

# INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY MOTHER OF THE SAVIOUR CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Runcorn

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111378

Headteacher: Mrs A Synnott

Lead inspector: Mr F Ravey

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 March 2004

Inspection number: 257107

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   |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed  |
| Number on roll;              | 147  |
| School address:              | Lapwing Grove<br>Palacefields<br>Runcorn<br>Cheshire |
| Postcode:                    | WA7 2TP  |
| Telephone number:            | 01928 711921   |
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| Appropriate authority:       | Governing body                                       |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Father Adrian Tait                                   |
| Date of previous inspection: | 7 December 1998                                      |

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Primary School has fewer pupils on roll than most primary schools nationally. Nearly all pupils are from the White British ethnic background. No pupil is believed to have a first language other than English. The percentage of pupils having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. These needs are identified as difficulties with learning, speech and communication and behaviour. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Pupils' entitlement to free school meals is above the national average. Attainment on entry to the school varies but is below average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                 |                | Subject responsibilities  |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---|
| 11371                          | Mr F Ravey      | Lead inspector | English, history, music, physical education   |
| 19431                          | Mr J Holmes     | Lay inspector  |   |
| 27677                          | Mrs D Davenport | Team inspector | Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography |
| 25270                          | Mrs M Rayner    | Team inspector | Science, art and design, Foundation Stage, special educational needs                    |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school gives its pupils an acceptable standard of education** although it has serious weaknesses in teaching. Standards are above average in English and mathematics at Year 6 but elsewhere they vary considerably. Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching also vary considerably throughout the school. The school's leadership has successfully overseen a rise in standards in English and mathematics in recent years but school management has not ensured improvements in teaching where it is weak. As a result of the serious weaknesses in teaching, the school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- teaching is unsatisfactory overall in Years 3 to 5; and sometimes it is poor;
- pupils in Year 6 achieve well in English and mathematics to attain above average standards, owing to good teaching and good provision;
- children in the Foundation Stage achieve well owing to good teaching;
- behaviour is mostly good but that of a small minority of pupils is unsatisfactory and sometimes poor;
- the school takes good care of its pupils;
- it makes good provision for moral and social development;
- attendance is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory;
- provision for making pupils aware of cultural diversity is unsatisfactory.

Since the school was last inspected, in December 1998, standards in literacy and numeracy have risen well, especially in Year 6, but standards in science have not risen so successfully. In relation to the issues raised in the previous inspection report, assessment is not yet used satisfactorily in some year groups to help teachers plan work that matches pupils' learning needs. The school now has a satisfactory plan for strategic development. However, the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and the role of governors in checking the work of the school have not developed sufficiently. Issues relating to the outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage have still not been resolved. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection, mainly on the basis of improved standards in literacy and numeracy.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.** In the Foundation Stage, children achieve well. By Year 2, standards are average except in reading, where they are above average. Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and they achieve satisfactorily in writing although higher attaining pupils could do better in this subject. By Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and pupils achieve well in these subjects. Standards of work seen in Year 6 broadly reflect the recent test results for English compared with all schools nationally (shown in the above table) but standards in mathematics this year are not at the very high level they have been in recent years, when attainment was in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Pupils also achieve well information and communication technology (ICT) although standards in this subject are average. Standards in science are broadly average in Year 6, an improvement on last year's test

performance, and pupils largely achieve satisfactorily. Achievement overall in other parts of Years 3 to 6 is less strong and sometimes pupils underachieve. Pupils whose special educational needs relate to learning difficulties achieve satisfactorily throughout the school but those with behavioural difficulties do not achieve as well as they should in parts of Years 3 to 6. In physical education in Years 3 to 5, pupils do not reach the standards they should nor do they achieve as well as they should. **The development of pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall** although there are variations within these aspects. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are best in Year 6 and are also good overall in Years 1 and 2 and in the Foundation Stage. They are worst in relation to a significant minority of pupils in Years 3 to 5. The school makes good provision to teach pupils Christian values but its provision to make them aware of our society's cultural diversity is unsatisfactory. Attendance is well below the national average and punctuality is unsatisfactory, both despite the school's good efforts.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory overall** despite serious weaknesses in Years 3 to 5. It is good in the Foundation Stage, where it enables children to make good progress in developing early learning skills. It is satisfactory with some strengths in Years 1 and 2, and in these year groups has a good impact in helping pupils learn to read. Teaching is good in Year 6, helping pupils to achieve well in English and mathematics, but in Years 3 to 5 it is unsatisfactory, with pupils sometimes underachieving or behaving in an unacceptable manner. Whilst the school makes effective analysis of test data to help check pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy, the use of assessment information gained from checking pupils' written work is not as good as it should be in the Year 3 to 6 age group.

The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for its pupils although work is not adapted well enough to the learning needs of different groups of pupils in Years 3 to 5. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, consisting largely of cramped spaces that are too small for the groups of pupils they contain. The school cares well for its pupils, providing a friendly and supportive ethos. Links with parents are satisfactory whilst those with other schools are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory overall.** School leadership is satisfactory overall, largely because it enables staff to implement a shared vision for raising standards so that pupils leave the school with above average standards in English and mathematics. However, school management is unsatisfactory in ensuring that a consistently acceptable quality of teaching is available to pupils throughout the school. The governing body is very supportive of the school and very committed to it but governance is unsatisfactory overall as the governing body is not sufficiently aware of the school's weaknesses and so cannot act in a way that holds it fully to account for its work. The governing body meets all statutory requirements.

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

Parents mostly have supportive views of the school. However a significant minority feels that they are not kept well informed about their child's progress and that the school does not consult and seek their views. Inspectors found that communications with parents are satisfactory although there is some room for improvement. Pupils also have positive views of the school although about one third of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire seeking their views expressed some level of concern about the behaviour of other children. Inspectors found that pupils mostly behave appropriately although on occasions a significant minority do not, especially in Years 3 to 5.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise the quality of teaching where it is poor, unsatisfactory or less effective than it should be;
- implement a rigorous programme for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching;
- raise standards of behaviour for the small minority of poorly behaved pupils;
- make better use of assessment information to help pupils' improve their work;
- raise levels of attendance and punctuality;

- implement a programme to raise pupils' awareness and appreciation of the cultural diversity of our society.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

**Standards are average overall by Year 6 but they are above average in English and mathematics and pupils in Year 6 achieve well in these subjects. In Year 2, standards are average overall but above average in reading, where pupils achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve satisfactorily but those with behavioural difficulties in Years 3 to 5 achieve unsatisfactorily.**

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

- Pupils in Year 6 achieve well in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) owing to good teaching and good provision of learning opportunities.
- Pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve well owing to good teaching and good support for learning.
- Standards in reading are above average in Year 2 and pupils achieve well owing well-planned provision for teaching early reading skills.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 5 do not achieve as well as they should overall owing to weaknesses in teaching.
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties in Years 3 to 5 do not achieve as well as they should because of weaknesses in the management of their behaviour and inconsistencies in provision for these pupils.

