught in a mixture of English and French and a point for development is to move to teaching entirely into the foreign language in order to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills even more.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned to match pupils' abilities.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards to support learning.
- Marking is very good and helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils experience difficulties, however, with problem solving activities.

### Commentary

50. Standards of attainment are above average by the end of Year 2 and are average by the end of Year 6. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls or boys, or the very few who have English as an additional language. By the time they leave the school, pupils have achieved well, in relation to their potential, because lessons are well planned, most of the teaching is good or better, and pupils work hard in lessons. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils were achieving very well by the end of Year 2, but progress in learning was slowing down in the junior years. The pupils' performance in national tests in Year 6 has fluctuated in recent years from average to below average but there is now greater consistency of teaching throughout the junior years. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' attainment and the drive now must be for the school to maintain this.
51. Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall, because of a number of factors. Standards of attainment are rising in Years 3 to 6 and the quality of teaching is good overall, whereas it was satisfactory in the juniors before. Assessment is used very well to monitor pupils' progress, whereas it had little impact before. Pupils of all abilities are now given work that is well matched to their abilities, including challenging activities for higher attaining pupils.

52. The quality of teaching is good and this is helping pupils to become more confident about tackling mathematical problems. The school's analysis of pupils' past performance in national and optional tests has identified problem solving as a weakness. In a very good lesson with pupils in Year 6, the teacher gave pupils a number of strategies to help them solve complex problems. These questions required pupils to undertake a number of steps before reaching an answer, and to read the question carefully to establish what they needed to do. Pupils were provided with a prompt sheet to help them tackle problems in a logical order, for example, underlining key words in order to help them understand the question. The planning for the lesson was excellent, and questions were finely graded so that pupils of all abilities enjoyed success, including higher attainers. Key features were the praise and encouragement the teacher gave. This gave the pupils the confidence to explain to the rest of the class the strategies they had used in tackling the questions. A number of pupils demonstrated their methods on the interactive whiteboard. This excellent resource is used very effectively in many lessons and helps pupils to make good progress. Progress is slower, however, when pupils do not read the question carefully or do not identify all the steps involved in solving a problem.
53. The leadership and management of the subject, by the joint co-ordinators, are very good. They have a very clear picture of the subject's strengths and weaknesses, gained by looking closely at samples of pupils' work, and analysing performance in the national and optional tests. By observing teaching, the co-ordinators have gained a very good grasp of strengths and areas for development. As a result of their very good quality monitoring and analysis activities, the co-ordinators have devised training programmes for staff. For example, there has been very good improvement in the quality of marking following the introduction of a new policy recently. This very good quality marking identifies what pupils have done well and how they can improve. In this way, marking is contributing to pupils' mathematical understanding and development, and progress in learning. The school is well placed to continue the recent improvements in mathematics as a result of the strengths in leadership and management, and the improving quality of teaching.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

54. Pupils use mathematical skills in other subjects well, for example, in science when they represent results of experiments in graphs and charts. Teachers ensure they plan work that enables pupils to practise mathematical skills in different situations, so that they can see that what they have learned in mathematics has many practical applications.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The commitment of teachers to investigative learning is beginning to have a good impact on the development of more independent learning approaches.
- The space in some classrooms restricts some practical activities.
- There are too few pupils working consistently at higher levels throughout the school.
- Pupils' independence to record their own ideas and findings is too limited.
- There has been insufficient time for the new co-ordinators to analyse performance data and check learning fully.

