

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANNE LINE CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

Basildon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115160

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Angela Russell

Lead inspector: Mr David Cann

Dates of inspection: 2nd- 4th February 2004

Inspection number: 257573

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	178
School address:	Wickhay Basildon Essex
Postcode:	SS15 5AF
Telephone number:	01268 524263
Fax number:	01268 273187
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Karen Huscroft
Date of previous inspection:	29th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Anne Line Catholic Infant School is Voluntary Aided school for 194 pupils aged 4–7 years. Pupils are drawn from an urban residential area where there is a mixture of rented and owner-occupied accommodation. They are from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds and their skills on entry are generally in line with those expected nationally. Most pupils are from a white British heritage but 10 per cent are from other ethnic backgrounds and 3 per cent learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs are below the national average. There have been major staff changes over the last six months. The acting headteacher is covering for a headteacher who has been absent on long-term sick leave since July 2003. Out of the six class teachers in the school during the inspection, two joined the school in September 2003 and three joined three weeks before the inspection. Three teachers are on short term-contracts, one covering for a full time teacher on maternity leave.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20009	David Cann	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, citizenship, design and technology, music and physical education
19743	Ann Taylor	Lay inspector	
25775	Vivien Wilson	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, geography and history
7420	Ann Simpson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage and special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Anne Line RC VA Infant School provides a **satisfactory** quality of education in a supportive and caring environment. This has been successfully achieved at a time of extensive staff change and reflects the commitment of the staff and the clear leadership of the acting headteacher. Pupils benefit from satisfactory teaching and learning and reach satisfactory standards by the end of Year 2. Achievement is satisfactory overall. The school represents **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English and are attaining above average standards in reading by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching and learning are good at the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils have a positive approach to school and relationships are good.
- While pupils' behaviour in most classes is good, teachers do not hold their attention in all lessons.
- Adults care for pupils well and ensure that they take an active part in school life and learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- There is good support for pupils learning English as an additional language.
- The school works very well with parents and has strong links with the local community.
- The roles of subject managers are not satisfactorily developed.
- Governors do not have a strong enough impact on the school's strategic planning.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has been improved and pupils' attainment has risen by Year 2. Teachers are good at challenging more able pupils, whose results are good, and there have been improvements in the teaching of music. However, there is still a need to develop the way pupils use and apply their knowledge of number across other subjects and behaviour management is not consistent. Improvements have been made in development planning, but more needs to be done to create a clear and relevant programme for the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	D	A	A	A
writing	E	B	D	D
mathematics	D	A	B	A

*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*

Overall, pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. Test results, at the end of Year 2, indicate above average attainment in reading and mathematics and below average attainment in writing. As a result of improvements in literacy teaching, current pupils are achieving well in English and standards of writing are average. In mathematics, pupils attain standards which are often above average with more able pupils doing particularly well. Current pupils are achieving well and reaching levels in line with those expected. Pupils' attainment in science has been slightly below average, but current teaching is raising pupils' standards effectively. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are well supported and achieve well. Pupils of all abilities acquire a satisfactory knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT). Achievement in all other subjects inspected is satisfactory.

Children in the Foundation Stage progress well. They are in line to achieve the goals that children are expected to reach by the time they go into Year 1.

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers set pupils clear goals to achieve in lessons and adapt tasks well to challenge pupils of all abilities. Teachers and support staff work together well to support pupils with special educational needs who make good progress towards their targets. Individual help for pupils learning English as an additional language ensures that all pupils are included in school life and learning. While most lessons are well managed and purposeful, the way teachers control pupils is not satisfactory in all lessons. Teachers challenge more able pupils successfully but the targets for improvement that they set in literacy are not always clear and effective. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good and helps children settle into school and relate well with adults and other children.

The curriculum provides a good range of learning experiences for all pupils. Teaching is well planned in both the Foundation Stage and in Years 1-2 and takes good account of the needs and aptitudes of different pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils enjoy a variety of interesting experiences, which is having a positive impact on writing skills. There is a good programme of personal and health education and good links with the community extend pupils' learning well through visits and visitors. Accommodation is well used and resources are good.

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. The school provides **good** support, advice and guidance and is **good** at involving pupils in the life of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Under the good leadership of the acting headteacher the school has set an appropriate agenda for raising standards and to help new staff settle in. However, the many new subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in managing and developing their subjects. **Governance is satisfactory.** While governors are supportive of the school they do not yet have a sufficiently strong impact on how developments are planned.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel well informed and their children are happy to come to school. Most **pupils** also say they like coming to school and consider it a friendly and happy environment

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Extend the contribution of subject leaders towards the development of their subjects.
- Establish consistent expectations for pupils' behaviour in class and improve systems for managing it.
- Raise the role of governors in setting the school's strategic objectives.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils' attainments are **satisfactory**. Children in the Foundation Stage attain the expected levels in all areas of learning, achieving well in their personal and social development and satisfactorily in all other areas. By Year 2 pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and satisfactorily in all other subjects inspected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage, especially in learning to work and play with others.
- Year 2 pupils achieve well in reading and their skills are improving in writing.
- Higher-attaining pupils are well challenged in mathematics and achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all classes.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language develop their language skills well.