#### **Commentary**

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 16.4 (17.1)    | 15.7 (15.8)      |
| writing       | 14.5 (16.4)    | 14.6 (14.4)      |
| mathematics   | 16.6 (18.3)    | 16.3 (16.5)      |

*There were 21 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 2003***

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 27.8 (29.1)    | 26.8 (27.0)      |
| mathematics   | 30.0 (30.5)    | 26.8 (26.7)      |
| science       | 27.5 (30.9)    | 28.6 (28.3)      |

*There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. The tables above show that at Year 2 pupils were successful in attaining standards overall last year that were broadly average, compared with those nationally. Standards the year before were significantly above average at Year 2. At Year 6, pupils' have been successful in attaining standards that are above average in English and very high in mathematics at Year 6. As pupils



start school with attainment that is broadly below average, this indicates good progress and good achievement overall in these subjects.

2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2 have improved well in recent years. When compared with all schools nationally, standards attained in the most recent national tests were above average in reading and were average in writing and mathematics. Standards in Year 2 this year are at similar levels in these subjects. When compared with schools in similar circumstances, most recent standards are well above average in reading and mathematics and are above average in writing. This indicates that pupils last year made very good progress in reading and mathematics although this year progress is good.
3. Last year's figures for Year 2 tests are a broadly accurate reflection of the trend in results over recent years. Overall, standards at the school have risen at a better rate than nationally. Given that pupils' starting point for their education is generally average when they start Year 1, having achieved well in the Foundation Stage, these results represent good progress overall in developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and show that pupils achieve well. However, progress in writing is no more than satisfactory owing to a continued lack of sufficient attainment to the higher National Curriculum level. This indicates some weakness in achievement in writing for higher attaining pupils. In other subjects at Year 2, standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Standards attained in Year 1 present a broadly similar pattern to Year 2.
4. Standards in English, mathematics and science at Year 6 have also improved well overall in recent years and at a better rate than nationally. In 2003, test results were above average overall when compared with all schools nationally. Standards in mathematics were very high but those in science were below average. When compared with schools whose pupils have similar levels of attainment in Year 2, a similar picture emerges but compared with schools in similar social circumstances, attainment overall was well above average. Standards in mathematics are high owing to effective teaching in Year 6; those in science are lower because pupils do not have enough opportunities to become independent investigators and select their own resources. In other subjects at Year 6, standards are broadly average but pupils achieve well in lessons in information and communication technology (ICT) owing to well planned teaching. This is especially the case in relation to developing the skills of numeracy through ICT. In other subjects, achievement is average overall but is below average in physical education, owing to weaknesses in teaching in parts of the age group.
5. The school sets challenging targets for English and mathematics in Year 6 and has had considerable success in meeting these. This is due to a well-organised curriculum for English and mathematics and to effective teaching of these subjects in Year 6. Additional provision in Year 6, in the form of out of school clubs for English, mathematics and science, also helps to raise standards.
6. In Years 3 to 5, pupils sometimes do not achieve satisfactorily in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and PE. Progress over time is inconsistent and sometimes unsatisfactory, for example in spelling and handwriting. Expectations of what pupils should achieve are generally not high enough. A significant factor in lack of progress and unsatisfactory achievement in lessons is ineffective and sometimes poor management of pupils' behaviour in some lessons in Years 3 to 5. This leads to some pupils not engaging in learning and in others being prevented from learning as they should. Another significant factor is that work is sometimes not well matched to pupils' learning needs and does not provide sufficient challenge for them to learn.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily overall. However, there is a mixed picture. Pupils with learning difficulties mostly achieve the appropriate targets set for them in their individual education plans. Support staff make a significant contribution to helping pupils with identified behavioural difficulties achieve. In spite of this, achievement for these pupils is unsatisfactory overall because behaviour improvement plans are not applied consistently.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

**Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall. They are very good in Year 6 but sometimes unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 5. The school makes satisfactory provision overall for developing pupils' personal qualities. Attendance is well below average.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils enjoy school life and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour around the school and in some year groups is good. Behaviour in Year 6 is often very good.
- There is a significant dip in behaviour in lessons in Years 3, 4 and 5
- The school enables pupils to develop a good sense of moral values and to develop a good awareness of how to live in a community, However, provision to develop awareness of cultural diversity is unsatisfactory.
- Attendance during the last academic year was well below national average and is poor.

### Commentary

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

| Authorised absence |      | Unauthorised absence |      |
|--------------------|------|----------------------|------|
| School data        | 7.7% | School data          | 0.7% |
| 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.*

8. The level of absence due to parents taking children on holidays in term time has a large impact on the poor attendance figures. The school informs parents of the need to attend regularly and not to take holidays in term time unless unavoidable. Unfortunately a number of parents do not comply with this requirement and the absence due to holidays constitutes a substantial proportion of the overall figure. The trend for the current year is that the attendance shows a similar pattern to the previous year. The school is working hard to improve attendance. It has systems in place to monitor and promote good attendance and works closely with local agencies to track absences. It tries hard to present a positive view of attendance to its pupils, for example by presenting good attendance certificates and a trophy each week to the class with the best attendance record. Punctuality is unsatisfactory for a small minority of pupils.
9. Many pupils enjoy school and express positive views about it. They are friendly, polite and helpful around school, have positive attitudes and values and behave well, particularly in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and Year 6. However, the behaviour of a significant number of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 is unsatisfactory and the atmosphere is not conducive to learning for this age group. A significant number of pupils do not respect staff and they disrupt lessons. By contrast behaviour around the school other than in lessons is good and at times it is very good, for example in the dining room at lunchtime. As a result of these variations, attitudes and behaviour are judged to be satisfactory overall. Pupils themselves express largely positive views about behaviour although a few express concerns. The table below shows that few pupils were excluded last year. In many ways, this is representative of behaviour in the school except for the significant pockets of misbehaviour in Years 3 to 5.

