

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103712

Headteacher: Mrs H Carter

Acting headteacher at the time of the inspection: Ms R Coogan

Lead inspector: Mrs R Andrew

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th July 2004

Inspection number: 257119

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	201
School address:	Hawthorn Lane Tile Hill Coventry
Postcode:	CV4 9LB
Telephone number:	024 7646 6655
Fax number:	024 7669 5459
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Kevin Lambert
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-size Catholic primary school situated in the Tile Hill area of Coventry. There are currently 201 boys and girls, aged three to eleven, on the school's roll. Most of these pupils are white but several other races are represented. About 80 per cent of the pupils are from Catholic families. The area experiences significant levels of deprivation and the proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above average. Fewer than average pupils are identified as having special educational needs, mostly learning difficulties. One pupil has a written statement of his needs because of their complex nature. When they start school, pupils' attainments, particularly in language and numeracy skills, are below average. The school has experienced significant difficulties since the last inspection, including the sudden loss of headteacher and deputy headteacher followed quickly by the whole governing body. There is now a new governing body and senior management team. The school is involved in Sure Start, Healthy Schools and Arts Mark projects.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21460	Rachael Andrew	Lead inspector	English Art and design Music Special educational needs
9614	Carolyn Webb	Lay inspector	
20010	John Sangster	Team inspector	Science Geography History Physical education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school, where the quality of education, especially teaching and learning, ensures pupils do well. Strengths in leadership, management and governance and the strong steer provided by the acting headteacher have enabled the school to put its recent troubled history firmly behind it. The strong Catholic ethos contributes to pupils who are well behaved, work hard, look after each other and take an active part in shaping the future of the school. Taking into account pupils' academic achievement and personal development, **the school gives good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership of the acting headteacher has steered the school through a difficult period.
- The senior management team and governors provide strong support, know what needs to be done and act decisively and effectively.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes get a good start.
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because of good teaching.
- The school values all its pupils, cares for them very well and involves them in decisions that affect their future.
- Pupils work hard, co-operate well and are polite and helpful.
- Although there have been significant improvements, there is further to go in consolidating computer skills.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall, and very good in response to the key issues identified then. This has not had the expected impact on standards because of the school's recent troubled history, especially the high turnover of senior staff and governors and difficult relationships. In 2000 and 2001 standards dropped significantly. However, since the leadership, management and governance problems were resolved, standards have risen substantially and are now much as they were at the time of the last inspection. Very good behaviour and positive attitudes have been maintained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Pupils achieve well, although higher attaining pupils do not do always do as well as they should, especially in reading at age seven and investigative science at age eleven. At age seven, girls do better than boys but by eleven the gap has closed. Pupils of different ability and those with special educational needs all do well because of careful assessment of their needs, good teaching and support from teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils from ethnic minorities do as well as white pupils. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, standards are average in mathematics and science and in English they are above average. Standards are better than those shown in the table above, especially in mathematics where there has been much improvement this year and standards are now average. The school's 2004 results reflect this. Pupils' skills in applying mathematics to problem solving are relatively weak. The grades in the table for 2001 show just how low standards fell following the loss of senior staff. In science they were in

the lowest five per cent in the country. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now broadly average. Pupils do not have enough time on computers, however, to practise and consolidate their skills. This is because there are too few computers. Religious education is the subject of a separate diocesan inspection.

By the end of reception children are on course to reach the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning. These are personal, social and emotional development, language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Children do best in knowledge and understanding of the world because of the very good provision in this area and particularly skilful teaching. The development of writing skills is slow and the most able children do not do as well as they should in developing reading fluency.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are very good. They have very good attitudes to work, behave very well, are polite and helpful and take a keen interest in school life. Older pupils take on a good deal of responsibility, willingly and capably, including looking after younger children. Attendance is unsatisfactory following a recent fall to below national levels.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good. Teachers make the work interesting so that pupils want to get on. They use a wide range of resources to draw on and develop different ways of learning. Pupils work hard and learn at a good rate, even when they are not closely supervised, because teachers challenge them and make their expectations clear. They know what they need to do to improve because teachers mark work and follow pupils' progress carefully. Teachers guide and support pupils well, according to need. The curriculum is enriched through special events, work with other schools, visits, visitors and clubs that broaden pupils' experiences.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher is providing very good leadership during the absence of the headteacher. She is ably supported by senior managers who carry out their responsibilities effectively. Well-established and efficient procedures facilitate management. The governing body is knowledgeable and determined to keep the school moving forwards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school's work. Pupils think their school is a very good one and are proud to be part of it. In particular they appreciate the opportunities that the school council brings for being involved in the school's future.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their computer skills in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good throughout the school. At the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are in line with the national average. In English they are above. At the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Children at the end of the reception class are on course to achieve the goals set for their age in all six areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in English but higher attaining pupils should do better in reading at the end of reception and Year 2.
- Pupils do well in English, mathematics and science because teaching is effective but problem solving is a relative weakness in mathematics and higher attaining pupils should do better in investigative work in science.
- Pupils get a good start in the nursery and reception classes.
- There has been a significant improvement in standards since the sharp fall in 2000 and 2001 as a result of the action taken by senior staff.
- Although standards in ICT are broadly average, the small number of computers slows the consolidation of skills.