Commentary

1. At the Foundation Stage, standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The majority of children in the reception class have attained the expected standards in their learning when they enter Year 1. In communication, language and literacy children attain satisfactory standards and explain their ideas easily in speaking with adults and other children. Children's personal development is in line with the standards expected and many progress well in learning to relate happily, work and play with others. Children attain a satisfactory understanding of number and apply their knowledge well in action games and play activities. In all other areas of learning children achieve satisfactorily and are stimulated by well-planned activities, which effectively link areas of learning.
2. Test results at Year 2 have improved at the same rate as those nationally and are broadly similar to the levels observed at the last inspection. Pupils' results in reading and mathematics have been above or well above average in three out of the last four years. Pupils have achieved well and current pupils indicate similar good levels of progress in these skills. An above average number of pupils attain higher levels in both reading and mathematics. Over the last four years, writing results have been above average in two years and below or well below average in the other two years. Writing has been the subject of a whole school focus which is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and current pupils are attaining the expected levels in their work. Pupils' attainment in science was below average in 2003, but current pupils are attaining levels in line with those expected. The increased emphasis on practical activities and investigations is promoting better achievement. In information and communication technology, pupils attain the expected levels and achieve satisfactorily although they do not yet apply their knowledge across all subjects. Pupils attain the expected levels in all the other subjects inspected.
3. Pupils who learn English as an additional language achieve well. They benefit from well-focused learning activities effectively led by teachers and language support staff. Pupils swiftly develop a competence in English, which helps them to progress well in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make a good start in their learning. Most pupils achieve well as a result and reach the targets set for them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.2 (17.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.0 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.3 (17.7)	16.5 (16.3)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good relationships between staff and pupils which create a secure learning environment.
- Strong community values are promoted in the school and this ensures freedom from bullying and harassment.
- The behaviour of most pupils is good but a significant minority become inattentive where classes are not well managed.

Commentary

4. The school continues to instil in pupils the positive values and desire to learn which were reported in the previous inspection. Children clearly feel welcomed into the school community as soon as they start school. Adults place a strong emphasis on learning to share, to take turns and to respect one another. By the time they leave the reception classes, children are achieving the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development.
5. Throughout the school, the vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. The atmosphere in most classrooms is happy, purposeful and busy. Where teachers have not yet established clear routines, some pupils demonstrate immature and uncooperative behaviour. However, generally teachers' control of their classes is good and pupils respond well to the tasks set for them. Pupils behave well around the school and are polite and welcoming to visitors. There have been no exclusions in the past year
6. There is good provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. A well-planned and enriched curriculum provides good opportunities to learn about living with others and to appreciate the traditions and cultures of other societies. The school's Catholic ethos provides a strong moral framework. Assemblies give good opportunities to listen to stories, to sing together and to reflect on important issues. A strong framework of shared values ensures that incidents of bullying or harassment are rare and quickly dealt with, and that racial harmony is promoted positively.

Attendance

Attendance in the year ending July 2003

Authorised absence (%)	
School data	8.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence (%)	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

- Pupils' attendance was well below average last year when they were distorted by the school being closed for three days due to unforeseen circumstances. In response to this the school monitors data more carefully and is raising parents' awareness of the importance of good attendance. Attendance is now in line with the national average for infant schools and most absences are because of childhood illnesses.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. The curriculum is well planned and pupils cared for well. The school's links with parents are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. Teachers have good working relationships with pupils although some class routines are not well established. Support staff have made an important contribution to the stability and continuity of teaching and actively help pupils with their learning. The quality of assessment is satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment is used efficiently to plan tasks for pupils of all abilities.
- There is well organised support for pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language.
- Teachers are good at identifying and challenging more able pupils who learn well as a result.
- The management of pupils is mostly good, although expectations and routines are not well established in all classes.
- Teachers do not ensure pupils regularly use ICT in class work nor always reinforce learning through links between subjects.
- Pupils' targets in English are not well understood by all pupils

Commentary

- Teaching at the Foundation Stage is good. The large team of teachers and learning support staff work well together, sharing effective planning and ideas in order to provide an organised and purposeful programme for children. Children are helped to settle well into the school environment and, as a result, many make good progress. Most pupils enter the school with average levels of skills and experience. However, there is a significant minority with little command of English and special educational needs who require and receive a good level of support.
- In Years 1 and 2, teachers are good at explaining the purpose of each lesson to their pupils. In good lessons, teachers successfully engage pupils in the exciting process of discovery and maintain a purposeful pace throughout the sessions. They use good questioning to recap on previous learning and obtain pupils' ideas and contributions. In English, pupils suggest

appropriate words to use, in science pupils offer their predictions on their investigations. Teachers draw pupils together at the end of lessons to share their ideas, but do not always leave enough time to do this effectively.

