

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Bede's Catholic Primary School

Northwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111341

Headteacher: Mrs E Livesey

Lead inspector: Mr J R Francis

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th May 2004

Inspection number: 257598

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 140

School address: Keepers Lane
Weaverham
Northwich
Cheshire

Postcode: CW8 3BY

Telephone number: 01606 852149

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr I Bradley

Date of previous inspection: 6th July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This smaller than average Catholic primary school has 140 pupils in five classes, including 19 reception age children in a combined reception/Year 1 class. Currently the pupils in Year 1 are taught as a separate class each morning. There are a similar number of boys (73) and girls (67). The school serves the parish and surrounding area, and socio-economic indicators are above average. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is very low. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and only one, a recent arrival, is at the early stages of learning English. There are a very few pupils who have special educational needs, including those with Statements of Special Educational Need. This is well below average. Attainment on entry is above what is normally expected for children of this age. The number of pupils entering or leaving the school at other times than those normally found is broadly average, other than in Year 5 and 6 where there has been an increase in the numbers coming into the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17976	Mr J R Francis	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education
13895	Mrs A Smith	Lay inspector	
30398	Mr C Scola	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Modern foreign languages Personal, social and health education Special educational needs English as an additional language
32088	Mrs M Carter	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage ¹ Science Geography History

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¹The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school providing its pupils with a **very good** quality of education. The school gives very good value for money. The pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards. The teaching is good. The curriculum is good with very good provision for enrichment. The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear educational direction for the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching is good overall, with a high proportion of very good teaching.
- The pupils make very good progress and achieve very high standards in English and mathematics by Year 6.
- Pupils' personal development, attitudes to school and behaviour are all excellent.
- There is very good assessment, tracking and recording of pupils' progress.
- Relationships with parents are very good.
- The governing body is knowledgeable and provides very good support.
- The amount of time given to teaching some subjects is not enough to cover them in sufficient depth to raise standards.
- The outdoor provision for children in the reception class is inadequate.

High standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained since the previous inspection and the quality of teaching overall is better. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly. The leadership of the curriculum has been improved. Other weaknesses have been satisfactorily addressed other than the provision for outdoor activities for children in the reception class.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall achievement is **very good**: pupils achieve highly because of the good quality of teaching. Current standards in English and mathematics are very high in all aspects of the subjects. Standards in science are well above average. Standards in ICT are now above those expected of pupils by seven and 11 years. Those pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well because the work is well matched to their needs and they are well supported. Those pupils who have English as an additional language make very good progress.

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

*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.*

Over the past three years the performance of 11 year olds in English and mathematics in national tests has been consistently very high and in the top 5 per cent of schools. Standards for both seven and 11 year olds have exceeded the national trend of improvement since the previous inspection.

Although children enter the school above the levels normally found for this age, they make good progress and most will exceed the expected levels by the time they go into Year 1.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **excellent**. There is a strong, supportive ethos. Pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are excellent. Attendance is well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** education. Teaching and learning are **good** with much that is very good. The curriculum is good overall and is very well enriched by many visits and visitors. However, not enough time is given to teaching geography, history and design and technology, which limits the depth of coverage and prevents pupils from attaining higher standards. Planning meets the individual needs of all pupils well. Systems to track pupils' progress through the school are very good, are used well and have a positive impact on their learning.

Staff know the pupils very well and their personal development is catered for very well. There are very good links with parents and very good procedures for children starting school. Links with the community and other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher sets a good example in her teaching and shows very good drive and commitment. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other key staff. There is a strong commitment to continued improvement. Governors are very knowledgeable about the work of the school and support the school very well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils think highly of the school. Parents find staff very approachable, feel welcome in school and receive very good information on their children's progress. Pupils have very good relationships with staff and are confident there will be someone to turn to if they need advice or support. They like school and feel they learn a lot.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Improve the outdoor provision for children in the reception class.
- Raise standards in history, geography and design and technology by revising the curriculum to provide time to teach these subjects in greater depth.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **very good** overall and there is particularly good achievement in Years 4, 5 and 6. By Year 6, standards are very high in English and mathematics and well above average in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in mathematics and English at Year 6 are very high, particularly in reading.
- Standards in geography, history and design and technology are not high enough.

Commentary

1. The most recent test results in 2003 show standards at the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Attainment in all subjects has been consistently well above average over the last four years. Results have improved at a rate faster than the national trend.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.0 (18.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.5 (16.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.8 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 23 pupils in the Year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.8 (31.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	30.4 (30.3)	26.8 (27.7)
science	30.4 (31.1)	28.6 (28.3)

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

2. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained at Year 6 since the previous inspection in 1998. In English and mathematics results have been in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally for the past three years. Higher attaining pupils continue to achieve very well and the proportion attaining the higher levels has steadily improved over time. As a result, standards have improved at a faster rate than schools nationally. By both Year 2 and Year 6, there has been very little difference in the performance over time between boys and girls, neither is there in current work.