Commentary

1. The table below shows that, at the end of Year 2 in 2003, standards were broadly in line with the national average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, however, pupils did well in all three subjects, particularly in writing. Over the last four years standards have risen at much the same rate as those in most other schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (15.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.0 (14.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The table below shows that, by the end of Year 6 in 2003, standards were broadly in line with the national average in English and science but well below average in mathematics. Over the last four years, standards have not kept pace with the national trend. Instability in staffing and senior management contributed to a sharp fall in standards between 1999 and 2001. In that year, standards were in the lowest five per cent nationally in science and poor in English and mathematics. Since then, standards have shown a strong improving trend. By 2003 they were much the same as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils did as well as pupils in other similar schools except in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.3 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.7 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The current Year 6 is a relatively small one – 21 pupils – and results for 2004 are likely to have been affected by the high turnover of pupils. Ten pupils in this year group left during Years 3 to 6. Nine of these pupils were forecast to attain at least average standards at the end of Year 6, having done well in tests at the end of Year 2. Pupils who joined the class recently have been identified with special educational needs. Nevertheless, the school set ambitious targets, and recently published results show these have been achieved. There have been further improvements on preceding years, especially in mathematics, where the school has made a concerted effort because standards were lowest. There are no longer any significant differences in standards in the three subjects. It is not possible to compare the 2004 results with other schools because results have not yet been published. Inspection evidence reflects the 2004 results.
4. By the end of the reception year, children are on course to reach the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning. These are personal, social and emotional development, language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development. Children do best in knowledge and understanding of the world because of the very good provision in this area and particularly skilful teaching. The most able children do not do as well as they should in developing reading fluency because teachers do not move them on quickly enough. Teachers provide too few opportunities for guiding children in gaining fluency in writing so this is a relative weakness in literacy skills.
5. In the rest of the school, pupils do well in English. It is taught particularly well, especially in Year 6 where pupils make substantial gains. Nevertheless, few pupils persevere with joined handwriting and so many lack fluency. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can recall facts well about what they read because comprehension exercises concentrate on this but they have difficulty in making inferences or reading between the lines because not enough is demanded of them.
6. Pupils in Year 2 to 6 do well in English, mathematics and science because they are taught well. Teachers explain new learning thoroughly, set tasks that develop pupils' understanding and engage their interest so they work hard. As they get older, pupils quickly develop their capacity to work without direct support, using reference materials, classroom prompts and earlier learning to produce good quality work. There has been an improvement in pupils' investigative skills in science but the application of skills to solve problems in mathematics is a relative weakness.
7. As a result of circumstances beyond the control of the school – the serious loss of senior staff and high turnover of temporary teachers – there was a sharp fall in standards in 2000 and 2001 when results at the age of eleven were poor. Results at age seven, where classes did not experience such upheaval, improved at the same rate as the national trend. Since 2001 when stability of staffing was regained, results have risen to the same level or a little higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. This is largely attributable to the good work done by subject leaders and senior staff in checking where weaknesses lay and taking

effective action. All staff have pulled together to restore good standards. Nevertheless, the overall trend of improvement at eleven is below the national trend.

- Standards in ICT are now broadly average and have improved significantly since the last inspection as have resources, teachers' confidence and skills. Interactive whiteboards in every class, used largely by teachers, contribute strongly to learning in all subjects. There are still too few computers, however. This slows the consolidation of pupils' skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes and standards of behaviour are high. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of personal development are very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The distinctive Catholic aims and ethos develop respect for others and a strong sense of belonging to a worshipping community.
- Opportunities to serve on the school council, and to take on other responsibilities, and the school's personal and social education programme contribute strongly to pupils' growing maturity.
- Pupils are calm and sensible around the school and co-operate well in lessons and at play.
- Attendance has fallen below average.