10. The approach to managing behaviour is not consistent from class to class. Most teachers are successful in obtaining good behaviour and co-operation from their pupils. However, there are instances where pupils make insufficient progress by becoming distracted and inattentive. With a large number of new staff, the school is aware of this problem and is taking steps to address it through a new policy on behaviour management, reinforced by staff training and discussion. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers demonstrate a lack of strategies and experience to ensure pupils understand and accept class routines.
11. Teachers plan well for pupils with special educational needs. Support from learning assistants is well targeted to the pupils' needs. Good assessment provides a basis on which to plan strategies for effective learning and teachers and support staff exchange information well. Classroom assistants make an important contribution to pupils' learning by directing their attention during tasks although during plenary sessions they do not always play as active a part as they could.
12. Teaching is good overall for pupils with English as an additional language. Individual and small group teaching helps them to make good progress. The effective deployment of the language support assistant means that pupils in each class benefit from individual help for two hours a week. Usually, tasks are modified well so that pupils' learning is directed towards their specific language needs. However, teachers do not always ensure that lesson planning always includes activities to suit pupils' level of English.
13. The quality and format of weekly lesson planning varies considerably from class to class. In some classes, detailed and comprehensive plans identify all the elements expected. In others, there is not enough attention to ensuring that pupils use ICT as regularly as they could and learning is not linked from subject to subject. The variation in formats makes it difficult for subject leaders to monitor the way these aspects are being implemented.
14. There are sound systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, as reported at the previous inspection. Teachers use assessment well to group pupils so that their work is well matched to their learning needs. Thorough observations by teachers and support staff contribute to efficient assessment and recording of the needs and progress of pupils learning English as an additional language. The developing use of computer records enables the school to predict individual pupils' learning potential with some accuracy. This information is now used to plan work to challenge higher-attaining pupils more effectively than reported at the previous inspection. Staff training has led to more accurate marking. This is regularly discussed with pupils to help them to understand how well they are learning. These marking conferences also allow pupils to express their own views on their progress. However, the learning targets presented to pupils are difficult for all pupils to understand. Consequently, pupils are not clear about exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	9	14	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum that effectively includes all pupils in learning. It is satisfactorily enriched by extra-curricular activities. The accommodation is good and resources support effective learning in all subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned to challenge pupils of all abilities.
- Planning ensures all pupils are included in school life.
- Use of the immediate locality for learning is good.
- The curriculum promotes good personal, social and health education.

Commentary

15. The curriculum is well planned to ensure proper coverage of subjects throughout the school. Schemes of work are satisfactory and under regular review. The school is implementing improvements in pupils' learning of literacy, numeracy and science which are having a positive impact. Higher-ability pupils, those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are identified in lesson plans and tasks are adapted well to meet their different needs. The school promotes a fully inclusive curriculum where pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
16. In the Foundation Stage, activities are well organised to promote pupils' development in all areas of learning. Adults plan carefully together and ensure children pursue a stimulating programme, which develops their imagination and skills. Outdoor facilities, resources and equipment are used well, both in the Foundation Stage and in other classes.
17. There is good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. A strong team of learning support assistants plans closely with the teaching staff and provides support for individuals or groups as appropriate. Strategies are used successfully in integrating these pupils into the work of the class. Learning activities for pupils with English as another language are based on a careful assessment of their particular background and language needs. Valuable advice and support from local education authority advisory staff helps teachers to plan the most effective teaching methods. Resources for learning are good and pupils are well included in all aspects of school life.
18. The teaching of personal, social and health education is good and contributes towards establishing good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Through circle time¹ discussions, pupils have regular, planned opportunities to develop greater self-awareness, confidence and an increasing understanding of social issues. Teachers use the local environment well, for example, by taking pupils out on walks to look at different aspects of the town in connection with their work in history, geography, and art.

Care, guidance and support

The systems to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. There are **good** systems for supporting pupils with advice and guidance about their work. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing, and acting on their views is **good**.

¹ Circle time is a class session where pupils gather in a circle and take turns to talk about a given topic.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good monitoring of pupils' personal development, especially from support staff.
- Children benefit from very good induction arrangements.
- There is good care and support for pupils learning English as an additional language.
- Relationships in the school are positive and friendly; pupils are cared for well.
- Systems for consulting pupils are good and often take place in weekly circle time.
- The school recognises that First Aid training needs updating.