## Commentary

55. Standards are average for the majority of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory, as was found at the time of the last inspection. Few pupils, however, are working at a higher level, which is reflected in test results. The 2003 test results for Year 6 were disappointing for the school and were not a true reflection of standards because staff absence in one of the classes led to inconsistencies in teaching and assessments. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory because, although science has not been a main focus of improvement, there has been a concerted effort this term to introduce greater use of practical, experimental and investigational work in lessons. This is a transitional period for the school as teachers become more used to giving pupils varying amounts of freedom to control their own investigative work. Standards look set to rise further as pupils of different abilities have more opportunities to apply skills and knowledge rather than mirror an experiment modelled by the teacher.
56. The new leadership team, which has been in place since October 2003, has a grasp of the issues and has made a good start on tackling aspects that need to be improved. National test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 show that standards have been well below average for the last two years when compared nationally and were below those in similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that more pupils in Year 6 are on track to exceed national expectations but their learning has not been accelerated in the past. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils can talk confidently about the areas of science they have studied and have acquired sound and often good knowledge and understanding. For example, average-attaining pupils readily explain how to go out about building an electrical circuit and use correct scientific terminology. Pupils' scientific skills are below average because, until very recently, they have been given insufficient opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations.
57. Teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, because the use of assessment to set targets and to enable specific skills to be developed systematically, is not yet sufficiently precise. The assessment by teachers of the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2003 shows that standards met the national average but were well above it when results were compared with similar schools. Discussions with pupils in the present Year 3 show that almost all pupils have knowledge and understanding at the expected level, though not at higher levels. This is because pupils have not been given sufficient control over their learning, and this is now beginning to improve. Most pupils make sound gains in their learning. Lessons are well planned to build on earlier experiences and provide activities that are carefully matched to their previous learning. Teaching assistants are used well to ensure that lower attaining pupils achieve as well as the more capable pupils. Teachers develop the use of correct scientific vocabulary well. In Year 6, skilful questioning challenged pupils' thinking and clarified their ideas when investigating voltage. This enabled the most confident pupils to use their scientific knowledge when predicting what might happen next.
58. Although the amount of practical work has increased since the last inspection, it has been too tightly directed until recently and pupils have had insufficient opportunity to use their own ideas to plan and carry out investigations. Skills of recording are inconsistent and, in too many cases, pupils still copy what the teacher has written. This limits their achievement. Systems to assess pupils' progress have been improved but the use of information to set clear and precise targets for improvement is inconsistent. Some teachers need to be more rigorous in this new approach to planning future work. Improvements set in place to enhance provision are recent and it is too soon to see a significant rise in standards.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school achieve well and standards are now above average, because the teaching is good overall.
- Enthusiastic leadership is having a positive impact on improving the quality of provision by removing barriers to improvement.
- Opportunities for the use of ICT across the curriculum are good and enhanced by the high quality of the ICT suite and the quantity and accessibility of the interactive whiteboards in classrooms.
- The quality of technical help and the links to the local secondary school have enhanced provision.
- The timing of some lessons is a little short and does not always allow pupils to focus on their progress.
- There is scope for improving planning for more able pupils.

### Commentary

59. At the time of the last inspection standards were average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are now higher because pupils are learning more quickly in lessons and there is no wasted time. The subject is often planned into several lessons per day and the presence of the interactive whiteboards in many classrooms has revolutionised the quality of teaching. They are more than a visual aid to enliven teaching. The moving images enable pupils to grasp learning concepts in many subjects. Good examples were seen in art and design, music, English, mathematics and science. Pupils are faster and more confident because they are used to typing in their contributions on the keyboard and seeing them projected on the large screen. Infant pupils log on and off machines independently; edit, save and print their work. For example, pupils in Year 1 confidently scrolled up and down the screen using direction arrows to access a word bank linked to the children's story, *Handa's Surprise*, which they had been reading during a literacy lesson. This effectively reinforced their spelling skills as well as their control of the mouse and the arrow keys.
60. Older pupils are adept at downloading information from the Internet and are effectively using ICT as a tool for research and learning in other subjects. By Year 6, many pupils are confident and competent users of computers. They know the usefulness of ICT in their work and in the outside world. They use secure search engines to access websites on the Internet. Their skills in control technology are strengthened during visits to the high school in the autumn term.
61. Teaching is good because expectations are high and methods are well chosen. Pupils download images relevant for their work from the Internet. The teachers' own knowledge is good and they gave clear information and outline the steps to take to achieve success. Another strength in teaching lies in the way that teachers use positive reinforcement. Teachers achieve a good balance between formal instruction and the time allowed for pupils to practise skills. This results in good learning. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and learning is broken down into manageable steps. Some of the lessons, however, are a little short and this can affect how well progress in lessons is evaluated. Skilful questioning fully involves pupils in their own learning and support is well targeted at those who need it most. Positive attitudes and good behaviour are important factors in pupils' achievement in lessons.
62. Although the leadership of the subject has not been in place for long, it is good and strategies to raise standards have been well managed. This is because of the sheer enthusiasm and determination to integrate the subject into learning. The roles of the technician and the co-ordinator complement one another extremely well, bringing together technical expertise and an understanding of learning steps. A comprehensive whole-school audit has been carried out so that training sessions can be planned. The subject has its own slot during each staff meeting

when ideas can be shared. The assessment system is used well to chart progress and to enable teachers to provide relevant follow up work.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

63. The use of ICT across the curriculum is stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' planning for other subjects identifies opportunities for its use. Lessons often use work from other subjects as the means to develop computer skills. Literacy skills are improved by the pupils' growing proficiency in word processing and by the use of programs to improve their skills in reading and spelling. Pupils use CD-ROMs and the Internet regularly for personal research in other subjects. Data handling in science, using computer skills, has improved well.