Commentary

- Pupils participate wholeheartedly in school worship and sing with enthusiasm. They join in the school prayer and morning and evening class prayers. Older pupils are aware of the school's mission statement and think it contributes to harmony in the school. They are sure that Catholics and non-Catholics are treated with equal respect and no one feels left out. The school does much to celebrate the various achievements of its pupils and values their ideas and efforts.
- Pupils take the work of the school council very seriously. They are proud to represent the school in this and other ways. They feel certain that their work is beneficial to the school community and has a positive effect on behaviour, for example through improving play times. Older pupils take on many responsibilities including befriending younger children. Pupils in Year 6 have personal targets to help them prepare for secondary transfer. The pupils benefit from a taught programme of personal and social education, which is often combined effectively with class worship.
- Pupils move about the school calmly and are polite and helpful. Behaviour is very good and there have been no exclusions. Pupils have very good attitudes to work, and are keen to participate in all the school has to offer. Parents say that their children like school. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions and pupils play sensibly with others outdoors. They try to befriend those who have no-one to play with. St Joseph's garden provides a quiet place for those who want to be alone.
- The school has been surprised by the recent fall in attendance. Unauthorised absence has fallen but authorised absence has increased as a result of the number of pupils taking holidays in term time. There are satisfactory monitoring systems including weekly visits from the education welfare officer.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.8	School data	0.2
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good and brings about effective learning. There is a significant amount of very good teaching in English, mathematics and science. Teaching in Year 6 is particularly effective. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils well and is enriched to a good extent by activities outside normal lessons. Teachers keep a careful eye on pupils' academic progress and personal development and guide them effectively.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are all good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning is successful because teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and use a wide range of strategies and resources that captures pupils' interest.
- In the nursery and reception classes teachers are particularly skilful at developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Individual pupils know where they need to improve because teachers set realistic targets based on what they know already.
- Teachers have high expectation of behaviour and manage pupils well so that lessons proceed without interruptions.
- There is good support from senior leaders for improving teaching although the process has faltered during the absence of the headteacher.

Commentary

13. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes, Years 1 to 2 and Years 3 to 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and the good teaching observed in lessons was reflected in the quality of pupils' work over the year in their books. Almost a third of the teaching seen was very good (see table below).

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	10 (29%)	14 (41%)	9 (26%)	0	0	0

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

14. Teachers are good at making lessons interesting. They use interactive whiteboards and other resources well to engage pupils and keep them on their toes. Pupils say they find lessons interesting and enjoy the challenge of difficult tasks. They do not get disheartened because teachers use their skills to explain new work thoroughly and check with searching questions that pupils have understood. Very good teaching was observed in several classes, notably in Year 6, where teaching and learning are particularly effective. Learning support staff are clear about their roles and contribute strongly to effective learning of small groups, including those

with special educational needs. They have learned many skills from watching class teachers and by taking up training opportunities.

15. Nursery and reception teachers plan together for a wide range of interesting activities that give children very good insights into the world around them. Children benefit from using all their senses to explore and investigate. Adults are skilful at making links between different aspects of the work so children see its relevance. They make the most of children's interest to talk about the work and develop their understanding and vocabulary. Children are enthusiastic and some of the most able initiate activities of their own and involve others.
16. Targets are set for groups and individuals that help them to work at areas where they have difficulties and to move on to the next steps. This is particularly effective in Year 6. Marking acknowledges strengths and builds self-esteem but also picks up general and specific areas for improvement. The checks teachers make on work and progress help them to identify pupils in need of additional support. Intervention programmes, such as 'booster classes' for mathematics, are successful in helping pupils to do their best.
17. Lessons proceed at a good pace and there are few interruptions to learning because teachers have high expectations of behaviour and manage pupils well. From the start in the nursery, children are taught what is acceptable in different situations. Pupils learn to become self-reliant when working alone or in groups without close supervision. They get what they need sensibly and refer to others, classroom prompts or reference books for help rather than interrupting the teacher.
18. Teaching has been improved through the checks that senior managers make and the advice and support they give. Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and this has been a crucial factor in raising standards quickly since the low point in 2001. The recent significant rise in mathematics results at age eleven is an example of how effective core subject (English, mathematics and science) leaders have been.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and balanced and caters well for the needs of all pupils. It is enriched well by activities, visits and visitors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum (in the nursery and reception classes) provides stimulating activities for young children.
- There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors that enriches the curriculum.
- There is some good innovative practice.
- Links across the curriculum are good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT across the curriculum.

Commentary

19. Since the last inspection there is now provision for nursery education and, together with the reception class, the Foundation Stage curriculum provides a wide variety of stimulating and imaginative learning opportunities.
20. The school meets statutory requirements for all subjects. The school has rightly focused on raising achievement in literacy, numeracy and science and the curriculum in these areas is good with teachers overall working hard to make their lessons effective and interesting. Limited equipment has, until recently, hampered the development of skills in ICT and their

application across the curriculum is limited. The provision of interactive whiteboards in classrooms has strengthened the teaching and made learning more interesting for the pupils.

21. There is evidence of good innovative practice. The school is leading the way in the teaching of a modern foreign language and a lesson was observed where geography was taught through French. The school has been awarded a silver charter mark in recognition for its work in promoting Healthy Living and a bronze award for work in music, drama and the arts. It has piloted work on drug awareness. The emphasis on promoting citizenship across the school is good. Very good links with the local secondary schools prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.
22. A strength within the curriculum is the way teachers link subjects together so that skills learned in one area can be applied to another. This was demonstrated in the inspection in one class where pupils were learning about two contrasting locations, Coventry and Llandudno; they used Venn diagrams to display their results and persuasive writing skills to encourage others to visit these locations. This shows a good link between geography, mathematics and English.
23. The school gives pupils the opportunity to take part in an extensive range of visits, including a residential visit for Year 6, and visitors with expertise or experience support the curriculum well. Pupils take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities such as music, art and sport. These experiences support pupils' personal development well and enhance their social skills. The accommodation, including classrooms with attractive displays and extensive grounds, provides a stimulating environment in which to learn.

Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for welfare, health and safety and for consultation with pupils are very good. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care is very good.
- Very good relationships result in mutual trust and respect.
- Personal development is not systematically monitored and recorded.

Commentary

24. The pupils' health and safety are high priorities. Security is tight and regular risk assessments are recorded. School councillors record hazards such as protruding staples but are not yet included in formal risk assessments. First aid training and practice are good. Current child protection arrangements do not yet fully comply with new legislation but this is in hand. Procedures for checking jewellery and footwear are not stringent enough and a few pupils put themselves at risk by not complying with school guidelines.
25. Teachers know pupils very well and are aware of individual circumstances that might affect their well-being or education. Close relationships ensure that all have someone to turn to if they cannot solve problems for themselves. The small Rainbow groups boost confidence and provide additional support for pupils in troubled times.
26. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a good understanding of how to improve because of the close monitoring of academic progress and careful target setting. Pupils in Year 6 are involved in evaluating their own progress and this strengthens the process further. Pupils find teachers' marking helpful but they do not feel it works equally well in all classes.
27. Through questionnaires and the school council, pupils are closely involved in the future of the school. Staff and governors consider pupils' views before making decisions so pupils feel their

opinions and suggestions matter. Although their personal development is monitored and recorded in individual records of achievement and annual reports, recording is not systematic enough to make it easy for teachers to check progress regularly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has shown determination in improving existing links with parents.
- Links with the local Catholic church have improved.
- Liaison with the local secondary school helps the transition process.

Commentary

28. Efforts to improve links with parents, as a result of the school's questionnaire, include the provision of literacy workshops. Governors are now trying to organise before and after-school clubs. Parents are strongly supportive of the Catholic aims and ethos evident in the school. Their attendance at consultation evenings, matches and performances is good. A few help regularly in class. However, the parent /teacher association has lapsed.
29. Parents are well informed. Through the prospectus, the governors' annual report, news and other letters, parents know about events and what has been happening. Should any parent require additional information or help, friendly office staff are a welcome first contact. Annual progress reports are detailed, helpful and easy to understand. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed and invited to review meetings, although some choose not to attend.
30. Links with the local Catholic church are now good. The priest is a regular visitor and pupils look forward to seeing him. A number of parishioners attend school mass and come together with other members of the community for school occasions. Pupils are involved with activities in the Church and local community.
31. Through good links with other local schools, particularly the Catholic secondary school, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Transition arrangements are effective and include bridging units, visits and useful exchanges of information, for example about pupils with special educational needs. Students on work experience value their time in school and this benefits all parties involved.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The acting headteacher provides very good leadership. Other staff with key responsibilities provide good leadership in their areas. Management is good. The governing body carries out its duties well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher provides very good, strong leadership, which gives stability to the school.
- The governing body gives good, knowledgeable support.
- Senior staff show good leadership.
- There has been little monitoring of provision in subjects other than mathematics, English and science.

Commentary

32. Since the last inspection, the school has gone through a period of instability, with changes in senior management and governance, difficult relations with the parish and a fall in the standards achieved by pupils to a low point in 2001. The school now has good systems of management in place. In the long-term absence of the headteacher, the deputy has taken on the role of acting headteacher and gives very good leadership to the school. She has continued with a part-time teaching commitment and provides a very good role model to other staff. She has their full support as well as that of the governing body. Together they have taken prompt and effective action to resolve an apparent fall in standards in mathematics, as well as addressing the issues from the last inspection.
33. A key issue at the last inspection was to provide clear terms of reference for governors' committees and provide appropriate training for them. This has now been done. The governors have a wide range of experience, both within and outside education, and many of them are actively involved in the day-to-day life of the school. They provide very good support to the headteacher and staff. They have a clear view of the strengths of the school and a good understanding of what needs to be developed further.
34. Other senior staff exercise their responsibilities well. The members of the senior management team have a very good understanding of the priorities for the school and support the acting headteacher well. Between them they share the co-ordinator responsibilities for English, mathematics, science, special educational needs and the Foundation Stage. They lead these important areas well, both in monitoring and in giving support and advice to other members of staff. The co-ordinators for other subjects of the curriculum have not had as great an opportunity to monitor what is happening in their subjects, but the school is aware of this and has identified it as a future priority.
35. The management of the school is good. The school has developed very good systems to evaluate its own performance. Monitoring of teaching has helped to identify areas where teachers need support and this has been given effectively. School development planning, identified as a key area for improvement at the last inspection, is now good; the plan is a working document in which staff, governors and pupils are all involved, and priorities within it have been identified clearly. There are good systems in place for the induction of teachers who are new to the school and also for the training of student teachers through a partnership with Newman College of Higher Education. The school has also received strong support from the local education authority in managing the changes which have been brought about.
36. The school's financial management is sound. The sum carried forward from 2002-3, the last year for which final figures are available, was relatively large at 7 per cent of the budget, but this was principally due to uncertainties over staff sickness and absence. Spending is monitored on a regular basis by governors, headteacher and the administrative officer, with support from the local education authority's finance officer.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	636847
Total expenditure	590416
Expenditure per pupil	2660