Commentary

19. Pupils are looked after well in a caring and supportive environment. The school is a happy place and relationships are friendly. Pupils thrive in this positive atmosphere. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is good, and there are detailed records kept of issues, which may be affecting pupils' capacity to learn. Support staff maintain these records and have importantly provided pupils with continuity and a familiar face during the recent period of changes in teachers.
20. Induction arrangements for the youngest children are very good. As well as staff visiting homes, children also have the chance to attend the pre-school class on a part-time basis in the term before they start in reception. This helps them to settle into main school life easily.
21. Health and safety procedures are secure and there are staff qualified to administer First Aid. The school have recognised that for several staff their First Aid qualifications have lapsed and update training is planned. The school has child protection procedures which meet requirements and staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.
22. Staff are demonstrating their concern for pupils' welfare by seeking to gain the accolade of being a 'Healthy School'. This arose after parents were consulted for their views and raised healthy eating as an issue they would like to see developed. Systems for listening to pupils and responding to their views are informal, but good. Staff encourage pupils to talk about topical issues affecting them during circle times.
23. Pupils who learn English as an additional language have good relationships with school and advisory staff. Careful monitoring of their progress leads to good support and guidance. For example, when observations showed that a pupil had no experience of learning through play, the school's good induction arrangements ensured he had a term in the reception class to experience practical activities and playing with other children.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents are very pleased with the schools' work and the partnership is **very good**. Links with the community are **good**. The partnership with other schools is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate its friendly atmosphere.
- Liaison between home and school is very good and the newly-established parental 'open afternoons' are encouraging this further.
- Good links with the community and the Church are helping pupils' personal development.

Commentary

24. Parents are very supportive of the school and very positive about its work. This is shown by almost full attendance at parents' evenings and good support for the Friends, who raise considerable amounts of money for the benefit of the children. Dining furniture and outdoor play equipment were all paid for out of funds raised by the parents' association (PALS).
25. Links between home and school are very good. The newly introduced fortnightly open afternoons have proved popular and are valued by parents who can call in and see how their child is getting on. Parents are also invited to class assemblies and appreciate seeing their child performing with others. Pupils' annual reports are informative and there is a good amount of information sent from the school about day-to-day routines and news.
26. The school is fully involved in local community life. Pupils raise good amounts for local charities. There is a strong relationship with the local Catholic Church and ministers visit regularly to meet with the children and take assemblies.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The acting headteacher provides **good** leadership but the roles of subject leaders have not been satisfactorily developed. Management and governance are both **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher's leadership of the curriculum is good.
- There is good management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those who learn English as an additional language.
- The new subject leaders have not developed their leadership roles.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's needs, but have not established a sufficiently active role in agreeing the school's strategic direction.
- The school development plan does not identify, cost or establish success criteria clearly enough.

Commentary

27. Judgements on leadership and management are similar to those reported at the previous inspection. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities of ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs or those learning English as an additional language, receive the help that they need and are fully included in school life. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a strong commitment to shaping its direction. However, until recently they have not been actively involved in making decisions and setting budget priorities. As a result, they have not been able to effectively challenge and support the school in achieving its aims or to play an influential role in responding to the previous inspection report. Now that governors are receiving more information, their impact is more evident.
28. The acting headteacher has efficiently unified the recently appointed teaching staff into a cohesive team. Her good understanding of where standards need to be improved has been successfully shared with staff. Together with good support from the established group of learning support assistants she has ensured that the school is effectively focusing on these areas. Responsibilities for curriculum leadership have been allocated amongst staff, but although new teachers are building up a satisfactory awareness of their subjects, they are not yet in a position to influence teaching or bring about change.

29. The school development plan now satisfactorily links objectives with raising standards of pupils' attainment. However, the means of measuring successful outcomes are not sufficiently clear and not all elements are precisely costed. The plan is not monitored regularly enough to provide a useful check on the progress being made in relation to current staff responsibilities.
30. The acting headteacher has effectively managed the many staff changes and the recruitment of new staff. This is evident in the good working relationships between staff and the lack of disruption to the pupils' learning environment. The learning support assistants are well deployed to make the best use of teachers' time. Good management of staffing to support pupils with special educational needs and pupils learning English as a new language helps them to achieve well. Monitoring of pupils' national and school test results is satisfactory and plans for improvement are based on how well pupils are performing. Good efforts have been made to support new teachers' professional development, particularly to promote higher standards in pupils' writing. However, performance management objectives have not yet been identified to support school priorities.
31. Governors have a satisfactory awareness of the school's financial management and of obtaining best value for expenditure. However, the level of governor input into setting the annual budget has been limited in the past and is an aspect governors rightly intend to improve. Administrative staff carry out day-to-day financial organisation efficiently and provide good support for management and teachers.
32. Leadership of special educational needs provision has improved since the last inspection and is now good. There is strong leadership from the acting head teacher and the governors to ensure that the school vision of an inclusive community is realised. The coordinator has put in place clear procedures for identifying and meeting pupils' needs. Good use is made of outside expertise and resources are well allocated.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	474,995
Total expenditure	473,262
Expenditure per pupil	2,402

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	1,645
Balance carried forward to next year	3,378

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

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

- Teaching places a successful emphasis on children' personal, social and emotional development.
- Adults have high expectations of good behaviour to which children respond positively.
- Children are encouraged to become active members of a supportive, caring community.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and fully included in learning.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language are given valuable individual help to develop their language and communication skills.