3. Children in the reception year achieve well. They start school with above average skills and make good progress. All are in line to attain the expected levels in all the areas of learning² by the time they move into Year 1 and most will exceed these. However, the lack of outdoor facilities limits the opportunity to develop some aspects of their physical skills development.
4. Current standards at Year 2 in reading are well above average, and in writing are above average. Standards continue to improve as pupils move through the school and achievement between Years 4 and 6 is particularly good. Work is very well matched to pupils' prior attainment, especially the higher attainers, and lessons have interest and great pace. In Year 5, a significant number of pupils are already attaining levels in English and mathematics above those expected by the average Year 6. By Year 6, pupils are attaining very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
5. Attainment in science is above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6. Achievement is very good and around half of the pupils in Year 6 are working at the higher level. This is a similar picture to the last test results. The emphasis on investigative and experimental science is helping to raise pupils' attainment.
6. Standards in ICT are above the expected levels at Year 2 and Year 6, a significant improvement at Year 6 since the previous inspection where standards were below expectations. The lack of a computer suite does not prevent pupils from developing their skills, particularly with the careful planning in place, which allows pupils to use all of the computers in the classes around the school on a rolling programme. Attainment in art and design and music is above the levels normally found. Standards in other subjects where it was possible to make judgements are similar to those seen in most schools and pupils' achieve appropriately. However, the limited amount of time given to geography, history and design and technology prevents pupils from attaining higher standards.
7. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well and make very good progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Very good assessment procedures are used very well to identify individual pupils' progress and the work planned for them is well matched to their needs. They are also well supported by the adults in the class, particularly the teaching assistants. Pupils identified as being more able are well supported across a range of subjects and interests. Analysis of pupils' work shows very good provision for these higher attaining pupils.
8. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are very well provided for. The school has very effective systems to analyse the performance of these pupils. This ensures these pupils receive appropriate support enabling them to make very good progress and achieve very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development is **excellent**, as is their behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest in school life and their attitudes to learning are excellent.
- Pupils' have excellent relationships with each other and adults in the school.
- Attendance is well above the national average.

² These expected levels are in the areas of learning in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, physical, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Commentary

9. This area is a great strength of the school and the very good qualities noted in the previous report have been even further improved in many areas.
10. The activities in the reception class provide children with many opportunities to work together in pairs or in groups. From an early stage the children are learning to take turns and share. The very good relationships engendered by staff and the very good role models they present result in children caring for each other. Their personal and social development and behaviour are excellent.
11. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils work together in harmony and support each other very well. Teachers' very good class management skills ensure a calm working atmosphere throughout the day. Through praising effort and good behaviour they very rarely have to remind pupils about expectations for behaviour. As a result there are excellent relationships with pupils listening to each other politely and with real interest. Pupils treat each other, staff and visitors courteously. There have been no exclusions in the last two years.
12. Pupils enjoy being at school. They arrive in their classrooms early, settle down to work very quickly and show a very real eagerness to learn. They maintain this positive attitude throughout the day. They work hard, concentrate on what they are doing and take a real pride in presenting their work well.
13. The pupils welcome opportunities for taking responsibility. When they are given additional duties such as collecting registers, taking lunch numbers, filling in and checking numbers for the school bus they fulfil these responsibilities sensibly. They do not yet have a wider involvement in school decision-making, although a school council is currently in the process of being set up.
14. The school is very much part of the church family. Assemblies provide good opportunities for reflection and foster a strong sense of belonging to a whole school community. Pupils have very good awareness of the differences in cultural beliefs and this is well supported, for example, by links with a school in Italy. Displays around the school reflect the multicultural dimension of this country. Cultural and social development is also enhanced by out of school visits, including residential visits in this country and abroad.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.0
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.0
National data:	0.4

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

15. Attendance is very good and well above the national average. This is better than that recorded at the time of the previous inspection. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Supported by the school, parents and carers encourage the regular attendance of all pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching overall is good, with much of it very good. The curriculum is good, providing a very good range of experiences and opportunities that enrich the curriculum.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is very **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very high proportion of good and very good teaching leads to very good achievement.
- Teaching challenges all pupils, including higher attaining pupils, to improve further.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use technology well to enhance their lessons.
- Very good assessment enables planning to be clearly focused on pupils' individual needs.
- Teachers' classroom management is very good and teaching assistants are actively involved to enhance pupils' learning.