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

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

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                             | 146                  | 1                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                    | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

10. The development of pupils' personal qualities is satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' moral development is good but that for cultural development is unsatisfactory. The school places an appropriate emphasis on provision for spiritual development through assemblies and caring for one another. This was demonstrated through an assembly to promote appreciation and giving thanks for the world around us
11. The school provides a clear understanding of the principles that distinguish right from wrong and this largely impacts positively on behaviour around school although there are weaknesses in some classes. Pupils can discuss their own behaviour and see how their actions affect others. They are provided with satisfactory opportunities to learn about British cultural traditions and they also learn about a range of other faiths and cultures through subjects such as religious education and geography. Appropriate consideration is given to artists from other times, backgrounds and cultures. However, the school lacks planned provision across the curriculum to help pupils develop their awareness and appreciation of the richness of cultural diversity in our society. Whilst this aspect is addressed through subjects such as religious education and personal and social education, the school lacks a structured approach throughout the curriculum to ensure that every opportunity is taken to develop awareness of cultural diversity and to celebrate it.
12. Good initiatives such as the use of play leaders give children responsibility for others at playtime and pupils are active helpers for example in the dining room. This promotes personal and social development well but pupils have limited opportunities to develop independence, initiative and increasing levels of responsibility in lessons.

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

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall although there are some serious weaknesses in teaching.**

#### **Teaching and learning**

**Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in the Foundation Stage. They are satisfactory with some strengths in Years 1 and 2. They are unsatisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6 although good in Year 6. Assessment is satisfactory overall but with some weaknesses.**

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

- Teaching in Years 3 to 5 has serious weaknesses relating to the management of pupils' behaviour and the planning and organisation of learning activities, resulting in underachievement and misbehaviour by some pupils.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage provides pupils with a good start to their schooling, enabling them to make good progress and achieve well.

- Teaching in Year 6 enables pupils to achieve well through carefully organised, purposeful learning.
- Teaching also has a good impact overall upon achievement in ICT and in some lessons seen in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is successful whereas that of pupils with behavioural difficulties is sometimes unsuccessful.
- Assessment information gained from pupils' work is not used as effectively as it could be in the Year 3 to 6 age group.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor  | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|-------|-----------|
| 0         | 0         | 14 (41%) | 16( 47%)     | 1(3%)          | 2(6%) | 1(3%)     |

*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.*

13. The impact of teaching upon learning varies considerably throughout the school. However, the overall impact of teaching upon pupils leaving this school at the end of Year 6 is one of good achievement in literacy and numeracy – and this has been the case consistently in recent years. In other areas this year, pupils are also achieving well in ICT in Year 6 and there is nothing to suggest underachievement in this age group. This good impact has to weigh significantly when coming to an overall judgement on teaching in a school where it is good in some areas and has serious weaknesses in another. The judgement that teaching is satisfactory overall is based upon the skills and good standards that pupils consistently take with them from the school – the strongest measure of its 'added value' to their education.
14. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to their education owing to a high expectation of what they should achieve. This is underpinned by good relationships between staff and children and by firm management of children's behaviour. Teaching is well organised and confident, and where learning actively engages children's attention, they are keen to work and they achieve well. Occasionally, the lack of purpose in activities provided for learning through play restricts children in developing ideas and skills but overall children learn purposefully and happily, making good progress in developing their skills and understanding.
15. At the other end of the school's age range, teaching in Year 6 also has a good impact upon pupils' learning and enables them to achieve well, especially in mathematics and English but also in ICT. In these subjects, all groups of pupils engage in purposeful learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, providing them with challenging tasks and making it clear why pupils are attaining good standards in the national tests in English and mathematics. Teaching of science is not quite so successful, with work sometimes not providing higher attainers with sufficient level of challenge and hence restricting their progress. Overall, however, the impact of teaching in Year 6 is good, and especially in the links made between ICT and numeracy. Visiting teachers from the local high school add further strength in French and music. As a result, pupils respond well, behave very well and are good learners.
16. The effectiveness of teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 is indicated by the fact that just over two-thirds of lessons observed in these age groups were of good quality. However, the lack of any very good teaching observed also reflects the lack of an additional degree of creativity in the teaching that on occasions would have taken learning to an even higher level.
17. In Years 1 and 2, teaching has at least a satisfactory impact upon pupils' learning, and sometimes its impact is good. Well-organised provision for reading is backed up by a consistent

and effective approach to teaching basic skills in this subject. Good relationships and a firm approach to managing pupils' behaviour provide pupils with a good environment in which to learn although the management of behaviour for a few pupils in Year 2 is sometimes difficult and less successful.

18. In Years 3 to 5, the management of pupils' behaviour causes serious difficulties that sometimes interfere with learning to a significant degree. This is compounded by some lessons that lack sufficient challenge for learning and fail to stretch higher and average attaining pupils. This was very evident in the unsatisfactory and poor teaching seen in these year groups but was also seen as weaknesses in lessons that overall were judged to be satisfactory. Teachers often struggled to manage the challenging behaviour caused by a few pupils but this was sometimes exacerbated by ineffective lesson planning and poor use of accommodation. Sometimes the expectation of what pupils should achieve was too low and occasionally the poor behaviour of a few meant that others could not learn. In some lessons, failure to manage such poor behaviour impacted negatively on achievement. The teacher followed the school's guidelines for managing unacceptable behaviour but this was ineffective in modifying that behaviour. On other occasions, teaching was less than satisfactory when pupils were not provided with the techniques needed to help them develop key skills in a lesson.
19. Teaching in Years 3 to 5 showed some good features, notably when behaviour management was more successful and when a teacher provided good organisation, good praise and was able to explain clearly what pupils should do. However, overall teaching for pupils in these year groups is unsatisfactory. Nearly half the lessons observed in these year groups during the inspection were judged to be less than satisfactory, with some poor and very poor teaching seen. The rest of lessons were judged to be satisfactory although containing some weaknesses. No good or very good teaching was seen in Years 3 to 5, indicating a lack of robustness in the teaching. The impact is that pupils in these year groups do not, overall, achieve as well as they should.
20. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils with special educational needs and make a good contribution to the management of behaviour and learning throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties respond well to the good support they are given and make at least satisfactory progress in lessons. However, pupils identified as having behavioural problems do not respond as well to the targets set in their individual behaviour plans, especially in Years 3 to 5 when the teacher is not supported by another member of staff. Occasionally, these pupils behave in a way that is dangerous to other pupils.
21. All test and assessment results in literacy and numeracy are analysed and recorded appropriately to track pupils' progress through the school. Assessment in other subjects is based largely on the expectations in the unit of work being studied, although in information and communication technology the local authority system is appropriately used to record pupils' attainment against National Curriculum levels. However, information gathered from pupils' work is not used as well as it should be in the Year 3 to 6 age group to help teachers plan work that meets pupils' learning needs. Although whole class targets are regularly set for literacy and numeracy, pupils do not have targets to match their individual needs. Teachers' written marking does not often explain how pupils might improve their work.

