

INSPECTION REPORT

CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Portsmouth

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 116384

Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Giltinan

Lead inspector: Mrs Ann Coughlan

Dates of inspection: 29 September – 1 October 2003

Inspection number: 255885

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:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	275
School address:	Gladys Avenue Portsmouth
Postcode:	PO2 9AX
Telephone number:	023 9266 1818
Fax number:	023 9266 4780
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Lee Elliot
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves an inner city residential Catholic community and is regularly oversubscribed. The socio-economic backgrounds of the pupils are broadly average. There are 275 pupils on roll, with similar numbers of boys and girls. The number of pupils with special educational needs and those with statements of special educational needs is in line with the national average. Most of these pupils have learning or speech and communication difficulties but a small number have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities includes pupils from black, Asian, Chinese and mixed backgrounds but is below the national average and most are fluent in English. The pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average and the number of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual times is also average. The school received an Investors in People award this year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21124	Ann Coughlan	Lead inspector	Science and physical education, English as an additional language
11229	Michael Freeman	Lay inspector	
31029	Peter Thrussell	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, music and special educational needs
22654	Pat Wootten	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum, English, history and geography

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This improving school provides a **satisfactory** education. Achievement is good in Reception and by the end of Year 2, where, as a result of good teaching, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6, where standards in English and science are average and standards in mathematics are above average. Staffing problems have had an adverse effect on achievement. Leadership and management are good overall. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The high aspirations, vigour and determination of the headteacher in driving improvements.
- Teaching and learning are good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2.
- Very effective teaching assistants provide valuable support for learning in the classrooms, library and computer suite.
- The school's good ethos and good provision for spiritual, moral and social development are reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour and good relationships.
- Effective links with parents support pupils' learning.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in English in Years 3 to 6.
- The use of information from assessment is not rigorous enough.
- The school has too high a level of surplus funds and strategic planning needs a clearer focus.
- The school does not involve pupils enough in decision-making.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the school was inspected in 1998. Standards at the end of Year 2 fell sharply in 1999 to well below average, but since then, there has been steady improvement. Issues from the previous inspection relating to the school's ethos, pupils' behaviour and the school buildings have been tackled successfully. There has been sound improvement in pupils' personal development, in the role of subject managers and assessment but the school has identified that there is still more work to be done in these areas.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	Year 2000	Year 2001	Year 2002	Year 2002
English	B	C	C	C
mathematics	D	D	C	C
science	D	E	C	C

*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.*

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good in the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. Children reach the goals they are expected to by the end of reception and exceed those for their personal, social and emotional development. In Year 2 pupils attain above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Achievement dips in Years 3 and 4, particularly in English and mathematics, but by the end of Year 6 pupils attain above average standards in mathematics and reading, and average standards in writing and other subjects, except history where standards are below average.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. In Reception children learn well because the adults have a good understanding of their needs and what they need to learn next. In Years 1 and 2, basic skills are taught well. Teaching is more variable in Years 3 to 6; in Years 3 and 4 expectations are too low in writing so that pupils do not learn enough and then need to catch up in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress in achieving their individual targets but work in class lessons is not always matched well to their needs. The skilled and experienced teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The good standard of care and welfare that the school provides helps pupils feel secure and this, together with the constructive partnership with parents, makes an effective contribution to learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Very effective leadership by the headteacher has created a staff team committed to raising standards. She is well supported by the senior management team. Management is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive, has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and holds the school to account but there has been a weakness in financial management and control.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with most aspects of the school. Concerns about bullying and harassment were not substantiated by evidence during the inspection. On the rare occasions when there is a problem this is dealt with very appropriately by the headteacher. Pupils are also happy with most aspects; they like and trust their teachers but about one in three do not always find their lessons interesting and they would like more educational visits.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Address underachievement in English in Years 3 and 4.
- Make better use of assessment information in English and mathematics and continue to develop assessment procedures in other subjects.
- Develop a more strategic view of school improvement that links clearly with the funding available to the school.
- Improve the opportunities for pupils to be involved in decision-making and independent learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is good. Current standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT are above average in Year 2. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. It is good in mathematics but satisfactory in science and English. In Year 6 standards are above average in mathematics and average in English and science. Standards are also average in ICT, art, music and physical education in Year 6 but are below average in history.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the consistently good quality of education provided for them that meets their individual needs.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 owing to good teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in attaining the targets in their individual education plans because they receive good support.
- Achievement in writing is unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6.
- The achievement of all groups of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is limited by weaknesses in assessment.

Commentary

1. The school's results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 fell sharply to well below average standards in 1999 but there has been a steady improvement since and the school's trend in performance for pupils in Year 6 is in line with the national trend.
2. By the end of the reception year pupils exceed the expected standards in their personal, social and emotional development owing to the very good induction procedures and because teachers and assistants attach great importance to this aspect. Most reach the expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative development. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in children's physical development or in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.5 (15.8)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	17.9 (17.9)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (27.5)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.6 (26.0)	26.7 (26.6)
science	28.9 (26.5)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In Year 2 standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and this is a very good improvement since the well below average results in the 1999 national tests. In Year 6 standards are above average in mathematics and this is similar to the last inspection. In science standards are average, again similar to those at the last inspection. However, evidence from this inspection indicates that standards are now rising in science owing to good teaching of investigative and experimental science. Standards in English have fallen since the last inspection when they were above average. They are now average overall owing to weaknesses in pupils' writing though standards in reading are above average. The teaching of English, especially in Years 3 and 4, although satisfactory, is not as effective as the teaching of mathematics and science and this, together with weaknesses in assessment, results in unsatisfactory achievement in writing by the end of Year 6. In addition, there are gender differences; boys' achievement in writing is lower than girls in Year 1, 3 and 4.
4. The school has identified those pupils who are particularly able in English but evidence from lessons and analysis of pupils' work shows that the school has not yet made enough provision for these pupils to ensure that they always achieve as well as they could. Although higher attaining pupils attain well in national tests in mathematics they are not given sufficient opportunities for investigative work and problem solving. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. This is because the targets in their individual education plans are specific to their needs and achievable. The care and support offered by the adults who work with them furthers this good progress. Their general progress in lessons is satisfactory because activities do not always take sufficient account of their particular learning needs. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve as well as their peers.
5. Pupils' language and literacy skills in Years 3 to 6 are not high enough to enable them to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Their good mathematical competence supports other subjects well but is not consistently developed through other subjects except in science. Standards are above average in ICT in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils' competence in ICT is sufficient to support learning across the curriculum.
6. Standards are below average in history in Year 6, where there are shortcomings in the teaching and the curricular planning which affect adversely the rate at which pupils can progress in acquiring historical knowledge and skills. Pupils' singing is above average and those pupils who play instruments or belong to a choir attain above average standards but, overall, standards in music are average. Standards are also average in art and in physical education (PE).
7. The school slightly exceeded its targets in mathematics in 2003 but did not meet its target for English. Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment and they receive a good start to their education and attain above average standards by the end of Year 2. However, progress slows in Years 3 and 4 and, in addition, the older pupils have not benefited from some of the improvements recently put in place so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment levels are average overall, indicating satisfactory achievement overall.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social and development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show interest in school activities and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Behaviour is very good in Reception.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are good and there is a high degree of racial harmony.

- Pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong and show respect for other's feelings and beliefs owing to good provision for their spiritual, moral and social development.
 - Pupils' opportunities for personal development are limited.
 - Pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity is limited.
8. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Registers are marked briskly and efficiently and meet statutory requirements. The school office and the education welfare officer monitor them effectively and regularly. The majority of pupils arrive at school punctually. However, a few lessons during the inspection did not start on time and learning time was cut short.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

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

No of pupils on roll
237
5
5
2
3
3
2
2
2
1
5
5

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
2	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are positive and most concentrate well in lessons. They work hard and enjoy coming to school, as they feel secure and well cared for. When lessons are lively and stimulating they respond with enthusiasm. They are well motivated to learn in most lessons but become passive learners in some instances when the teacher does not engage their interest or takes too long over introductions. However, they do not always have a clear picture of what to do to improve their work. They co-operate well with each other and with adults and show constructive relationships with staff and each other.
10. There has been a good improvement in the way teachers manage pupils' behaviour since the last inspection and achievement is good in this area across the school. The school has

successfully addressed the key issue on improving behaviour and the ethos of the school. Pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong from the high expectations that the school has of their behaviour and the good role models set by teachers. School rules are applied fairly and consistently, and pupils have the opportunity to discuss them fully when formulating their own classroom codes of conduct. Good behaviour and positive attitudes are recognised and celebrated by the school both in the classroom and in assemblies. As a result, there is very little inappropriate behaviour by pupils and where this occurs it is dealt with effectively. Parents consider behaviour is good but a few had concerns about bullying. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection and evidence shows that the headteacher sees pupils and parents immediately in the very few instances where harassment has occurred.

11. All pupils in the school are valued, and staff work hard to help them understand the part they have to play in life, and the importance and responsibility of belonging to a faith and school community. Pupils show respect for each other's values and beliefs and the school is now a happy, lively and harmonious community based on positive Christian values. Pupils' spirituality is developed well through assemblies and religious education and teachers provide a quiet reflection time in prayers at the end of sessions. However, there is no systematic planning for pupils' personal reflection across the curriculum. Consequently, opportunities are missed to remind pupils of the beauty and diversity of the world around them.
12. There has been satisfactory improvement in relation to the key issue on improving pupils' personal development. Pupils are willing to undertake responsible tasks, such as the Year 6 pupils being supportive 'buddies' with Year 1 pupils. However, a planned and comprehensive range of tasks and duties for pupils to enhance self-esteem and personal development is not yet fully in place. For example, the planned school council is in an early stage and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to collaborate, or to show initiative in lessons and develop independence in learning. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily.
13. Cultural development is satisfactory with a recognisably strong musical focus. Other areas, such as drama and art and design, are less well developed. Although pupils are carefully nurtured in the Catholic faith, they nevertheless have a developing awareness of other faiths and the values and practices related to them. However, this awareness alone does not prepare them sufficiently for life in a society that is not only multi-faith but also multi-cultural.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The strongest features are the good provision in the Foundation Stage and good teaching and learning in Reception and Years 1 and 2. The areas needing most improvement are the use of assessment to inform planning, particularly in Years 3 to 6 and the provision of more opportunities for pupils to express their views about the school and develop greater independence in learning.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall with some good features particularly in the Foundation Stage, for pupils with special educational needs and in tracking pupils' achievement, although the way this information is used for subsequent planning and target setting is underdeveloped.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in the reception classes have a good understanding of how young children learn and provide a rich variety of experiences.
- Teachers in Years 1 and 2 teach basic skills very well.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach.

- All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage this well.
- The well-trained and experienced teaching assistants are very effective in providing support for teachers and pupils.
- The teaching of science is good throughout the school.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to develop independent learning skills.
- The use of homework to support learning in class is inconsistent.
- Most work is marked regularly but its usefulness varies.
- Assessment practices are not consistent or embedded and are not yet secure in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4 (10%)	18 (48%)	14 (39%)	1 (3 %)	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.

- Teaching is good in Reception and Years 1 to 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Overall, the quality of teaching is similar to that found at the last inspection but with improvement in Reception where the effective teamwork between teachers and assistants ensures that each day's activities are well organised and run smoothly. The adults encourage and engage the children well so that they acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate and develop their capacity for concentration. A significant improvement in teaching across the school is the teachers' management of behaviour and this is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. It is helping to improve pupils' ability to concentrate and pay attention during whole class sessions.
- In the best lessons, the learning objectives are clear and the teachers stimulate interest through use of visual aids and effective questioning. The pupils are keen to learn because they become fully involved with the content of the lesson. For example, in science the greater involvement of pupils in planning and improving their work is an improvement since the last inspection. However, not all lessons are as stimulating. One in three pupils, in response to their questionnaire, stated that lessons were not always interesting or fun. Inspectors found that in a few lessons teachers make insufficient use of resources to capture pupils' interest and the introduction to the lesson goes on too long. Across the school, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to develop independence and learn to take more responsibility for their own learning. This is particularly difficult for them to manage where classes or teaching groups are very large, as in Years 5 and 6 or some Year 4 science lessons.
- As a result of the emphasis by management on the use of ICT, teachers are beginning to integrate it effectively into their lessons. Classroom computers are used efficiently so that pupils practise their skills and gain a good understanding of how ICT can help them learn. In some instances, however, the programs chosen do not support the learning objectives of the lesson and limit learning.
- Teachers develop pupils numeracy skills satisfactorily in science but less so in other subjects. Although some examples of good writing were seen in history and religious education, overall, teachers miss many opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills. In physical education lessons in Years 5 and 6 pupils' evaluation of their own work was encouraged well so that they were able to consider how to improve. These evaluation skills occur in some English and science lessons but overall are underdeveloped.
- Teaching assistants are involved very productively in all parts of lessons, for example, talking purposefully with pupils to explain and reinforce subject specific vocabulary. Pupils with special

educational needs receive confident and competent support from teaching assistants, both in group work and in the classrooms. Although their learning is good when working on their individual targets, activities in class lessons do not always take sufficient account of their particular learning needs. As yet, similar support is not given to the most capable pupils.