Commentary

33. The school has maintained good provision for pupils since the last inspection in spite of recent major changes in staffing and leadership. A rich and stimulating environment is provided within which pupils make a good start to their school life and where they have a variety of imaginative learning experiences. The care and support given to pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school's strong commitment to inclusion is evident in the reception classes where pupils with a range of needs are helped to work together by the skilful intervention of all adults. Children make good progress in their learning because of the carefully planned support which they receive. They attain the Early Learning Goals² in all areas of development.
34. Children enter school with skills which are broadly in line with those expected for their age. However, recently, a significant number of children have joined the school with little or no understanding of English and the number of pupils with special educational needs has risen. Teaching has been well organised to provide these children with support which is promoting their communication skills well. The leadership and management of the curriculum is good.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good relationships between children and adults within a caring ethos.
- Children are provided with good opportunities to work with each other through well planned play activities.

Commentary

35. Children attain the expected levels and achieve well. Teaching is good. Children are helped to settle into school quickly through a programme of home and school visits. The classroom environment is well planned and orderly and children feel secure. New children are soon able to gain confidence through stimulating and well-supported activities. The provision of exciting role play areas encourages children to be interested, motivated and eager to learn. Teaching is planned so that children work in groups, as a whole class and independently and there is an

² Early Learning Goals – these are the standards that children are expected to reach by the end of their reception year. They refer to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy children should be able to write their names and begin to write simple sentences.

emphasis on sharing and taking turns. As a result, children begin to develop an awareness of others' needs.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many, rich opportunities for children to develop their speaking through role-play.
- Reading and writing are given a purpose, which makes the children want to learn.

Commentary

36. Most children should attain the Early Learning Goals by the age of five and their achievement is good. Children's skills on entry are broadly in line with those expected nationally, but a few enter with little or no understanding of English. Teaching is good and well planned around a theme, Chinese New Year for example, gives a variety of interesting opportunities for all pupils to develop their spoken language. They play within a Chinese restaurant, cooking food and serving customers. They learn to speak naturally and easily in conversations with each other and with adults. They listen with rapt attention to a story about a dragon and then follow him to his lair to find him sad and lonely. They have a real reason for writing to him and begin to practise forming words and letters. Good questioning from the teacher brings out a range of imaginative ideas. Many pupils are confident in identifying the initial sounds in words and some can read simple and more complex words. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress within their capabilities.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical activities in small groups enable children to grasp basic concepts.
- Children are well supported in learning to count and identify numbers.
- Some opportunities for using mathematical ideas within a practical situation are not developed.

Commentary

37. Children achieve satisfactorily and attain the levels expected by the age of five. Satisfactory teaching provides structured opportunities for children to learn to count, calculate and gain understanding of shape, space and measures. Children work with balance scales to see which objects are heavier or lighter. Teaching staff ensure that they use the correct mathematical language and observe their experiments closely and accurately. Resources are good. Most children are beginning to have some idea of how to compare objects according to their weight. In the outside play area, children count and identify numbers as part of action games. Many children count well up to ten and some can count beyond this. Within the class theme of the Chinese New Year, there are opportunities for using mathematics in context, for example in using coins or counting ingredients. These situations are not always exploited as well as they might be. In the pre-reception group, a shoe shop is a good opportunity for sorting, matching and counting and is well used.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative planning provides children with stimulating opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- Visits, visitors and practical activities enrich learning.

Commentary

38. Good teaching ensures children achieve well and attain the levels expected by the age of five. The spacious classrooms enable staff to plan for a range of imaginative activities within a topic. The Chinese New Year theme follows on from a visit by a troupe of Chinese dragon dancers, which greatly excited the children. Good planning then provides for imaginative role play in which children experience and appreciate different dress, food and customs. Interest levels are high and children return often to the Chinese café to cook noodles and to use chopsticks. They identify and talk about the differences in Chinese lettering, looking closely at patterns. These experiences develop awareness of the richness of other cultures and link well with learning in language and communication. Computers are used regularly and children have a very good understanding of how to use the keyboard and mouse as well as simple programmes. They show confidence and self-assurance.

Physical development

The provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching successfully develops children's learning through outside activities.
- Learning assistants and volunteers are deployed well to supervise and support children.