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	5029
Balance carried forward to the next	46431

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good overall. Provision overall has been improved by the addition of a nursery. Provision since the last inspection has improved in reception. Admission arrangements are very effective and help children to settle quickly into school. Home visits by staff and opportunities for children to come into school help teachers recognise the needs of the children quickly. The 'buddy' system with older children helps the younger children to settle well and to feel at ease with the whole school environment.
38. The management of the Foundation Stage is very good. The co-ordinator creates effective teams and together they plan an imaginative curriculum that involves all the areas of learning and incorporates both indoor and outdoor learning experiences. This results in the creation of exciting learning opportunities, which engage the children. Teaching is good; the ratio of adults to children is high and this enables focused help to be given to children with special needs. Children make good progress.
39. The accommodation and general resources are good while the outside play areas are of an excellent standard and are a strength of the provision for Foundation Stage children.
40. Children's attainment on entry is below that expected nationally particularly in the core areas of communication and in understanding of mathematical concepts. Most children, however, achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage and make good progress.
41. Staff assess the development of children's skills and concepts well through informal and structured observations. Detailed records of progress aid planning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's positive caring ethos is a strong feature of the Foundation Stage and this helps children achieve well.
- Routines are established, and activities are well planned and exciting.

Commentary

42. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes and as a result children's achievement is good. Most are on course to achieve the goals set for their age by the end of reception. Staff establish secure routines so that children feel safe. There is a calm atmosphere and children settle to tasks quickly and with little fuss, most becoming engrossed in the activity they have selected. There is an emphasis on developing co-operation so that, for instance, wheeled vehicles are designed to carry more than one child, and play activities are planned that enable children to play together. During the inspection children happily shared play resources in the 'airport lounge' and interacted well with each other when enacting a scene from the story of Noah. There are many opportunities for children to take responsibility such as relaying messages, and after making sandwiches children are encouraged to wash up.
43. Staff are very positive in their interaction with the children. All have been trained in a programme that puts the well-being of children at the core of the planned activities. This is

working well and helps raise children's confidence and self-esteem. Assemblies and prayers support children's spiritual and emotional development well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff use very good questioning techniques and intervene well to develop children's communication skills.
- Emphasis is placed on developing a breadth of pre-reading experiences.
- Higher ability children are underachieving in reading.
- Children's pencil control and writing skills are underdeveloped.

Commentary

44. Children enter nursery with underdeveloped language skills. Many rich opportunities are provided to develop these and children make good progress. Teaching generally is good. The imaginative play areas are used well to encourage children's free writing; nursery children write information about passengers arriving at the 'airport' and reception children send postcards from the seaside. This is good practice and helps children experiment with writing. Children's pencil control and ability to write simple sentences unaided remain a concern for the staff and this was borne out in the inspection. More time and opportunities need to be devoted for guiding children's writing. Much attention is given to helping children develop story telling, understand what is happening in pictures and learn the sounds of the letters. This gives children a good foundation. Most children are on course to reach the goals set for their age by the end of reception. The achievement of the majority is good but the attainment of the most able children in reading is, however, low in comparison with their grasp of mathematical concepts.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because teaching provides a balance of informal and formal learning opportunities
- Mathematical activities are stimulating, and motivate and excite the children to learn

Commentary

45. Teaching is good and children quickly develop the ability to sort, match and count objects. Achievement is good and most children are on course to reach the goals set for their age by the end of reception. During the inspection nursery children showed that they could sort fruit, identify common features and count how many there were of a particular fruit. In the reception class the teacher provides rich learning opportunities. In making shortbread children are accurate in their counting of spoonfuls of ingredients. They knew that the cutters are circular in shape. In the story of Noah's Flood children are able to count up to 40. In formal oral mathematics sessions, children show a very good understanding of the value and position of numbers up to 20. Using a washing line with some numbers pegged to it the teacher uses challenging questions matched well to the ability level of individual children. As a result, more able children can, for example, say which number is two more than 14. Children's mathematical development is addressed in other areas of learning; children can sequence shapes in printing and use a sequence with pasta shapes in creative activities. Children in

both the nursery and reception classes are able to sing a variety of number songs, which helps their mathematical development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning and the integration of areas of learning are very good.
- The outdoor areas are used very imaginatively and develop children's concepts well.