19. The headteacher and management team have done much to address the weaknesses in assessment identified by the last inspection but recognise there is still more to be done. Assessment procedures and use of assessment in the reception classes are now good overall. The information transfers to Year 1 so it may be used to plan appropriately for pupils' needs. However, this is not always used effectively to plan for the lower attaining pupils.
20. In Years 1 to 6, most work is marked regularly, however, the quality of marking varies and some does not indicate what the pupil has done well and what they need to do to improve. This limits learning. However, peer assessment in Years 5 and 6 is used well to focus pupils on their own learning and what they need to do to improve. These older pupils know what their targets are and can discuss what they need to do to overcome difficulties.
21. Teachers use assessment effectively to track the achievement of pupils in literacy and numeracy from Year 1 to Year 6. However, the data from these assessments is not used to predict challenging but achievable year-on-year targets in English and mathematics to enable teachers and pupils to know what they are expected to achieve in lessons in order to make satisfactory or better progress. Although the school has recently introduced a good assessment system in ICT, in science and other subjects there are no systems in place to formally assess pupils' achievements. As a result, teachers rely only on their day-to-day knowledge of the pupils' progress. This is frequently successful but there was evidence in some lessons of an inappropriate level of challenge being set when all groups were given the same work.

The curriculum

Overall, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum although there is some imbalance in the timetabling of foundation subjects. It is good in reception and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. The school supports the pupils' learning outside the school day and develops the range of their activities satisfactorily. The school's accommodation and resources support the implementation of the curriculum satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage children make a good start and progress well because of the good range of curricular activities organised for them.
- Overall, equality of opportunity is satisfactory but the needs of the most able are not fully met.
- A specialist writing teacher is raising standards for some pupils.
- Numeracy and ICT skills are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum but the use of literacy in other subjects is underdeveloped.
- There is a good contribution to pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) through religious education, but other planned initiatives are not yet in place.
- The timetabling of lessons does not allocate sufficient time for some foundation subject while some sessions are too long to sustain pupils' interest and concentration.
- There is a limited range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum.
- Very good improvement in the school buildings is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.

Commentary

22. Owing to effective management the curriculum for children in the reception classes has improved significantly since the last inspection and covers all the areas of learning. However, opportunities for literacy and numeracy across all areas of learning are not fully developed. In

addition, outdoor play and activities involving sand and water are significantly restricted for much of the year because of the lack of a covered play area. The main strength is the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development.