Commentary

39. Children achieve well and teaching is good. Children use the small outside area frequently during the day. Adults make good use of the area for a variety of activities, which enhances children's physical development and other areas of learning. From time to time, children are able to experience the larger spaces of the hall and the outdoor playground in order to develop greater confidence and use larger apparatus. Good use is made of learning assistants and parent volunteers to provide the necessary levels of supervision and support. Children join in with structured games and they use apparatus such as hoops and balls. When they first join the pre-reception group, many children are lacking in confidence and lack control or co-ordination in their movements. They are quickly helped to gain confidence and develop an awareness of space through fun activities and caring support. Staff are very aware of children's safety and help them to understand the need for control. Children are taught to handle small equipment, such as pencils and scissors, and all are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning within themes gives good opportunities for creative and imaginative development.

- Children are not always encouraged to exercise choice and use their own ideas.

Commentary

40. Attainment is in line with the levels expected and teaching is satisfactory. Children achieve satisfactorily. They enjoy dancing and moving to music, especially when imitating the dragon dancers. They can handle musical instruments sensibly and know how to start and stop together. They sing simple songs with enthusiasm and do the actions happily. There are planned opportunities to work in small groups with an adult using paper, paint, glue and scissors, for example making Chinese fish, but the children are not always encouraged to extend their talk about their choices or to pursue ideas of their own. Children make satisfactory progress in exploring colour, shape and space. They are less successful in expressing their feelings and preferences in response to art work and music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strategies to improve pupils' writing skills are having a positive effect.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language achieve well.
- Teachers provide a variety of interesting situations to help pupils to improve their speaking skills.
- Pupils do not have specific targets written in vocabulary that they can understand.

Commentary

41. Year 2 test results in 2003 show well above average standards in reading but below average standards in writing. Current pupils are attaining above average levels in reading and average levels in writing. The school's tracking of pupils' progress successfully identified writing standards as an area for improvement. The work of current pupils shows that they have made good progress, as a result of improved teaching strategies. This indicates that high standards in reading have been maintained and that standards in writing have improved since the previous inspection. Most pupils achieve well in relation to their average levels of ability when they start Year 1. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average for pupils of this age. Boys achieve better than girls in reading.
42. Teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils whose home language is not English achieve well because of good, regular individual and group support and suitably adapted work. The whole-school focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and improving standards in writing gives pupils more opportunities for practice. Interesting role-play areas, based on their history topics, encourage pupils to develop their imaginative vocabulary in their play. Small group discussions help pupils to gain confidence in expressing an opinion or explaining how they feel. Pupils listen very attentively to their teachers during the introduction of lesson activities, but are not always allowed enough time to extend their answers to questions.
43. A thorough teaching of phonic skills contributes to pupils' good progress in reading and helps them to express their ideas confidently in their writing. An improved range of reading books has recently been introduced to encourage pupils' interest and enthusiasm when they read in small groups. The range includes a selection of non-fiction books on subjects to maintain boys'

interest in reading. No particular ways of helping girls to achieve as well as boys have been identified.

44. Teachers plan an interesting range of activities, supported by imaginative resources and visits designed to engage pupils' involvement in writing tasks. This approach is stimulating their interest well and teachers show pupils how to extend their range of vocabulary and punctuation to make their work lively. Teachers also provide good opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects which allow pupils time to develop their skills in a longer piece of work.
45. Teachers' careful assessment of pupils' understanding helps them to plan activities that are satisfactorily matched to groups with different levels of ability. This is effectively supported by well-directed learning support assistants and helps most pupils to progress at the right level. Although different work is set for higher-attaining pupils, it does not always demand enough effort from them, to develop their writing skills and thinking sufficiently. Pupils' lists of learning targets are not expressed simply enough for pupils to understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
46. The subject is being satisfactorily managed during the subject leader's absence on maternity leave. Leadership is sound and has ensured that all teachers are focusing on the priorities for improvement identified by monitoring pupils' test results. Interpretation of data, however, did not recognise that girls' attainment is lower than that of boys in reading and so this issue has yet to be addressed.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Pupils make good use of literacy across other subjects. They have good opportunities to practise writing skills in history and religious education lessons. Study of interesting everyday objects from the past provides a worthwhile focus for writing. It offers good scope for pupils to make comparisons, use their imagination and learn new vocabulary. Information books related to the current topics are used well to encourage pupils to read for themselves about a subject. Although there are many good opportunities for pupils to answer questions, they are not often asked to speak for a variety of different purposes.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher-attaining pupils are well challenged and achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support learning.