Commentary

46. Children achieve well in this area of learning because teaching is good. Opportunities are provided to help children understand matters of importance to themselves and their families such as baptism and they have a developing knowledge of contrasting religions, cultures and festivals. Topics are used well to link children's learning. For example, the 'Sea' topic includes the story of Noah's Flood which is extended well by children making their own boats and experimenting with floating and sinking or by adding cargo to see the effects on buoyancy. They can use large construction apparatus in the 'Builder's Boat Yard' and can see the effects of wind through the windsocks and chime bars positioned outside. For a trip to the sea, children make shortbread and sandwiches for a picnic. Children have the opportunity to use computers, they help operate the interactive whiteboard and take 'photographs' with cameras. This develops well the children's early understanding and familiarity with technological equipment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

47. There is no judgement about the overall provision in teaching and learning and about standards of achievement as no lessons were seen in reception. Planning to support provision for physical development makes full use of available resources both inside and outside the classroom. The outside area in nursery is well laid out and equipped with low level climbing apparatus. Children enjoy using this large outdoor play equipment and show good body control and balance. Their manipulative skills are developed well through the use of construction equipment, jigsaws and the opportunities to use a variety of pencils and crayons.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good use of outside specialist to develop music.
- Very good stimuli are used to give children first hand experiences.

Commentary

48. Teaching is good. There is an appropriate balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities. Children learn well through exploring their senses and imagination; for instance, they have the opportunity to feel, smell and taste fruit or, in the story of Noah's Flood, imagine how the animals felt being in an ark for 40 days. Music sessions are planned effectively so that children play a range of instruments. They show good ability to make loud and soft sounds and have a very good sense of rhythm. Good opportunities to experiment with skills in art such as printing with fruit or different objects aid the children's learning. Play areas are very well planned to support children's creative development. The mock airport in the nursery includes passports and a checking-in area, an X-ray machine for luggage, a waiting area and a café.

Travel brochures are available in the waiting area. Classroom displays support the children's learning and help them make good progress. The children achieve well and most are on course to reach the goals set for their age by the end of reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills are taught well in Years 1 and 2 but higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to think about what they have read.
- In Years 3 to 6, teachers use a wide range of strategies to stimulate an interest in writing and to develop writing for different purposes.
- Pupils read regularly, in small groups, individually and at home but reading diaries are not used well to highlight what pupils do well and where they need to improve.
- Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly, keeping an eye on progress and setting targets that move the learning on.
- Although there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills, these are not planned systematically through the school to build on earlier learning.
- The leadership and management of English are very good. There has been much successful work in improving teaching and learning so that standards have risen substantially from a very low base in 2001 and are now above average.

Commentary

49. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and broadly average at the end of Year 2. They are much the same as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Although boys tend not to do as well as girls at age seven, by the time they leave they have closed the gap.
50. The scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection and the lessons observed show that pupils make systematic progress through Years 1 and 2. The teaching of basic skills of reading and writing is thorough. Pupils get through a lot of work and do well. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading and writing are much the same as those in most schools. Higher attaining pupils, however, do not have all the skills they need to get the most from their reading because the questions prepared for them to answer in their books concentrate on recalling facts rather than reading 'between the lines'. Some pupils are still finding this difficult at the end of Year 3.
51. Older pupils say they enjoy writing. This is because teachers in Years 3 to 6 capture their interest well through carefully chosen texts that appeal to boys and girls. They plan lessons thoroughly and so are well prepared to use a range of resources including interactive whiteboards and tape recorders. Pupils are skilled at trying out their ideas, making notes, discussing with a partner what they want to write and referring to a thesaurus to find interesting vocabulary. Pupils throughout the school gain confidence because teachers share their own ideas or use ideas from the class to get everyone writing and show pupils how to structure their writing. As a result pupils write confidently for a range of purposes. Older pupils' strengths lie in content and structure rather than 'secretarial skills' – accuracy of spelling and punctuation, and neatness of handwriting.
52. Reading is taught well throughout the school and there are good opportunities for pupils to read individually to themselves and to adults and in small groups. Many pupils read regularly at home and this contributes to their progress, particularly in the early stages. Pupils have

reading diaries but these are not used well to indicate to pupils what they do well or how they could improve or to help parents direct their help more effectively.

53. Teachers check pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and indicate to pupils through their comments what they do well and how they can improve. In the older classes teachers set targets for individuals and small groups so that pupils can keep an eye on them as they work. The comments that teachers make often make helpful reference to these targets. Teachers and pupils together make decisions about when the targets have been achieved and what the next ones should be. Target setting contributes strongly to progress. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils identified by teachers as requiring specific help are supported well through small group work. Occasionally the targets for these pupils are too vague for progress to be easily measured.
54. The co-ordinator has been identified by the local education authority as a leading literacy teacher. She has been influential in improving teaching and learning throughout the school although this work has been hampered to an extent by the additional responsibilities she has undertaken during the absence of the headteacher. The quality of the co-ordinator's work is a good model for others. Individual teachers have been helped by sharing lessons with the co-ordinator and watching her work. More general weaknesses have been identified and overcome through monitoring and in-service training. Teachers feel that they have received valuable help from within school and from the local education authority. Teachers work well as a team and are committed to continuing the improvement in English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. There are many good opportunities for pupils to read and write in subjects other than English. In Year 5, for example, knowledge gained in geography was put to good use when pupils produced 'radio broadcasts' to attract visitors to Coventry and Llandudno. This example is also typical of the varied opportunities pupils have for speaking. The approach to speaking and listening is not sufficiently structured, however, to build on skills from year to year.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and learning.
- There are very good systems in place for raising standards.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Problem solving is a relative weakness but is receiving attention.