23. There is some imbalance in the curriculum for Years 1 to 6 and in its timetabling. The time allocated to history and geography is not adequate to effectively deliver the programmes of study, include appropriate fieldwork and develop subject specific skills. Science and design technology are sometimes taught over a whole afternoon session, so that pupils' enthusiasm and concentration are not sustained throughout the lesson.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs to enable them to meet the targets in their individual education plans is good. Teaching assistants work very confidently and competently with pupils, recording and monitoring the progress made. However, the planned activities in lessons do not always support their particular learning needs.
25. The school employs a specialist writing teacher. In the classes and lessons where she has been involved, writing standards have shown an improvement. However, this initiative and good practice has yet to permeate teaching and learning throughout the whole school.
26. The 'Here I am' programme in religious education provides a structured approach to personal, social and health education (PSHE). Trained visitors provide an input to sex education and drug awareness. A good start has been made on a *Healthy School* initiative but this has not been in place long enough to have had any significant impact. Planned initiatives such as the regular use of circle time and the establishment of a school council have yet to be put in place, which means that pupils' views are not sufficiently sought.
27. The school provides a satisfactory range of out-of-school clubs including sport, music, ICT and French. Conversations with pupils showed that they value and enjoy these activities and the school plans to evaluate the uptake. The school provides a satisfactory range of educational visits and visitors to enhance its curriculum but both parents and pupils expressed a wish for this provision to be extended. In the past some visits and clubs have been cancelled because of lack of parental support.
28. The school has a satisfactory number of teachers and a good number of teaching assistants that enables them to organise classes so that most pupils receive equality of opportunity. In some lessons, however, particularly those involving practical activities, groups are too large for effective teaching and learning. Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to express their views or practise their speaking skills in the larger classes. Although the school has identified more able pupils in English and mathematics and a few in other areas, the analysis of their work shows that these pupils do not always receive work that is sufficiently demanding for their needs. This confirms a view expressed by parents. The school has made a start on improving provision by designating an experienced teacher to develop this area and has arranged for these pupils to attend problem-solving sessions organised by the local authority.
29. The school has made very good improvement in its accommodation since its last inspection when several aspects of the accommodation were identified as weaknesses that limited pupils' learning. For example, there is now a spacious and library as well as a large and well-resourced music room. Alterations have ensured that most pupils are no longer disturbed by noise from other classes although pupils using the computer suite are still disturbed by reception children playing in their outdoor play area. In addition lack of cover for any of this area makes its use dependent on good weather.
30. Learning resources throughout the school are satisfactory in quantity and range. The computer suite is well used though it is rather small to accommodate the larger classes comfortably. The attractive library, although inconveniently located in a first floor room, is a strength with an energetic librarian and good up-to-date stock.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. It is very good in Reception. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction arrangements for children into the reception classes are very good.
 - There are good procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
 - There are very good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs and effective use is made of outside support.
 - The school has good systems to monitor pupils' academic standards and progress in English and mathematics but the data obtained are not always used effectively to provide pupils with advice and guidance.
 - The school's systems for monitoring pupils' standards and progress in other subjects and in their personal development are underdeveloped.
 - The school only seeks the views of pupils and involves them in the development of the school in a limited way.
31. Parents appreciate and value the good pastoral care and welfare present throughout the school, particularly in Reception. The induction procedures into the school are very well planned and several parents remarked how pleased and impressed they were with this smooth and efficient transition process. The school also provides very good arrangements for transfer to the next class towards the end of the summer term. Child protection measures are well organised and effective. There is good provision for health and safety, including well-organised first aid and fire precautions. Governors have addressed a key issue from the last inspection well by providing written reports of risk assessments.
32. Children with special educational needs are identified quickly in reception and individual education plans drawn up by the co-ordinator in conjunction with class teachers and teaching assistants. Realistic and manageable targets are set that are reviewed at least termly, and are discussed and shared with pupils. Careful records are kept of pupils' progress. The help and support of outside agencies is managed well. Provision, particularly for behavioural needs, draws effectively on this support. Pupils with statements receive their full entitlement of support. Although the school has identified gifted and talented pupils, its provision for them is in an early stage of development.
33. Current assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are not consistent across the school. Written work across a range of genres is not assessed regularly enough. There is not enough moderation of levels and as a result some assessment, particularly in English for pupils in Years 3 to 6, is inaccurate and is one of the reasons why standards in writing are not improving as quickly as they should. Teachers do not have access to examples of work that has been moderated and annotated to show agreed levels to help them to ensure that individual targets are accurately focused.
34. The individual class teachers provide good pastoral care and guidance and there is good back-up available to deal with any difficult issues. Pupils are well supported and guided and staff have developed trusting and helpful relationships with pupils. The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development by seeking their views is, however, unsatisfactory. There are very few systematic and regular attempts by management to consult pupils. Such consultations, apart from helping the school generally, would also provide valuable personal development and opportunities for raising self-esteem.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, other schools and colleges are good. There are satisfactory links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views of the school.
 - An open and helpful school staff deals with parents' concerns effectively.
 - Supportive parent body and hard working Parent Teacher Association.
 - Written reports on pupils' progress do not always show parents clearly what their children need to learn next.
 - Well-established links with the local community, particularly the church and other local schools.
 - The school's involvement with local business and industry is limited.
35. The links with parents are good and productive and parents are nearly all enthusiastic about the school and its work. Many parents commented warmly on the 'open-ness' and friendly atmosphere of the school and the helpfulness and accessibility of the headteacher and her staff. Parents are confident that any problems or issues they might bring to the school are dealt with respectfully, swiftly and effectively. The school has provided effective family learning partnerships with parents, including those in ICT, and parents appreciate these.
36. The school provides information such as the weekly newsletter and advance curricular information to sustain parents' interest and involvement. Parents report that the termly parent/teacher consultation meetings are helpful and informative. The school works hard to develop links and provide a good level of information for parents of pupils with special educational needs.
37. However, some inconsistencies remain. Parents report that homework 'depends on the teacher'. Some of the annual written reports on pupils' progress do not contain targets for pupils. Parents are concerned about mixed age group classes and the school has not yet provided sufficient explanation to resolve these concerns. The inspection shows that the school takes into account the different age groups when planning the curriculum so repetition of work rarely occurs. However, inspectors agree there is a basis for concern when the mixed age range is combined with very large classes or teaching groups.
38. The majority of parents are supportive although some trips and clubs have been cancelled because of lack of parental support. The well-run and hard working Parent Teacher Association raises useful funds for the school. A few parents help in school on a regular basis, providing valued assistance in the library, with reading and on visits. Attendance at the last annual meeting of the governing body was very good.
39. The partnership with local schools and pre-school providers is strong and productive and transfer arrangements are particularly good and effective. The headteacher and other staff gain from their involvement with other schools in local authority initiatives and links with other Catholic schools. The school also benefits from its links with local training institutions. The school is well embedded into the local community, particularly the Catholic Church community, and partakes fully in community events, such as Harvest Festival. Areas of contact with the local business and industrial community, however, are not so well developed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and in the three years since her appointment has been successful in raising quality and standards and the profile of the school in the community. The headteacher is supported well by the effective senior management team.

While there are strong features in the management of the school, management is judged satisfactory because there are weaknesses in strategic planning and some of the recommendations from the last inspection on assessment and subject management have not yet been fully addressed. The governance of the school is satisfactory overall but has strong features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors understand the needs of the school and hold it to account for the standards pupils attain but there are some weaknesses in the management and control of the budget.
- The headteacher has very high aspirations and works with energy and determination.
- Systems to track pupils' attainments are now in place and support the school's monitoring and evaluation of its performance.
- There is confusion about strategic and operational planning and the school is working on too many priorities.
- There is good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and special educational needs.
- The role of the deputy headteacher in performance management is not defined.
- The Foundation Stage is not properly represented on the senior management team.

Commentary

40. Following the last inspection the school went through a difficult period in relation to staffing that had a negative impact on standards. Since her appointment, three years ago, the very active approach of the headteacher has resulted in a good pace of change and improvement so that standards are rising across the school. She provides very good leadership as she has a clear vision and high aspirations for further improving provision and standards. She has a passionate commitment to the school being recognised as a place where excellence is sought after. This is shared with members of the senior management team, who welcome the strong sense of direction and purpose and show very positive and effective commitment to school improvement.
41. Supported well by the governing body, the headteacher has made difficult but necessary decisions, to improve the quality of education. She has made good appointments and created a staff team with a common sense of purpose. This has already had a positive impact in improving achievement in Reception and by Year 2. Throughout the school teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together in teams led by the senior managers. However, the manager of the Foundation Stage does not have a role in whole school leadership and management; this has a detrimental impact on continuity.
42. Subject managers provide sound overall leadership. Owing to staff turnover some are fairly new in post and the issue on developing their role has not been fully addressed, nor is it possible to judge the overall impact they are having. However, the headteacher has put effective systems in place to develop consistency in subject management. Regular arrangements for monitoring are in place to develop monitoring skills but inconsistencies in teaching and learning across subjects remain. The subject manager for literacy has made good decisions about reading records and target setting which are having a positive influence on standards. However, she works mainly in isolation from the specialist writing teacher who reports directly to the headteacher. This means that opportunities to develop a strong team to address the key priority of improving writing in Years 3 to 6 are missed. There have also been good developments in improving investigational science, which were initiated by the previous subject manager.
43. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. He has a clear picture of the needs within the school and how they are being met. He has identified the need to consider further the styles of teaching and learning in lessons that are more appropriate for pupils with special educational needs. Regular meetings are held with

teaching assistants to discuss the provision and how it is being met, and planning time is spent with teachers to link provision appropriately.