## The curriculum

**Curricular provision is satisfactory. A satisfactory range of activities enriches the curriculum during and outside the normal school day. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory overall although resources are satisfactory.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provided for the children in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- Additional provision in literacy and numeracy for pupils in Year 6 has a positive impact on achievement.
- Provision for ICT is good, enabling skills to be used well in other subjects.
- Teachers' planning does not always meet the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 5.
- In some year groups, the school does not successfully ensure all pupils have equal opportunity to do as well as they can.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and impacts negatively on the quality of teaching and learning.

### Commentary

22. The breadth of curricular opportunities is satisfactory. Planning is clearly based on national and local guidelines and in most classes is suitably adapted to pupils' needs. The curriculum planned for the Foundation Stage is good. It is clearly linked to the national guidelines with a varied range of practical activities to develop children's skills in all six areas of learning. However, planning is often ineffective for pupils in Years 3 to 5. Here, work is not adapted closely enough to the learning needs of different groups of pupils. The provision for ICT is good and is used effectively across many areas of the curriculum. It is used well to enhance pupils' skills of literacy and numeracy on a daily basis through the effective use of the interactive whiteboards.
23. Pupils of all ages have access to a good range of extra-curricular clubs. Weekly homework clubs for Year 6 pupils contribute to the standards they attain in National Curriculum tests. A satisfactory range of opportunities is provided for pupils to participate in inter-school sporting activities and in performances in and away from school. These activities, together with visits and visitors to the school, further enrich the curriculum and contribute satisfactorily to pupils' personal development and to their overall achievement. Some parents expressed concern over the lack of educational visits, especially residential ones. Inspectors found that provision is improving and is satisfactory, with a residential visit planned for later in the school year.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Their individual education plans have clear targets for literacy, numeracy and, where appropriate, for behaviour. However, there is little indication in teachers' planning as to how the targets are used to plan specific learning for these pupils. Provision for pupils with behavioural difficulties is not as well developed and although the school has recently linked with a wider network in a behaviour improvement plan, it is too early to gauge the impact of this. Policies are reviewed regularly but do not include enough support for inexperienced staff to manage classroom behaviour effectively.
25. The school does not always successfully ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to achieve as well as they can. This is seen, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 5, where work is not well matched to their different abilities and does not sufficiently challenge the more able pupils. However, in other year groups, equality of opportunity is well assured by the match of work to pupils' learning needs.

26. Not well suited to whole class teaching and restrict freedom of movement and flexibility within lessons. Some classes are taught in corridor areas and this results in lessons being interrupted when other pupils move around the school. There is still no suitable outdoor play area for the children in the Foundation Stage. This was an issue at the last inspection which has not been satisfactorily addressed.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**The school has in place effective procedures for child protection. All aspects of care, welfare, health and safety are good. Support and guidance are satisfactory overall. Pupils' views are taken into account satisfactorily.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a safe, secure environment.
- The relationships between pupils and staff are good.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are good.
- Assessment of pupils' academic progress in Years 3 to 6 does not guide them sufficiently about how to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

27. The school takes good care of its pupils. It has in place sound health and safety policies and procedures in line with the local authority recommendations as well as its own. It carries out all its statutory duties on health and safety, undertaking risk assessment and checks on equipment in the school. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Lunchtime is supervised well, with assistants taking good care of the pupils in the dining rooms and on the playground. The use of play equipment enhances pupils' well-being at lunchtime.
28. Child protection procedures are fully in place. The headteacher is the named person and another member of staff is also named. Staff know the procedures and a governor keeps the governing body informed of child protection matters. The head teacher liaises with local agencies as necessary. The school has suitability checks carried out on all adults who are to come into contact with pupils. It has good induction procedures for its pupils, with home visits carried out by the staff in order to help children feel at ease when they come to school and to begin assessing their needs.
29. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs. The school also holds a list of pupils causing concern. Targets on individual education plans are reviewed regularly and monitoring arrangements are in place. Pupils with identified behavioural difficulties know their targets for improvement and relate well to support staff although in some lessons the effectiveness of these targets is diminished by the teacher's ineffective management of pupils' behaviour.
30. Pupils report some concerns about bullying but say that the school councillors are able to deal with any problems. The pupils feel able to consult staff with any problems and they deal with any issues quickly and effectively. Pupils express the view that teachers help them and expect them to work hard. They generally enjoy good relationships with staff and fellow pupils. The school council has representatives from each year group and discusses how they might best improve the school; the council has just been re-established and the effectiveness has not yet been fully established.
31. The school has effective monitoring procedures for pupils' personal and social education. Whilst the school has sound procedures for checking progress in literacy and numeracy, as yet assessment procedures in Years 3 to 6 are not effective in providing pupils with the information they need in order to improve their work.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

**The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. It has good links with the local community and with other schools.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with the local high school and with the local parish are effective.