Commentary

56. Pupils enter school with attainment that is below average for their age. As they move through the school, however, they make good progress so that at the end of Year 6 standards are in line with those expected, with many pupils achieving above. These standards are reflected in the 2004 results, which are a big improvement on the previous year when results were lower than in other subjects. The school has made a concerted and successful effort to put this right. Test results for Year 2 have been consistent in the past few years with pupils achieving standards expected for seven year olds. These results have been better than those of similar schools. Although standards in the current Year 2 are slightly lower than previously attained this is because there is a higher number of pupils with special needs in this current year group.
57. The teaching of numeracy is a strong feature of work in mathematics. Most pupils are confident about carrying out mental calculations. Pupils across all age ranges can explain the strategies they use to arrive at an answer and use precise vocabulary well. The focus on the

basic questions 'what do we have to find out', 'what do we know now' and 'how will we start' gives pupils a very good framework to approach their work with.

58. The teaching is nearly always good and in several year groups it is very good. Its strengths include carefully planned lessons that build well on previous learning, lesson objectives that are clearly explained so that pupils know what is expected of them, and tasks that both motivate and challenge pupils. In the majority of lessons teachers maintain a brisk pace, which retains the pupils' interest, and they use positive approaches that raise self-esteem and teaching techniques that excite and engage pupils. As a consequence learning is good. Teachers do not place enough emphasis on pupils applying mathematical skills to problem solving. As a result this area is weaker than others
59. The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has worked closely with the local education authority's mathematics advisor. Teachers' planning and children's work have been scrutinised, teaching observed and test results analysed. Staff have undergone intensive training. As a result teaching has improved and standards risen. Work is marked well and advice is given to pupils, making clear how they can improve. Presentation of work is good. Short, precise targets are given at appropriate intervals so pupils can take some control over their learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. This is satisfactory. A good example was observed in Year 5, where pupils used Venn diagrams to show the similarities and differences in the contrasting locations of Coventry and Llandudno. In other classes pupils used graphs and tables well to record data in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as they move through the school.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Although the school has increased the opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations, higher attaining pupils do not take enough responsibility for interpreting and recording their results.

Commentary

61. In the national tests in 2003, pupils in Year 6 attained standards which were average for their age. The standards attained by the current Year 6 are similar, with nearly two-fifths of pupils achieving above the expected level. In the teacher assessments in Year 2 in 2003 the results were below average, but the evidence of the inspection suggests that standards in Year 2 are broadly average. This is partly because the school has placed a renewed emphasis on the development of pupils' investigative skills, but also because teachers are establishing a wider base for the assessment of pupils' attainment. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school.
62. In Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of all the areas of the science curriculum. They understand some of the elements of a 'fair test', and they understand the effect of exercise of the human body, how electricity is used and the way some materials change with temperature. They use graphs to represent the findings of their investigations, but much of their work is recorded on worksheets prepared by the teacher, which does not give sufficient opportunity to more able pupils to decide how to set out their findings. In Year 6, pupils were observed carrying out an investigation into what solution makes the best bubble. They were encouraged to discuss how to carry out the investigation and had a good understanding of the need for a

fair test, but there was not sufficient time for more able pupils to discuss fully how to interpret the results. In their other work there were few opportunities for pupils, particularly the higher attainers, to devise their own methods of recording their findings, for instance in their work on plants.

63. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lesson observed in Year 6 the teacher used a wide range of resources to stimulate pupils' interest and engage their attention. Similarly in a lesson in Year 1 the teacher used resources and three different activities well to help pupils understand a range of sounds. Teachers plan lessons well; in a lesson in Year 4 the teacher made good use of the local environment to stimulate pupils' thinking about the effect of developments on animal habitats. Teachers also make good use of new technology, particularly the interactive whiteboards, to hold pupils' interest.
64. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She has identified the areas for development, such as investigative skills, and taken appropriate action, with good support from the local education authority. Pupils' learning has been enhanced by science days and weeks. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory; at that time standards were higher in Year 6 but there has been a decline in the intervening years, from which the school has now recovered well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge has improved since the last inspection.
- Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to support teaching in the classroom.
- Learning has been hampered until recently by old and unreliable equipment.
- There is still an insufficient number of computers in the computer suite to enable all pupils to participate effectively.
- There is insufficient emphasis on ICT work supporting other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