44. The leadership shows a strong commitment to inclusion. Though policies for gifted and talented pupils are in place, these have yet to be fully implemented. Pupils are treated as individuals and senior staff act as good role models in their relationship with each other and with the pupils and parents or carers. The school's commitment to racial equality is evident in its practice and the school is addressing areas where boys perform less well than girls.
45. The headteacher is responsible for all the performance management of teachers and this is appropriately linked to the school's priorities. The deputy headteacher, although trained in performance management, is not yet involved in the process as line manager. This contrasts oddly with suitable arrangements for the special educational needs manager to appraise teaching assistants and for the administrative officer to appraise the mid-day supervisors. There are satisfactory induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers but they have a heavy workload with large class or group sizes. The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training.
46. Although the school's strategic planning is based appropriately on regular analysis of the school's performance it does not provide a strategic overview of the school's main priorities for raising pupils' achievement or indicate clearly how success can be measured in order to show the impact of spending or actions. Key priorities have been identified but there are too many sub-sections and things to do. Time frames are often loose and monitoring actions and reporting routes are not well defined. Nevertheless, all staff know what the chief priorities for improvement are and what is expected from them.
47. The governing body has been active in supporting the school to bring about necessary changes and has allocated money suitably to the school's priorities. However, owing to weaknesses in strategic planning the quality of response to recommendations of the last inspection has been mixed. The most significant successes have been very good improvement to the school's buildings and good improvement to the school's ethos and in the behaviour of pupils. There has been satisfactory improvement to the school's assessment procedures, the role of subject management and pupils' personal development and the school is aware that further work is needed in these areas. The school now fulfils all statutory requirements.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	619675
Total expenditure	554530
Expenditure per pupil	2024

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	125349
Balance carried forward to the next	190494

48. There is a lack of clarity about the link between the school strategic plan and budget planning as governors' involvement in strategic planning is limited. Weaknesses in monitoring of the budget have resulted in the school accruing a very large surplus. To some extent this was due to circumstances beyond the school's control; they had allocated over £100,000 to a building project and the local education authority then paid for this work. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the governing body has not been accurate enough in budget forecasting or applying the best value principle of challenge. Having realised the extent of the underspend, the governors acted swiftly to bring forward planned spending and much of this is in hand in order to benefit improvement in provision.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school makes good provision for the youngest children as they start full time education. Attainment on entry is broadly average and most pupils will reach the expected level for children at the end of their reception year in most of the areas of learning. Some will exceed expectations. Teaching and achievement have improved since the last inspection. The reception unit is well organised with established routines, which enable even the youngest children to settle in very quickly. Relationships have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Parents feel welcome and appreciate the time and effort put into the very good induction process that makes parents and carers and their child feel 'special'. As a result, almost without exception the children come into school smiling and eager to take part in the range of learning activities planned for them. The teachers and teaching assistants are warm and welcoming and they work together well to form a strong team. Good links with playgroups and assessment on entry ensure that children are encouraged to build effectively on what they already know and can do. Occasionally lessons are too formal, over-directed and too long and opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy across the areas of learning are not fully developed. Overall curriculum provision has improved significantly since the last inspection, however, outdoor play and activities involving sand and water are significantly restricted for much of the year because of the lack of a covered play area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning results in good achievement.
 - The very good induction process familiarises children with routines and expectations of behaviour.
 - The warm caring relationships encourage children to take an active part in lessons and form good relationships with others.
 - Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and develop.
 - There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop independence and learn to take more responsibility for their own learning.
49. Children take turns well when playing on the scooters and tricycles. In lessons they listen attentively to stories and really enjoy 'conversations' with the puppets used by teachers to engage their interest. They show very positive and responsible attitudes towards books. In free play and creative activities they select from a given range of resources, share equipment and work quietly with good levels of concentration, as was seen in a lesson about colour mixing. They clear away sensibly, wash their hands and get ready for the next activity. The teachers create a very calm, reflective atmosphere at the end of sessions and all the children join in the prayers as part of a worshipping community. However, children do not have enough opportunities to make choices by discussing their learning and taking more responsibility for what they need to learn next. Most children will meet and some exceed national expectations by the end of the reception year in this area of learning. The previous inspection did not report on personal, social and emotional development and therefore no comparisons can be made.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of basic skills such as phonics and letter formation is very good.
 - There is a strong emphasis on developing positive attitudes to reading.
 - Opportunities to write in free play activities are well planned.
 - There are good opportunities for speaking and listening.
 - Children achieve well and enjoy their learning.
 - Some writing lessons are too long and there is not enough structured support.
50. Overall, teaching and learning are good and children are achieving well. There was no overall judgement in the last inspection report and therefore comparisons about provision cannot be made. The staff use a wide range of very effective strategies. Puppets and other toys are used to very good effect. Children are encouraged to listen to each other, repeat rhyming songs and take part in action games. Teachers ask questions to make sure that every child is actively listening in story time and wait patiently for the less confident children to organise their thoughts and explain what they think or feel. Most children speak clearly and are keen to talk about what they are doing although there are a few who are reticent. In role-play they assume voices of characters such as 'super hero' and show an interesting range of vocabulary! The initial sounds of words are taught very well. Most children are learning their sounds quickly and many of the older children can write their names and recognise the letters out of context. A few are trying to write their own words and phrases showing recognisable letters and many enjoy 'writing' as a free choice activity. Children frequently share a book with an adult and this develops positive attitudes. A few children recognise simple words but others have difficulty in understanding the direction of reading text. Children enjoy book browsing and most can tell the story from pictures. They know they can find out information from books and often choose to sit in the book area. Most children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the year but a few will struggle to do so.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Songs and rhymes are used very effectively to reinforce learning.
 - Free play activities further reinforce what has been previously taught.
 - There could be more appropriately matched mathematical prompts in classrooms.
 - Opportunities for mathematical development in other lessons are not always developed.
 - Equipment for sorting and counting could be improved.
51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children's achievement is also satisfactory. This is similar to findings in the last inspection. Teachers use songs and rhymes such as Five Fat Sausages to effectively reinforce number concepts. Free play activities such as pattern making with coloured pegs effectively reinforce what has been taught previously and children enjoy explaining the patterns they have made. Some good use is made of spare minutes in school routines such as registration to count the number of boys and girls. However, mathematical language and concepts are not always developed in other lessons. For example, when making sandwiches the rich opportunities to use language such as 'less than', 'more than' and count the number of slices of bread and plates and knives were missed. There could be a stronger focus on mathematical development in class displays with more examples of mathematical language. About half the children can count numbers to ten and some can chant numbers much higher than that. Number recognition is slower but some pupils have made a good start. These children have only been in school for a few weeks and have not begun formal addition and subtraction, which was seen at the end of the year in the last inspection. Most should reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision or standards for this wide area of learning although the work seen was good and boys in particular used the computers very confidently. For example, during free play activities a group of boys could select from a limited menu and use the mouse to select colours and apply paint. One pair could split pages to create symmetrical patterns and all could use the eraser. Use of the computer has improved since the last inspection. Other children very much enjoyed using their senses when examining a range of fruit and the effective teaching in this lesson provided good opportunities for the development of observational and early investigational skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-organised opportunities for creative play and to encourage imagination.
 - Good adult pupil interaction to encourage new ideas.
 - There is too small a range of attractive 'table top toys' to give enough choice to children who wish to play quietly.
52. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well because of the good range of activities and opportunities provided for them. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average. Classrooms are set up with role-play areas to encourage creative play and speaking and listening. The children use the tools and equipment such as drills and hammers and household items to act out familiar scenes. Some of the boys found other uses for the drills and used them as laser stunners when playing 'super heroes' and the teacher dealt with this sensitively so as not to stifle their imaginative play. Interaction with puppet characters in literacy and numeracy lessons encourages imaginative responses. Children are taught how to mix colours and there was great excitement when green was produced. They handle brushes and select paints with confidence and thoroughly enjoy selecting from a range of spangles, shapes and glitter to decorate their musical instruments. Most children will meet the expected standard by the end of the year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Not enough physical activity was seen during the inspection to make a secure judgement about provision or standards but timetables show there are not enough opportunities for vigorous exercise. The provision of an outdoor secure play area has improved provision since the last inspection. However, play with sand and water is still restricted for much of the year because there is no outdoor covered area. There is insufficient provision of push/pull toys to meet the needs of all children. However, opportunities for children to use ride-on toys and develop skills with simple tools are good and children are achieving well. They scoot and pedal and most can stop and start showing good control. They use simple tools such as rollers, shape cutters and cylinder sieves when working with play dough and most can use scissors with confidence to cut materials when making musical instruments. Most children hold pencils and paint brushes correctly and some of the boys can confidently manipulate a computer mouse. When taking part in action songs they can run, jump and stretch.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 1 and 2.
- Very good teaching of writing by the specialist teacher.
- Pupils have a good understanding of their own learning in Years 5 and 6.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not achieving well enough as expectations are not high enough.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to work together, or be involved in discussion and role play.
- Teamwork between the subject manager and the specialist writing teacher is not strong enough.