### **Commentary**

32. Parents are generally supportive of the school. They say that their children enjoy school and that they are learning as well as they can. However, a significant number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that they are not kept well informed about their child's progress and that the school does not consult them or seek their views. Inspectors found that, overall, communications with parents are satisfactory. The school provides consultation evenings each term and a written report in the summer term, which gives parents a picture of what their child can do and general targets. However, reports do not contain information for parents on how their children can improve their work in mathematics and English. The school has homework and reading diaries to help communicate with parents and if parents wish to discuss a problem they are able to arrange a meeting with the appropriate person. Meetings are held both formally and informally with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, although meetings about behavioural issues are not always documented.
33. The school has consulted parents on some issues and did have a 'Friends of Our Lady Association' but unfortunately due to lack of support it is no longer operating. The school sends out details each term of what is to be taught in order to keep parents satisfactorily informed about their children's learning. The school prospectus and annual report to parents are satisfactory although there are some minor omissions.
34. The school has satisfactory links with the wider community but good links with its Roman Catholic parish. The school has liturgical celebrations and the pupils participate in events organised by the parish. The parish priest leads special assemblies. The school organises visits to a residential home and to a hospital for carol singing each year. The school has visits from the local fire brigade, police and nurse.
35. The transition arrangements to the receiving secondary school are good. The secondary school sends teachers to the primary school to teach French and music. The secondary school sends teachers in to interview the pupils prior to transfer and the Year 6 teacher acts as a liaison from the primary school. Pupils have the opportunity to spend three days in the secondary school in order to make the transition as smooth as possible.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. Leadership is satisfactory but management is unsatisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governing body is committed to the school but is not sufficiently aware of its weaknesses.
- The headteacher and key staff have led good improvements in standards of literacy and numeracy in recent years.
- Procedures for checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.
- The governing body does not keep sufficiently close check on the effectiveness of major spending decisions.



## Commentary

36. The governing body is dedicated and very committed to the good of the school. They have helped shape the school's improvement in standards of literacy and numeracy in recent. In this, they have been assisted by the good quality of information about pupils' performance that they receive from the headteacher. The governing body fulfils all its statutory obligations and in that regard it is keeping a watchful eye on the school. However, governors are insufficiently aware of the school's weaknesses. This prevents them from holding the school properly to account for the quality of teaching and learning.
37. The headteacher and key staff have high aspirations for the school and provide good leadership for some key aspects of school improvement. Despite long-term illness, the headteacher is very committed to improving the school further. She is well supported by the senior teacher and together they provide strong leadership of those aspects of the curriculum concerned with developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Staff are committed to developing an inclusive school. However, school self-evaluation is not sufficiently grounded in a rigorous, extensive, first-hand programme of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Subject co-ordinators have some experience of checking the quality of teaching and learning but not as part of a rigorous programme. As a result, weaknesses in the teaching have not been sufficiently identified or addressed. The impact of the school's procedures for checking such a vital area of school activity is unsatisfactory. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed adequately. The co-ordinators liaise effectively with staff, parents and outside agencies. Essential documentation is in place and updated regularly.
38. As a result of falling numbers on roll, the governing body has decided to use its budget surplus in order to maintain present levels of staffing. However, it has not got in place systems for checking the value to the school of this very important decision, other than through analysis of national test and related school data. In view of the serious weaknesses identified in teaching and despite good improvements in national test results the school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Total income               | 399744 |
| Total expenditure          | 331791 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2272   |

| Balances (£)                        |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Balance from previous year          | 39791 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 67953 |

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

39. Although attainment on entry is just below average overall, mathematical development is at a higher level. Many children are starting to benefit from pre-school or nursery provision. Children start school in September and induction to school is carefully managed to enable them to quickly become secure and settled. During the time the children spend in Reception, achievement is good. Pupils' attainment is largely average when they start Year 1 although attainment in mathematical development is above average for a significant minority of pupils. Children with special educational needs make appropriate progress. Children achieve well because the teaching is good and there are high expectations for their learning. Assessment information is used well to make predictions for achievement in the next term. Staff work well together as a team, sharing strengths and expertise. Relationships and behaviour management are good and the children develop good attitudes towards learning.
40. Children do not, however, have sufficient opportunities for developing increasing independence, such as exploring and selecting materials and equipment. Although the inside area is spacious and used efficiently, outdoor provision is unsatisfactory for learning enrichment. There are plans to develop the outdoor environment at some stage, but both of these issues were noted during the previous inspection in 1998 and progress in addressing them is unsatisfactory.

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

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

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

- Children have positive attitudes to learning and relate well to adults and to each other.
- Children are confident in sharing their ideas.
- Adults have high expectations for behaviour
- The organisation of learning opportunities does not enable children to show increasing independence in selecting activities.

#### **Commentary**

41. Staff provide children with a good example in this area of learning. Good use of praise and encouragement helps to raise children's self-esteem and motivates them to work hard. Children feel valued and this gives them the confidence express their views and ideas. Clear references to appropriate behaviour help children to understand what is expected in the school and wider community. They concentrate and show high levels of involvement in their activities but there are too few opportunities for them to make choices and select their own materials for tasks. This restricts their personal development. Children achieve well and most are likely to attain the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

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

- Well-focused teaching with high expectations helps children to develop the early skills of reading and writing.

- Children's are not able to sustain listening skills for extended periods
- Children do not have enough opportunities for independent writing

### **Commentary**

42. In this area of learning, children achieve well and are on course to reach the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are interested and eager to contribute to class discussions. They listen to stories with developing concentration but some children have difficulty in listening to one another and call out inappropriately: for these children good listening skills need to be made more explicit. They also have difficulty in following recorded instructions in nursery rhyme tapes
43. Children show sustained interest in books and know that information can be found in non-fiction texts. They can respond to text and illustrations, and in a book about water they identified an octopus and its tentacles. They can read a range of familiar words in books and in their own writing. Having plenty of books to browse is helping children to understand that words have meaning.
44. The emphasis placed on teaching children to recognise letter shapes and sounds and to form letters correctly ensures that they make good progress in learning to write simple words. Children work well in small groups with an adult but there are few opportunities for children to write independently or to use writing in their play. This limits the development of their writing skills.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Many children show an interest in number when they enter school.
- Good quality teaching promotes a sense of fun and enjoyment in mathematical development.
- Staff have high expectations and provide challenge for children's learning.

### **Commentary**

45. Achievement in this area of learning is good and many children are making good progress to exceed the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children have a positive attitude to number work. Teaching is effective because of the teacher's subject knowledge and because practical activities extend children's thinking. For example, children use stepping stones to develop their understanding of 'one more and one less'. Learning is enhanced by the use of a technological toy. Children input commands to move it along a number line with accuracy. Most children have a clear understanding of numbers to 20 and can correct simple errors that they make. They work with sustained concentration and take pride in their achievements in challenging tasks. They use mathematical names for shapes and have a basic awareness of symmetry.
46. Termly assessments are used well to see if children are reaching their predicted level of achievement. Staff use this information effectively to plan the next steps in learning but planning does not include a focus for mathematical development in the home-play area. Children, therefore, miss some opportunities to apply mathematical skills in a wider context.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are eager to learn about the natural world.
- Children have good access to information and communication technology and this is used well to support their learning.
- Outdoor learning opportunities are too limited to enable children to investigate their environment.
- Children are not given sufficient opportunities to explore and select tasks and materials.