65. By the end of Year 2 pupils have maintained average standards while standards at the end of Year 6 are now in line with those expected for this age group. Pupils' progress throughout the school is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection where standards were found to be below expectations at the end of Year 6. This improvement is the result of good training to raise the knowledge and expertise of staff so that all are now competent in teaching ICT skills. At the time of the inspection new equipment had recently been installed in the computer suite. Prior to this there had been very old operating systems and unreliable equipment, which have hampered progress.
66. The school has worked well to compensate for poor and unreliable hardware. A programme of paper-based activities is used to supplement the use of hardware. For instance paper-based activities show pupils the principles of data branching in Year 4, and Year 6 pupils learn how to design a multi-media page in preparation for working on the computers. The school has identified gaps in hardware provision such as control mechanisms, and visits by Years 2 and 6 are organised to Coventry Transport Museum where they use specialist equipment to supplement the school's. Experts are also invited into school with the appropriate hardware.
67. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned well and delivered competently. Work is based on national subject guidance and all areas are covered. There is a limit, however, to the depth that skills are taught so that, whilst pupils are competent in word processing, data handling and presentations, other work, such as modeling and controlling, is relatively weak.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. This is unsatisfactory, although there are pockets of good practice. For example, in one lesson observed, ICT and literacy skills were linked together well. The class had looked at and read together the big book 'Keeping Safe' in their literacy lesson. In their ICT lesson children were required to program the Roamer to move along a road and collect the relevant items needed to keep safe during a holiday by the sea.

HUMANITIES

69. Opportunities to observe **geography** were limited during the inspection, and it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision. In the geography lesson observed in Year 1 the subject was being used well to develop pupils' writing skills, as they compared living on the Isle of Struay with living in Coventry. In another good lesson in Year 5, the geography of France was used effectively as the medium for teaching basic French language, including the alphabet (as pupils spelt place names), the points of the compass and the vocabulary for different buildings in the town of Châteauroux. **Religious education** is the subject of a separate diocesan inspection.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils achieve well.

Commentary

70. The standards seen in pupils' work reach the levels expected for their age, and this represents good achievement for pupils, from the knowledge and understanding with which they enter the school. Pupils in Year 2 have written quite extensively about the Fire of London; they also know about famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. In Year 6 they begin each topic with a mind map, which identifies what they already know. They develop historical skills of inference and deduction as they study topics such as the Ancient Egyptians and the Victorians. Pupils of all levels of ability write quite extensively about these topics.
71. Teaching and learning are good. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher matched tasks well to pupils' different levels of attainment as they compared seaside holidays today with 100 years ago. In a lesson in Year 6 the teacher made the objectives of the lesson clear to pupils, and provided good resources for them to research some of the changes brought about by the railways, in the form of census returns. Sometimes, however, teachers talk for too long at the beginning of a lesson, which means that there is not so much time for pupils to work independently on the tasks they are given.
72. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over the responsibility; as it has not been a focus in the school's development, she has had limited opportunity to monitor provision. However, she has seen teachers' planning and examples of pupils' work and begun to develop ideas on assessment of their work. The standards achieved by pupils have been maintained since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. No lessons were observed in **art and design**, **design and technology** or **physical education**. Only two lessons were observed in **music**. It is not possible to make judgements about provision in these subjects. There is some good work in **art** on display showing the

development of pupils' drawing skills in portraiture. Pupils use soft pencils and charcoal to good effect and older children include considerable detail in their drawings. The work associated with the National Gallery 'Take One Picture' project has inspired work in two and three dimensions. Sketchbooks are not used well, however, as a place for pupils to collect and develop their ideas. Work in **design and technology** is based on national subject guidance, which supports planning satisfactorily and ensures that pupils gain a reasonable range of experiences. In two particular year groups teaching and learning are stronger. In Year 2 pupils follow good design principles. They make puppets, and build vehicles that incorporate wheels and axles. They also design structures that use axles and turns for Incy Wincy Spider. Children evaluate their own work. While older pupils make and evaluate bread, design 'moving toys' using circuits, and build rigid structures, the best examples of good teaching are in Year 5. Again good design principles are followed and work is linked well to other areas of the curriculum. Thus, in English, pupils study the work 'The Sand Snake' and in design and technology they scrutinise musical instruments and use their findings as a basis for their own ideas in designing and constructing instruments to use as accompaniment to the poem. There is a lack of rigour and breadth of experience in Year 6 so that progress in the final year is weak. In **music** lessons pupils have good opportunities to use a range of instruments to compose short pieces to illustrate moods or to accompany their singing. Pupils learn the recorder and a few go on to orchestral instruments. The choir meets regularly and pupils who attend have the chance to tackle more complex part singing. Lunch-time clubs, singing days, performances for festivals and visiting musicians such as African drummers broaden pupils' experiences further. The **physical education** curriculum follows national guidelines. Pupils in Year 6 receive professional coaching at a local sports club. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting clubs, with fixtures against other schools in football, netball and athletics, and outside coaching in rugby. Pupils also have good opportunities to learn to swim at Tile Hill School.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

74. There was no opportunity to observe lessons in this area of learning and no judgement can be made on provision. However, pupils' personal development is a very important part of the work of the school. The programme for personal, social and health education is good and includes healthy eating, sex education and teaching about the misuse of drugs. The school has obtained the silver award for Healthy Schools. The school council provides a good opportunity for all pupils to take part in a democratic process, and they are introduced to some of the elements of local government by a councillor who is also a school governor. Other local agencies, such as the police, ambulance and fire service, visit the school to introduce pupils to their work.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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