Commentary

53. Standards are above average in Year 2. In Year 6 standards are average overall, although reading is above average. This indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection in Year 2 but standards have fallen in Year 6. Writing is now average whereas it was above average at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6. This is similar to the last findings of the last inspection although the achievement of pupils in Year 1 is improving. The school has quite rightly identified that pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not achieving well enough and some pupils make little or no progress over the course of a year. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving similarly to other pupils, based on their prior learning.
54. Standards in Year 2 are above average when compared to similar schools and these have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 know some of the spelling rules related to plurals. They understand the structure of stories and can create a simple story plan. They enjoy discussing new ideas for a story in a familiar setting. Pupils show very positive attitudes towards reading and are achieving well.
55. Although some lessons lack zest in delivery and content, relationships in Years 1 and 2 are very good and basic skills are taught very well. Teachers keep detailed reading records that support good achievement. The subject manager demonstrates a good range of strategies to involve pupils in their learning and engage their interest. A very good example of this was seen in a lesson where the teacher role-played a conversation with the teaching assistant using a lion puppet to create a different plot for a familiar story. The pupils were entranced with the answers given to their questions and this set the scene very effectively for them to create their own story plans.
56. Good opportunities for speaking and listening in Years 1 and 2 are planned through partner work and role-play activities. However, the latter is not linked to the learning objective for the lesson so opportunities to practise vocabulary or rehearse a story plan orally are missed. Sometimes teachers speak too loudly, which inhibits pupil participation and does not create a calm learning environment.
57. Standards in speaking and listening and in reading in Year 6 are above average overall and have been maintained since the last inspection. When they are given the opportunity to do so, pupils can discuss and put forward their own points of view, showing the ability to be reflective. However, there is insufficient provision for speaking through drama, discussion and collaborative work. This would also encourage quality in pupils' writing. The latter is not as good as it could be although there are some examples of well constructed and well presented work in history and religious education. Pupils discuss favourite books and authors and confidently use books for research. Girls enjoy reading and need little prompting to do so; the boys are much less enthusiastic! Teachers keep detailed reading records and all pupils frequently share a book with an adult. This provision is strongly reflected in the above average reading standards.

58. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is more variable than for the younger pupils but overall is satisfactory, though relationships and the management of pupils are good throughout. This is a similar judgement to the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning provided by the specialist writing teacher is consistently at least good and from work seen often very good. However, evidence from work seen and from end-of-year test results indicates that a significant amount of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory and this is reflected in pupils' lack of achievement in reading and writing. In some lessons expectations are too low, marking is not detailed or related to the learning objectives and pupils do not work hard enough. This means that teachers in Years 5 and 6 have to work very hard to improve standards and encourage pupils to have high expectations of their own achievement. Overall they do this well.
59. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work and can discuss what they find most difficult. Teachers have high expectations of concentration and effort and marking is generally sharply focused on what pupils need to do to improve. Lessons are generally fast paced and teachers use a range of effective strategies such as 'hot seating' and note taking from text to prepare for writing an autobiography as Socrates, for example.
60. End-of-year standardised assessment tests track pupils' achievement. Nevertheless results are not yet used to set challenging targets year on year for individual pupils. Day-to-day assessments by teachers in Years 3 to 6 are not sufficiently accurate and this limits the effect of target setting for improvement. The use of assessment was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection and this has not yet been fully addressed. Regular moderated assessment of writing has yet to embed and have an impact on standards.
61. The school has identified that standards in writing need to be improved. Although writing standards are broadly average there are examples of exceptional writing. The publication 'Words come Tumbling Down' has examples that are rich in imagery, empathy and imagination from across the school. However, what is evident in books and day-to-day work does not always reflect what pupils are capable of, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Presentation often shows a lack of pride and handwriting is not consistently joined and fluent by the time pupils reach Year 5. There is insufficient challenge for the highest attaining pupils. This indicates a fall in standards since the last inspection. Too much time is spent on literacy in isolation and not enough time is spent crafting a finished piece of writing. ICT is used in some lessons but the programs are not well matched to pupils' attainment levels so they do not learn enough. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, higher attaining pupils using a program to reinforce verb endings found the work too easy.
62. The subject manager provides good leadership and shows a strong commitment to improving standards. Good decisions regarding deployment of high quality teaching assistants, target setting and record keeping are beginning to have a positive impact on raising achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Literacy links across the curriculum are not sufficiently well planned. The employment of the specialist writing teacher is having a positive impact on the classes she teaches. However, she works in isolation and not as part of a team with the subject manager and her time and expertise could be used more effectively

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- There are weaknesses in using and applying mathematics, which the school has identified.

Commentary

64. In classes for Year 1 and 2 pupils, an emphasis on questioning and discussion, and on practical activities, has helped pupils to develop and understand mathematical concepts well, and thereby attain above average standards by the end of Year 2. In Years 5 and 6, setting arrangements, along with booster support, have enabled teaching and learning to be well focused on different groups, so that pupils of all capabilities achieve well and attain above average standards overall. These standards are similar to those found at the last inspection and have recovered from the lower standards attained in national tests in 1999. Achievement in Years 3 and 4, particularly of higher attaining pupils, is only satisfactory, however, as insufficient account is taken of prior attainment. This means that teachers in Years 5 and 6 have to work very hard to improve standards and encourage pupils to have high expectations of their own achievement. Overall they do this well.
65. An analysis of pupils' past work shows insufficient opportunities for using and applying mathematical skills, both in the subject itself and in other curriculum areas. Analysis of assessment data by the subject manager supports this. In Years 1 and 2 pupils think around problems and are eager to respond to questions. However, some overuse of worksheets and workbooks has not encouraged pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, to begin to record their workings out and show how solutions are reached. In Years 3 to 6 current work in science shows a clear improvement in the use of these skills.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall; it is good in Years 1 and 2. Two very good lessons were seen in the classes for Year 1 and 2 pupils where teachers had high expectations. Open and carefully targeted questions enabled pupils to develop a good understanding of two-dimensional shapes, their names and basic properties. From their responses teachers were able to assess this understanding and move pupils forward in their learning. Very good use was made of teaching assistants, who managed practical activities well and continued to talk purposefully with pupils. Full, appropriate use was made of technology throughout lessons. Introductions were enhanced with the use of an overhead projector and an interactive whiteboard, and pupils used a computer program to draw different shapes.
67. An analysis of past work in Years 5 and 6 provides strong evidence of good teaching and learning that resulted in high standards and good achievement. Exercise books show positive comments in marking, which inform pupils how they can improve. Work is generally well presented and shows that pupils have worked hard in lessons throughout the year. Homework is used regularly and well to support learning in class. However, in lessons seen in Years 3 and 4 not all pupils were challenged sufficiently in their work on shape to move them far enough forward from the high standards achieved in Year 2. Insufficient use was made of a practical approach in Year 5 for lower attaining pupils to develop their understanding. There are not yet any numeracy targets on individual education plans to help teachers plan more effective provision for pupils with special educational needs.
68. Teachers manage pupils well and behaviour in lessons is good. However, positive attitudes to learning are not encouraged when pupils have to sit on the carpet for too long, or when questioning and discussion does not engage all pupils.
69. The subject leader has a clear picture of the provision and where improvements need to be made, for example in Year 3 where achievement levels out. There has been some monitoring of teaching and learning, and areas for development identified. This is similar to the situation reported at the last inspection. Individual progress is now carefully tracked throughout the

school, but this is not yet providing end-of-year targets for all pupils to aim towards and for teachers to plan more carefully. Short-term targets are now shared with pupils, which they are keen to achieve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. The provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils use an appropriate range of measures and older pupils use skills such as finding a median and sometimes bar and line graphs in science and pupils practise their mathematical skills using ICT but numeracy is not strongly featured in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average standards are reached by pupils in Year 2.
- The revised way of teaching experimental and investigative science is raising standards.
- Teaching is good across the school.
- Teaching assistants give very good support to pupils and teachers.
- Insufficient use is made of pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

71. Standards in science in Year 2 are above average and pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Although standards are average in Year 6, a similar picture to that of the last inspection, there is clear evidence from this inspection that standards are rising in Years 3 to 6 owing to improving provision. Achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6 because improved teaching methods are too recent to have had a full impact and assessment procedures are not fully developed. This latter factor has an impact mainly on the higher attaining pupils who do not have sufficient opportunities to plan their own investigations or analyse data.
72. In last year's national tests, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 declined significantly from the previous year and the school has taken appropriate action to improve pupils' investigative skills. Last term, the subject manager, with help from the local education authority science adviser, introduced a format for guiding pupils and teachers through investigations. This is already established well in all year groups. It has sharpened teachers' questioning skills and is improving pupils' understanding of prediction and fair testing and helping them to frame questions. It was seen to good effect in a Year 4 lesson on the insulating properties of different materials.
73. The quality of teaching is good overall and teaching assistants provide very effective support because they help pupils to understand vocabulary and concepts rather than just helping them complete tasks. Younger pupils get a good start in developing their scientific skills because skilled questioning by teachers develops their observational skills and guides their reasoning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were helped to consider aspects of growth more carefully when making comparisons between their age and height. This greater involvement of pupils in their work is an improvement since the last inspection.
74. The analysis of pupils' work from last year and teachers' planning shows that pupils were taught all elements of the subject but most of the work was set at average levels and did not promote high standards. There was too low an expectation for the quality of recording or for older pupils to reach independent conclusions. Lower attaining pupils did not always complete work. This indicates that assessment information is not always used well to match work to

pupils' needs. The limited evidence from this term indicates that pupils' recording is becoming better organised. Pupils use a satisfactory range of measures in their scientific work and are beginning to incorporate ICT as a tool for learning. Pupils learn a good range of scientific vocabulary but are not using writing skills sufficiently in accounts of their work.