### **Commentary**

47. Children achieve well and are on course to attain the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are very curious about their world. They use a wide vocabulary in discussing sea life and can refer to jellyfish, lobsters, crabs, cockles and seahorses. However, the tasks provided for children do not always match their potential for achievement. In water play, for example, the planned activity does not enrich learning by linking with the sea life theme. The outdoor learning environment is under-utilised and tasks are too teacher directed. This restricts children's development as independent learners. There is, however, good provision for ICT and children use the computer suite, the listening centre and technological toys with confidence. They have basic computer skills.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have a good attitude to learning, particularly in music.
- Imaginative play is not well developed

### **Commentary**

48. Most children are likely to attain the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching and achievement are satisfactory. Children enjoy their work in music and join in with enthusiasm. They demonstrate ability to listen to and appreciate music for a sustained period. They work collaboratively, for example in discussing their preference for percussion instruments to represent different animals in their work on Noah's Ark. When using instruments and exploring sounds, they play with confidence.
49. Children engage in imaginative play in their 'Garden Centre' and relate well to adults pretending to be a customer or gardener. However, this play area is not fully effective in supporting children's learning, as tasks focused on particular activities are not included in planning. Children are given the opportunity to develop their creative skills using a variety of materials such as paint, clay and textured materials but activities are directed by the teacher rather than initiated by the child and this limits creativity.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The outdoor accommodation is spacious but has not yet been developed or resourced to fully support learning.
- Indoor sessions are used well to develop the children's skills

### **Commentary**

50. No outdoor sessions were observed during the inspection but children were observed during one indoor lesson and at playtimes. They are working at the expected levels for their age. The classroom is well positioned for easy access to a spacious outdoor area and although the absence of outdoor play was noted at the time of the last inspection this has not been developed or provided with resources to promote learning. The children make use of adjacent facilities but this is only on a weekly basis.

51. In the hall, children are given useful opportunities to develop balancing skills and use apparatus. There is a clear emphasis on safety. Teaching is based on high expectations for progress towards the National Curriculum for physical education. In the classroom, children explore mouldable materials such as clay and are starting to use simple tools to develop the quality of their models of fish to support a theme related to water and sea life. They have some opportunities to use small toy animals imaginatively, for instance in recreating the story of Noah's Ark.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in developing the skills of early reading.
- Teaching in Year 6 promotes good achievement in English in that year group.
- In Years 3 to 5, pupils sometimes underachieve owing to insufficiently high expectations of what they can do.
- Teachers' marking does not provide pupils with sufficient information on how to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

52. Pupils make good progress in learning to read in Years 1 and 2 owing to a well-structured approach to this subject. Teachers provide pupils with books that stimulate their interest and enable them to build carefully upon previously learned skills. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly and the support of parents is sought successfully to help in this process. As a result, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards by Year 2. By the time pupils are in Year 6, their skills have continued to develop well and their attainment in reading is above average. Pupils have a good understanding of how authors create contexts and effects in their work. They pinpoint information quickly and accurately.

53. Standards in writing are average at Year 2 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Spelling is sometimes weak for higher attaining pupils and whilst pieces of writing make sense, pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to develop a theme and to extend their ideas into longer pieces of writing. This restricts their progress. In Year 6, pupils work productively at writing tasks. They

make good progress and achieve well. Standards are above average. Major strengths include the ability of higher attaining pupils to writing extensively in a flowing style that captures the reader's attention and the ability of average attaining pupils to write accurately within a particular style. Standards in speaking and listening are average throughout the school.

54. In Years 3 to 5, quality and presentation of work are sometimes poor. The fact that poorly presented work goes unchecked indicates low expectations. In Year 3 / 4, standards of punctuation and spelling are unsatisfactory, and pupils underachieve. Work in this year group is below the expected standard overall. In Year 4 / 5, achievement is generally satisfactory but with weaknesses in spelling and handwriting, especially for average attaining pupils.
55. Teaching of reading is good and that of writing is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but it is good in Year 6, where it is purposeful and well organised, enabling pupils to achieve well. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not often provide comments that would point pupils towards improving an aspect of their work nor do they refer to any individual targets for learning that pupils may have. Marking is more often used to note a standard attained or that an exercise has been completed successfully than to show pupils what to do to improve further.
56. Since the last inspection, standards in national tests have risen well at both Year 2 and Year 6. This is due to some good teaching and to the extra provision made by the school to help pupils develop the skills of literacy. Subject leadership is satisfactory. Whilst successful efforts have been made to improve provision, the lack of a rigorous and extensive programme for checking the quality of teaching and learning means that standards vary too much across year groups.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

57. The school make satisfactory provision for helping pupils develop their skills of language and literacy across the curriculum although this varies across year groups and subjects. For example, in Year 2 pupils take advantage of good opportunities to write about the results of a scientific investigation. In personal and social education and in design and technology no such opportunities are evident. In Year 3 /4, pupils get good opportunities to write imaginatively in other subjects such as history but the standard of work produced varies from good to unsatisfactory. In Year 6, pupils use computers effectively to help them search for information and to present it attractively. They are given good opportunities to write personal accounts in history and geography. High expectations from the teacher ensure that these contribute well to achievement in literacy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards attained by Year 6 pupils are above average and achievement is good.
- Teaching is good in Year 6 but is unsatisfactory overall in Years 3 to 5.
- The weekly homework club contributes in great measure to the standards attained by Year 6 pupils.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support learning.
- Teachers' planning does not always meet the needs of different groups of pupils, especially in Years 3 to 5.
- Behaviour is not managed well enough in some lessons.

The use of assessment information, including marking, is not rigorous enough.