Commentary

48. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. In the 2003, national tests in Year 2, pupils' results were above average and pupils achieved well. Current Year 2 pupils are making good progress and most are on course to meet the targets set for them, which are in line with those expected nationally. Teachers are well aware of the need to challenge higher-attaining pupils and plan well for them which is an improvement since the last inspection. The work set for them stimulates their interest and achievement well and the number attaining high levels is above average. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and attain levels which are often close to national expectations.
49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have a sound command of the National Numeracy Strategy and plan for lessons thoroughly. They use effective questioning to target

individual pupils and assess their understanding of number. They maintain a brisk pace during the mental starter and most pupils respond well and demonstrate an enthusiasm for the subject. The use of mini-whiteboards is generally exploited well to maximise pupils' participation but some pupils do not maintain attention well. Teachers do not always help pupils to explain their working clearly enough.

50. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their pupils. This knowledge is used well to provide feedback to pupils about how well they are doing and helps pupils to make good progress. Teachers are good at adapting tasks to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and this stimulates learning well.
51. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to learning by helping pupils to concentrate fruitfully on tasks set. They sensitively but firmly encourage pupils to explain their working and are good at reinforcing the main teaching points of the lesson. They help pupils understand and use the correct technical vocabulary, which is particularly valuable for pupils learning English as an additional language.
52. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and management and analyses results carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching. She provides good support for colleagues and with her encouragement teachers are adapting planning together to improve the use of numeracy skills in other subjects.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Mathematics is used satisfactorily across other subjects, but is not built into teachers' planning in all classes. Pupils develop their knowledge of number using ICT programs. While pupils are required to apply their numeracy skills in science and design and technology, teachers do not always exploit these opportunities to the full.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
 - Teaching places a good emphasis on learning through investigations.
 - Higher-attaining pupils attain good levels in assessments.
 - The subject leader has not been given sufficient time to monitor work and teaching in Year 2.
54. Pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Standards are similar to those at the previous inspection and pupils' understanding of investigative work has improved. In 2003, assessments of pupils' attainment in Year 2 indicated that they attained levels slightly below the national average. This has been addressed by improved planning and by placing a greater emphasis on practical activities. Current pupils are achieving satisfactorily and attaining standards that are in line with those expected of them. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged well by good questioning from teachers. Pupils with special educational needs progress well as a result of good support in class.
 55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are effectively developing their skills of scientific enquiry. They have investigated a range of forces and illustrated their findings by drawing and labelling the forces of pushing and pulling. In the lessons observed, Year 1 pupils took part enthusiastically in tasting different foodstuffs to try to identify how their senses worked. Displays in Year 2 are good at promoting pupils' awareness of healthy eating in line with the school's development of the healthy eating programme. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of good diet and proper exercise and the reasons for this.

56. Where teaching is good, teachers set clear objectives for learning. They, and other adults in the class, constantly ask pupils to think about what they are doing and help them to try and explain why things happen as they do. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils' enthusiasm is not contained effectively and a few become silly and distracted which impedes their learning. Marking is satisfactory and encourages and guides pupils effectively.
57. The subject leader does not provide satisfactory leadership at present since she has insufficient opportunities to monitor the work of colleagues. The subject has been satisfactorily managed. The school has reviewed pupils' attainment and introduced a greater focus on practical activities which is promoting pupils' learning. Activities are supported well by teaching assistants and parent helpers. Assessment information is gathered at the end of each unit of work and used effectively to plan pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of instruction in the computer suite is good.
- Pupils make good use of the computers in English.
- Resources are of good quality, but not always used sufficiently to consolidate pupils' learning.
- The planning of ICT use is not monitored closely enough.

Commentary

58. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain levels in line with those expected for their age. Since the last inspection, new resources and good teaching have enabled pupils to achieve satisfactorily and pupils' standards have kept pace with the nationally improved levels of achievement.
59. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils have regular weekly visits to the computer suite, where they receive good quality instruction and support from classroom assistants. Pupils focus on well-planned activities that are designed to develop new skills and generally have time to practise them. However, the amount of time spent using ICT in class is not consistent. Teachers do not always plan enough opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and develop their confidence further. The quality and quantity of equipment and resources are good and teachers' skills and knowledge are sound. There was good evidence of pupils using computers to extend their learning in English, and in mathematics the use of ICT is satisfactory. In other subjects, computers are used sporadically in the classroom. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make frequent use of ICT to extend their knowledge and are included well in learning. Assessment is satisfactory and is being used to guide the planning of activities as well as to monitor pupils' progress.
60. A period of staff absence has left the subject without satisfactory leadership and management. The new subject leader has taken over but she has not yet had a chance to develop an overview of teaching and learning. The monitoring of teachers' planning and use of ICT is an area for development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning in most subjects of the curriculum, but teachers' planning does not specify opportunities in all classes. Pupils use ICT well for writing brief accounts in history and English, as well as captions and labels for their work. Pupils use computers well in art and design to create self-portraits, their own designs based on Mondrian paintings and illustrations for greetings cards. In this way,

pupils develop good mouse skills, as well as an appreciation of colour and patterns. Pupils develop their mathematical skills well in responding to computer programs with tests and puzzles. There was little evidence of ICT being used in science.