75. The subject manager took over responsibility for the subject at the beginning of this term so it is not possible to make a judgement on her impact on standards and quality. There was a useful induction period when she worked collaboratively with the previous subject manager. She is enthusiastic about her new role and has compiled a suitable action plan for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 to attain above average standards.
- Good assessment procedures are now in place.
- Mixed ability pairing in lessons is not effective.
- The ICT technician gives valuable support but responsibility for management of the subject is unclear.
- Resources for the subject are good.

Commentary

76. Individual record books for pupils in Year 2 show that good progress has been made in all areas of the subject, and that standards are above average. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Similar standards were reported at the last inspection.
77. The recently introduced pupil record book is beginning to have a positive impact on raising achievement and standards. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the two lessons seen some pupils could have made greater progress if assessment data were available and used to inform planning. In one lesson Year 5 and 6 pupils were learning the skills connected with multi-media presentations. Although the task challenged older and higher attaining pupils, it was not suitable for younger or lower attaining ones. Mixed ability pairing was used in this lesson and also in a lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils on improving text. This restricted the progress of the higher attaining pupils and did not provide sufficient support for those having more difficulty. Teachers are beginning to use interactive whiteboards to good effect in some lessons.
78. Recent improvements in ICT provision are due largely to the hard and effective work of the school's technician. The majority of the school's computers are now networked. She has helped to organise the curriculum, drawing on national guidelines, and has compiled the pupil record book linked to the programmes of study. This provision means that pupils enjoy their work in ICT, they understand its usefulness as a tool for learning and are well motivated. The technician fulfils some of the roles of leadership and management, but there is a lack of clarity as to where full responsibilities ultimately lie. The school has a good level of resources for ICT.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Programs to support learning in other subjects have been introduced but the use and effectiveness of these resources has yet to be fully evaluated. For example, the inspection found that programs used to support literacy and numeracy were not always at a level appropriate to the attainment level of pupils or the content of the lesson being taught.

HUMANITIES

Work in geography was not inspected and work in history was sampled.

80. In a history lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils, CD ROMs and web sites were used to carry out simple research into Ancient Greece. Folders containing evidence of pupils' work in the study unit on the Victorians showed that pupils had carried out research using a limited range of sources and have factual knowledge about key events in the period. In Years 3 and 4 pupils studied what Victorian childhood was like compared to their own and how everyday things had changed over time. In Years 5 and 6 higher attaining pupils were able to make comparisons about the different strata of society and the consequences and opportunities for people's lives.
81. Planning shows that the school does not give enough time to history and geography to enable pupils to develop skills systematically or to do enough investigative and field work. There is not enough time to appropriately deliver all the elements and study units set out in the National Curriculum. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed good literacy links and some good written work but the use of first hand evidence and the increasing use of historical skills was not evident. Standards are below average and pupils' achievement unsatisfactory.
82. The school provides above average time for the teaching of religious education. This will be inspected by a Section 23 inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education was inspected in full and is reported below. Work in art, design and technology and music was sampled.

83. Inspectors saw part of only one lesson in design and technology and one art lesson. The provision of a scheme of work for design and technology represents an improvement since the last inspection. The one lesson seen, for Year 3 and 4 pupils, occupied a whole afternoon. This session was too long for pupils to give of their best throughout. Evidence from displayed work indicates that pupils' work in art is similar to that seen in most schools but there are no examples of work by significant artists around the school to inspire pupils. The one lesson seen, for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, showed that drawing skills are being taught well in these year groups. Pupils sketched Greek urns with regard to proportion and shading, skills previously practised in their sketchbooks. Work in the sketchbooks indicated a satisfactory level of achievement.
84. Standards of singing are above average and pupils approach music with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Extra-curricular activities provide good learning opportunities for some pupils. These musicians use their skills well to accompany the singing in hymn practices and concerts.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most lessons are structured and developed well.
- The development of pupils' evaluative skills is not consistent.
- Lack of a grassed area limits the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum.

Commentary

85. Pupils reach similar standards to those found in most schools in all strands of the physical education curriculum. This represents satisfactory achievement that results from the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning in the subject. However, this is a decline in standards since the last inspection when standards were above average.
86. Good teaching and learning seen in a gymnastics lessons for Year 5 and 6 pupils led to good achievement. There was useful discussion of the effects of exercise on the body during the warm-up session with reference to particular muscles. Strengths in the teaching included good control of the pupils, increasing the demand on pupils and good use of evaluation. Pupils were encouraged to improve their jumps and sequences and work in partnership through direction, experiment, practice and evaluation of their work. Good use of the teaching assistant was made in her observation and assessment of pupils.
87. However, teaching and learning are not consistent. In a satisfactory games lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils there was a clear lesson plan and the teacher explained the objectives of the lesson and safety rules clearly to pupils. Pupils responded well and put out equipment safely and effectively. As they practised a range of skills such as sliding, rolling and tumbling the teacher moved around advising and encouraging pupils. However, there was insufficient use of evaluation skills to help pupils understand how to improve their movements. Year 1 and 2 pupils took too long to change into their PE kit for a dance lesson and this resulted in insufficient time for the planned content of the lesson to be effectively managed so their learning was unsatisfactory.
88. Teaching assistants carry out some assessments but, as at the time of the last inspection, there are no procedures in place to track pupils' progress in all aspects of the subject. Pupils expressed their enjoyment of physical education but both pupils and parents reported that lessons were sometimes missed in favour of other activities such as music practice. There is little evidence to support their concern that the subject has a low priority. However, the lack of regular opportunities for the subject manager to monitor means that standards and provision are not checked for consistency.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

89. Religious education lessons provide good opportunities for personal, social and health education through the structured 'Here I am' programme and are contributing to the good attitudes and relationships evident in the school. The school is planning to further improve its provision. However, the regular use of time for pupils to sit in a circle to discuss sensitive issues has yet to be put in place. The planned school council is not yet operational. As yet, there is no comprehensive planning that draws the different strands of provision together and makes links across the curriculum. Teachers know their pupils well but keep no formal records of pupils' development in this area.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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