## Commentary

58. Standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are above those expected for their age and achievement is good. This is due to the good teaching they receive. Pupils' regular attendance at the weekly homework club also contributes significantly to the good standards attained. Pupils in Year 2 attain the standards expected for their age and achievement is good.
59. Most teachers' have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and use national and local guidelines satisfactorily to plan a range of activities which covers all aspects of mathematics. Good emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic number skills with appropriate opportunities for pupils to use and apply these skills to solving problems. However, the work planned for pupils in Years 3 to 5 is not matched well enough to their individual needs and often lacks challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils. This results in underachievement for these pupils.
60. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory overall but with some weaknesses in Years 3 to 5. It is good in Year 6. Where teaching is good, pupils are well motivated by well planned, practical activities and good use of resources, as seen in a Year 2 lesson on weighing, which made learning interesting and fun. The good range of activities on addition planned for pupils in Year 1 was a good example of work that was well matched to pupils' learning needs. Teachers' clear explanations as they work through examples with the whole class build successfully on pupils' previous learning. For example, Year 6 pupils used their secure knowledge of co-ordinates to plot and reflect symmetry in a second quadrant. Time is used well and the teachers' clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate result in good pace and productivity in learning. Teachers' use of praise and encouragement effectively boosts pupils' confidence and self esteem.
61. In Years 3 to 5, teaching is less effective when learning objectives are not made clear enough; teachers' subject knowledge is insecure; and mental arithmetic activities do not effectively challenge higher attaining pupils. Some pupils do not have a sufficient range of strategies to solve simple problems. Opportunities are missed to assess pupils' understanding and the accuracy of their work. This, together with some ineffective management of pupils' behaviour, results in pupils making few gains in their learning and this is unsatisfactory. However, throughout the school the use of interactive whiteboards motivates pupils well, enabling them to clearly see methods of calculation and recording of work. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils' learning.
62. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator, a leading mathematics teacher, has worked very hard to enable Year 6 pupils attain good standards in their work and achieve well. She has a clear action plan which focuses on raising pupils' achievement in the classes below Year 6. However, although there has been some monitoring of teaching and learning, the evaluation does not tackle weaknesses rigorously enough through effective feedback or targets for teachers. All test and assessment results are analysed with good systems to track pupils' progress through the school. However, the information gathered is not always used well enough in teachers' planning or to identify appropriate targets for pupils to help them in their learning. Teachers' marking is not rigorous enough and rarely helps pupils to understand how well they have achieved or what they need to do to improve their work. However, given the significant rise in standards, improvement since the last inspection is good.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Pupils use and consolidate their mathematical skills satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, they read and make charts and graphs in science, use co-ordinates in geography and learn banking skills in personal, social and health education. Information and communication technology is used effectively on a daily basis to support pupils' mathematical learning. The interactive whiteboards are very effective learning aids, which motivate pupils well.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond well to practical and investigative work
- High expectations and good challenge lead to pupils working well
- Where behaviour management is weak pupils do not achieve their full potential.

### Commentary

64. Standards are broadly average at Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This indicates some improvement from the just below average standards attained overall at Year 6 in 2003. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls but there are too few pupils achieving at higher levels. Extended homework activities contribute to the standards attained. Although pupils in Years 1 and 2 and those in Year 6 achieve at appropriate levels, there is a dip in achievement in Years 3 to 5, where lower standards of behaviour have a negative impact. Higher levels of achievement are seen where pupils are involved in practical enquiry based learning. In Year 6, for example, pupils worked attentively to investigate circuits and components. In Year 2, pupils discussed a variety of animal habitats in the school environment, showing average attainment.
65. Teaching is satisfactory overall but where unsatisfactory teaching was observed, in Years 3 and 4, pupils were not engaged in learning and were disruptive. There were insufficient opportunities for first hand, practical activities. Where teachers have explicit expectations and insist on high standards of behaviour, pupils work well in collaborative groups with no disruption to learning. However, overall, pupils do not have enough opportunities to become independent investigators and select their own resources, although this was mentioned as an area for improvement at the last inspection. Questioning skills are not always used well to challenge higher attaining pupils' thinking or to reinforce scientific language. Marking is not used effectively to show pupils how they can improve their work.
66. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall. It is shared between two experienced teachers. Both are developing their subject knowledge well but they do not yet have a tightly focused monitoring plan to help ensure consistent standards across the school. Information from data is not analysed closely enough to help teachers plan pupils' learning. In Years 3 to 6, the small size classrooms make it more difficult for teachers to include practical investigations in the lesson. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in lessons is good overall owing to effective teaching.
- Resources are good and ICT is used well to support learning in other subjects.
- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous.

### Commentary

67. Improvement in resources, curricular planning, staff training and leadership and management have contributed positively to the good improvement made since the previous inspection. Pupils



are taught a full range of ICT skills. By Year 2 and Year 6 they attain average standards and their achievement in lessons is good. However, a Years 4 and 5 lesson, pupils' achievement was only satisfactory owing to a small minority of pupils misbehaving.

68. By Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of basic computer operations. As they progress through the school, pupils become more confident users of ICT, building on the experiences gained at home when they use their own resources. They use the Internet well for research and reading in subjects such as history and geography thus enhancing their literacy skills. By Year 6, pupils create multi-media presentations incorporating images, sound and text but have not yet had the opportunity to "present" their finished products.
69. Teaching is good overall, with a good balance between formal instruction and the time allowed for pupils to practise skills. In most of the lessons observed, pupils were well motivated by the effective use of interactive whiteboards to clarify what was expected of them. Pupils show good attitudes to their work and time is used well, resulting in good pace and productivity in learning. Most pupils behave well, share resources sensibly and work well collaboratively, happily helping each other if unsure of what to do.
70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good subject knowledge, which she uses well to guide and support colleagues as necessary. She has an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. However, the checking of teaching and learning needs to be more rigorous to ensure that pupils have appropriate opportunities to record and present their work. Although satisfactory assessment and recording systems are in place, information gathered needs to be used more effectively to ensure that all pupils are working at the appropriate levels. Resources are good and the ICT suite is used well throughout the week by all classes to promote literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The ICT club encourages the improvement of computer skills whilst enhancing pupils' personal development.

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

71. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use their skills to support and consolidate learning in other subjects. Literacy skills are improved by word processing activities, while in mathematics, pupils use suitable programs to create charts, graphs and spreadsheets and play mathematical games to consolidate number work and data handling. Good use is made of the Internet to support research in history and geography. However, ICT is not yet used sufficiently in music.