## **HUMANITIES**

Very few lessons were seen in **geography** and **history** and the subjects were not inspected in depth. No overall judgement on provision is possible. Although the requirements of the National Curriculum are met in both subjects, there is very little time spent on either and only a few visits out of school or visitors to school enrich the subjects. This has happened because of the acknowledged focus that the school has maintained on English and mathematics since the last inspection in order to raise standards and pupils' achievement in these subjects.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

Very few lessons were observed in art and design, design and technology, and music. The subjects were not inspected in depth and no overall judgement on provision is possible.

In **art and design**, three lessons were observed, and pupils' work and documents provided by the school were analysed. The opportunities to make good progress in lessons are restricted by the lack of suitable space and facilities in some classrooms. For example, no water or washing facilities are available. In lessons seen, too little time was available for pupils to review their work and to make improvements. There is, however, evidence that the subject is successfully linked to ICT. In **design and technology**, one lesson was observed and pupils' books and finished work were scrutinised. Very little time is allocated to the subject and teachers plan lessons which often rely on making products quickly in the limited time allowed. Completed work is very similar from one pupil to the next and there are often too few opportunities for pupils to design individually and to evaluate the finished products. In **music**, a few lessons were observed, as well as hymn practice and instrumental lessons. The school has no co-ordinator for music and no specialist class teaching. Recognising this, the school has bought a published scheme of work, which gives non-specialist teachers good levels of support in planning and teaching class lessons. Where teachers are confident, lessons are effective and interesting. However, teachers' limited knowledge means pupils' learning is adversely affected. Too little time allocated for the subject means that teachers rush the end of lessons, limiting the value of what has been done, as no time is available to evaluate the outcomes.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's achievements have been recognised with the award of an *Activemark Gold Award*.
- The school values the benefits of the subject and is keen to promote participation in competitive sport.
- The *Passport to Sport* scheme is providing good opportunities for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Some lessons are too short, and this affects the development of pupils' skills.

### Commentary

64. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards of attainment are average overall. Pupils make good progress in learning, and achieve well in relation to their potential. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at a similar rate to their classmates. There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection because the majority of teaching is now good, or better, whereas there was some unsatisfactory teaching before. Also, the school has made good progress in introducing an effective scheme of work that ensures that pupils experience a broad and balanced range of activities
65. By the end of Year 6, pupils have good opportunities to experience all aspects of the curriculum, including outdoor and adventurous activities. There is a very strong tradition of sport in the school, and pupils' skills in gymnastics and dance have been developed strongly. Lessons are well planned, and staff and pupils are aware of the need for 'warm up' and 'cool down' activities before taking part in physical exercise, and aware of the benefits of exercise, generally. Activities link well with work the school has undertaken for the *Healthy Schools Award*.
66. The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons in gymnastics and dance were seen during the inspection. In very good lessons, pupils participate enthusiastically in activities. Planning is clear, and instructions to pupils are specific. A very good feature is the teachers' use of praise to motivate pupils to greater efforts, and pupil demonstrations to extend class learning, by sharing interesting and imaginative ways of performing. The lessons move at a brisk pace, for instance, enabling pupils to develop skills on several pieces of apparatus in gymnastics. However, in the majority of lessons, pupils' skills do not develop as well as they might, because there is insufficient time for pupils to practise these skills or to discuss what works well and what could be improved next time. As a result, standards of attainment remain average overall, and not above average, and do not reflect the good, and sometimes very good teaching.
67. There are very good sporting links with Manchester Leisure Centre staff who visit the school to develop the *Passport to Sport* scheme. This is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment in Years 5 and 6 in hockey, netball, athletics, football, cricket, rugby, short tennis and squash. The school was awarded an *Activemark Gold Award* in 2001 and reflects the school's commitment to physical education. The school is in the process of applying for the next phase of this award. During the last year, pupils have had opportunities to participate in football and netball clubs. In addition, the school has been successful in a mixed boys' and girls' football competition, and in several netball tournaments.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

## **Personal, social and health education**

### **Commentary**

Very few lessons were seen during the inspection. There is a satisfactory programme for personal, social and health education in place, including drugs education, which is taught in all classes. For younger ones it is often taught through *Circle time*. Older pupils are beginning to look at citizenship issues.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	5
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*