HUMANITIES

No lessons took place in **geography** during the inspection and, consequently, no judgement can be made about provision. However, a selection of pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils and staff. From the evidence gained, pupils achieve **average** standards for their age in geography. From pupils' work and their comments it is evident that they develop a satisfactory range of geography skills in the topics studied. Standards have been maintained since those reported at the previous inspection. Pupils' learning activities show that they study different ways of using the land and how this affects the work that people do. Their work shows how pupils learn to interpret and make their own simple maps on which they record natural and man-made features. They describe their preferences about an area, giving relevant reasons. Pupils' choice of means of travel for different situations shows that most have an acceptable grasp of a journey's need for land, sea or air transport. New leadership for the subject maintains the current organisation, but has not yet identified new priorities for development.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan an interesting range of activities to develop pupils' history skills.
- Lessons are organised well to develop speaking and writing skills.
- During the subject leader's maternity leave, management is satisfactory but there is insufficient leadership.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language have good support in lessons.
- Some undemanding worksheets do not extend pupils' history skills.

Commentary

62. Pupils reach standards that are average for their age. Teachers plan a variety of suitable learning activities that help pupils to achieve a satisfactory level of understanding and development of history skills. Lessons are well-organised where pupils compare present and past lifestyles. Role-play areas give pupils' new speaking situations and encourage their understanding of people's feelings and attitudes. The early twentieth century role-play corner is used effectively for pupils in Year 1 to talk about and use household utensils from the past, as seen during their visit to Hollytrees Museum. Pupils' writing shows that they are aware that rich and poor people had very different living conditions. Teaching and learning support staff helpfully modify the tasks of pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language. However, teachers do not always ensure that activities are matched to a pupils' language ability. In Year 2, pupils begin to compare written evidence to consider the reasons for conditions and events and to learn about the contributions of famous people. This includes Samuel Pepys' diary descriptions of the Fire of London and letters from Florence Nightingale about the Crimean War. Writing tasks are used well to further pupils' ability to write at length and use new vocabulary, but some worksheets have very limited possibilities for pupils to respond to what they learn. Standards have been satisfactorily maintained since the previous inspection. The subject is satisfactorily managed on a caretaker basis during the subject leader's maternity leave but there is a lack of clear leadership at present.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions took place with pupils to provide evidence in **art and design**, and **design and technology**, but it was not possible to observe lessons in the limited time available. It is not therefore possible to make a judgement about provision in either. Both subjects are planned to provide pupils with a satisfactory experience of all the required elements. Pupils' attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age. The school has developed good guidelines to help teachers plan lessons, and teachers monitor and record pupils' progress well. Pupils are encouraged to illustrate their work with drawing that develops observational skills well. Art skills are developed well to help pupils appreciate the wonders of nature and this is effectively linked into pupils' learning in religious education and science. Pupils plan designs well and in discussion they demonstrated that they have evaluated their work critically. They are enthusiastic about design and technology and make good use of ICT in art and design work.

No **physical education** lessons took place during the inspection and therefore no judgement can be made about provision, standards or teaching. Teachers plan pupils' learning to provide them with the expected range of experiences. Resources and accommodation are organised well to provide a satisfactory learning environment.

MUSIC

The provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader supports colleagues well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.

Commentary

63. Pupils achieve at a satisfactory level and learn to compose simple pieces confidently. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils develop good speaking and listening skills though working together and in appraising their work.
64. Teaching is satisfactory and gives pupils clear instruction and explanation about ways of recording notations and rhythm. Pupils sing tunefully and are confident when accompanying singing on untuned percussion instruments. Whole class teaching is effective and encourages all pupils to contribute their ideas. Teachers provide good opportunities for more able pupils to lead class activities. Sufficient time is allocated for pupils' own exploration of sound as they compose and perform simple pieces. Independent and collaborative learning are promoted well by support teachers and staff. All pupils are fully included and show enjoyment and appreciation of each other's work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and those learning English as an additional language are given good support and progress well. The use of recorded music to stimulate pupils' composition holds pupils' interest well.
65. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader provides valuable support and guidance to colleagues. Staff use a full range of percussion instruments to promote music making.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

66. One lesson was observed and evidence is also drawn from discussion with pupils and staff, but it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision. Teachers promote a safe and secure learning environment where pupils feel confident to share their thoughts and ideas. In a well led session of circle time pupils were encouraged to listen to each other and to value the contributions of others. Teaching is effectively linked with the religious education programme of study and this encourages pupils' appreciation and respect for the views and beliefs of others. In discussion, pupils showed a good awareness of social issues and had very positive attitudes to learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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