### **HUMANITIES**

72. Not enough work was seen in **history** to allow a judgement to be made about provision. In the one lesson seen, in Year 6, good questioning and good use of resources allowed pupils to demonstrate a secure knowledge of Roman History, appropriate for their age. Pupils were well behaved and keen to learn. Work seen in pupils' books indicates that standards are at broadly expected levels at Year 2 and Year 6. The curriculum covers a suitable range of topics and in Year 6 coverage appears thorough. In Years 3 to 6, good use is made of the subject to help pupils develop the skills of literacy although the standard of writing is not satisfactory in the lower part of the age group. In Year 2, whilst development of literacy skills through history is broadly satisfactory, some opportunities to let pupils write independent, personal accounts are not taken up. This restricts not only the development of writing skills but also the enrichment of historical experience.
73. No lessons were observed in **geography**. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement on provision or on teaching and learning. However, from the evidence available an appropriate range of topics has been covered and standards attained are broadly average. By Year 2, pupils know the difference between natural and man-made features and can plot these accurately on simple maps. They apply this knowledge satisfactorily as they compare life on an island to that in Runcorn. By Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of river formations and the water cycle and they have studied the coastlines of various locations. Although opportunities

are missed to develop pupils' writing skills in this subject, information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning.

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

74. No lessons were observed in **art and design** and it is, therefore, not possible to make a judgement about provision in this subject. Examples of art and design work displayed around the school show a satisfactory variety of techniques. As well as work related to topics, pupils have opportunities to explore and learn from the styles of an impressive range of artists from other times and cultures. Pupils in Year 2 replicate Pollock's style effectively in their work on colour and pupils in Years 4 and 5 are developing a sound understanding of graphite through the work of Jim Dine. Work in Years 3 to 6 introduces aboriginal drawing and African painting to enable pupils to appreciate art from other cultures.
75. Only one lesson was observed in **design and technology** and there was little evidence available of pupils' work. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement on provision. Teachers' planning indicates that an appropriate range of topics is covered during the year. The small amount of work in pupils' books shows that, by Year 2, pupils have made puppets and winding toys, using flow charts appropriately to record equipment and materials used. By Year 6, pupils record their initial thoughts, plan the stages of making and select the appropriate materials and equipment as, for example, they make a "pop up" Christmas card. However, pupils have not evaluated how well they have achieved their original design or recorded any modifications necessary to improve their work further. As there were no examples of completed work available, it is not possible to judge the pupils' level of skill and technique. In the one lesson observed, teaching was very poor. This was the result of the teacher's inadequate planning and organisation, the very slow pace of the lesson and pupils' very poor behaviour because they were not sufficiently involved in processes to attain the lesson objective to make biscuits.
76. Insufficient evidence was gathered to enable overall judgements to be made about provision in **music**. Teaching of music in Year 1 and Year 6 is lively and enthusiastic. This conveys itself to pupils, who respond well. In a lesson in the Years 1 and 2 age group, strong and effective management of pupils' behaviour by a teacher, founded on good relationships, and good interpretation of the lesson plan, enabled pupils to make good progress in clapping a rhythm or playing it on various percussive instruments. An extra element of challenge through introducing a 'pulse' beat ensured that achievement was good. In Year 6, enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership of a lesson meant that pupils achieved well in developing confidence and quality in their singing. They sustained this well and behaved very well as a result of an enjoyable and worthwhile musical experience. On another occasion in the Year 1 and 2 age group, the behaviour of some pupils led to a low level of disruptive noise and causes the teacher to move along too quickly in developing pupils' familiarity with the spoken rhythm of a song.
77. The school has identified music as an area for improvement and has developed an action plan to help it achieve the improvements it desires. One priority is to develop links with a local high school and this is being achieved successfully, with good quality work being provided by a visiting specialist teacher. Another priority is for the school choir to sing in a local festival. This event is planned to take place later in the term. Overall, satisfactory progress is being made in relation to the targets identified in the action plan
78. No lessons were observed in **physical education** in Years 1 and 2 and so no overall judgement can be made about provision. However, the quality of teaching in lessons observed in Years 3 to 5 was unsatisfactory overall although teaching in Year 6 was satisfactory. In Years 3 to 5, the management of pupils' behaviour in physical education lessons has a significantly negative influence upon progress. This is compounded when teachers do not provide enough challenge in the work.
79. All lessons observed started with appropriate warm-up activities and where teaching was at least satisfactory, these activities formed the basis for pupils to work effectively in pairs to develop the

skills of balancing. Some higher attaining pupils achieved particularly well in this and the overall standard was at the expected level for Year 6 pupils. Where behaviour management was ineffective, and sometimes poor, too much time was spent in trying to encourage a few pupils to do what they should be doing, to the detriment of others' learning. At its most serious, this misbehaviour resulted in pupils acting dangerously when handling equipment and presented a threat to the safety of some others in the class. Whilst teachers used the school's identified strategies for managing behaviour, these were of limited success. When pupils practised games' skills, they made insufficient progress as they were not given accurate and detailed enough instructions about how to improve technique.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

80. Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **satisfactory** in Years 1 and 2. No teaching of this subject was seen in Years 3 to 6 and so no overall judgement can be made about provision. However, the school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills. These include opportunities to discuss personal and social issues that are of particular importance to them ('circle time'). The school is involved in the national 'Healthy Schools Initiative' and also invites an appropriate range of visitors to provide pupils with information to enhance their safety, for example in relation to road safety and the dangers of fire. Personal relationships form an important part of the local diocesan syllabus for religious education and this topic includes sex education. Good opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility towards younger pupils are provided for older ones through helping to look after these pupils during lunchtimes, supervised by lunchtime staff. All this provides good, practical expression of the school's Roman Catholic ethos. In lessons, pupils receive good opportunities to reflect on themes such as 'Choices' and to develop their understanding of issues of importance to them, such as what it means to be a good friend. Usually, these opportunities are successfully developed although the listening skills and behaviour of a few pupils limit the success of this a little. The school helps its pupils to develop their understanding about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship by means of its school council. This seeks opinion from pupils and presents ideas for improvement to school management. These ideas are taken seriously and are acted upon wherever possible.

## SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i>  | <b>Grade</b> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>4</b>     |
| 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                               | 5            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                    | <b>4</b>     |
| Pupils' achievement  | 4            |
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>        | <b>4</b>     |
| Attendance   | 6            |
| Attitudes  | 4            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                        | 4            |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development            | 4            |
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>               | <b>4</b>     |
| 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  | 5            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                             | 3            |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                              | 4            |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views                  | 4            |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents                 | 4            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 4            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 3            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>5</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 5            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 4            |
| The leadership of other key staff                                    | 4            |
| The effectiveness of management                                      | 5            |

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