Commentary

16. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection with many more very good lessons seen. Good or very good teaching was seen in all classes throughout the school. However, there are particular strengths in the teaching seen in classes with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	11	3	0	0	0

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

17. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and attitudes. Lessons move along briskly, and are productive. Pupils benefit from the way teachers organise lessons that involves them actively in their own learning. There are many instances of pupils working very effectively in pairs or small groups, for example, in mathematics and science, sharing ideas and checking each others understanding. This capitalises on pupils' excellent social skills and further enhances their learning. Teachers' classroom management skills and organisation are very good and teaching assistants are important partners in lessons, supporting individuals or groups in achieving their best.
18. Teachers' use of accurate technical vocabulary reflects their good subject knowledge and very high expectations. Their questioning skills are particularly good and used effectively to extend pupils' learning. Questions are targeted well at individual pupils based on the teachers' prior knowledge of their attainment and are clearly aimed at drawing out pupils' understanding of the work. Good use is made of technology to support pupils' learning, for example, the use of overhead projectors for demonstrations or ICT to develop and reinforce skills.
19. Assessment systems have improved since the previous inspection. These are being used very effectively to accurately match the work planned to the needs of the pupils, as demonstrated by the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels, particularly by Year 6. Teachers constantly strive to stretch these pupils and take their learning further. The marking of pupils' work is very good and contributes well to this. It is particularly good in English. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets and much of the marking shows how they are progressing towards these.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is **good** overall with very good opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good curricular enrichment through extra-curricular activities, the arts and modern foreign languages.
- There is equality of opportunity and access for all pupils.
- Insufficient time for history, geography and design and technology limits their coverage.
- The lack of a specific outdoor area for reception children limits aspects of their learning.

Commentary

20. The curriculum is good for the reception children. Planning is thorough for all six areas of learning with a strong emphasis on learning through first hand experience, for example, when the children dressed up as pirates and went on a riverboat trip. The curriculum is well resourced in terms of staffing, accommodation and learning resources. However, the children do not have the benefit of a designated outdoor area for them to further develop their physical, scientific and creative skills.
21. The curriculum in the rest of the school is also good overall. It is enhanced through the arts, including music provision and through modern foreign languages (French and Italian) taught in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers' planning is good and provides many opportunities for active and investigative learning. For example, in a Year1/2 history lesson, pupils enthusiastically acted out the journey Florence Nightingale would have made to Scutari. Visits and visitors are used well to enrich the curriculum. A talk by a senior citizen to pupils in Year 1 about her holidays when she was a child linked work in history and geography and gave pupils the opportunity to make comparisons with then and now. Through their links with a chemical company older pupils have worked both in their laboratory and back at school on investigations into cleaning dirty water and cooling hot water. However, insufficient time is given to history, geography and design and technology. The two-year planning cycle for geography and history leaves too long a gap between blocks of work, which prevents pupils from achieving the higher standards of which they are capable.
22. Pupils benefit from a very wide range of extra-curricular activities in sport and music. Pupils in Year 6 take part in a "Let's Bike" scheme, environmental projects and local schemes. Residential visits give pupils the opportunity to take part in team building exercises as well as outdoor physical pursuits. The school also has strong links with a school in Italy with regular visits from staff and pupils, the sharing of curriculum expertise and joint curriculum projects. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have pen friends with whom they communicate either by letter or email. In 2002 the school was awarded the Silver Arts Mark Award for its work in promoting the arts.
23. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. It is well planned, effective and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Individual education plans are detailed and thorough. They contain appropriate targets, which are communicated well to all relevant staff. This ensures that they achieve very well.
24. For the few pupils who have English as an additional language, provision is very good. The expertise of outside agencies is called in when necessary and used effectively to plan particular programmes that benefit the individual pupils.
25. Numbers of support staff are not high but the staff the school has are well deployed and they make a very significant contribution to pupil's achievement throughout the school. Resources

are good overall, and although there are some limitations in ICT, they are used well. Good accommodation allows flexibility in working and the planned extension of the library area is aimed at enhancing this further.

Care, guidance and support

The school has **good** provision for promoting the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. The support and advice given to pupils is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for child protection is very good.
- Induction arrangements are very good.
- The opportunities for seeking, valuing and acting on pupils' views are not fully realised.

Commentary

26. Adults in the school know the pupils well and are vigilant about the pupils in their care. Pupils are well supervised during the school day. The good quality care and support offered helps pupils to feel secure in school and this enables them to concentrate during lessons with the aim of achieving high standards. There are trained members of staff to deal with any medical or welfare needs of pupils. All members of staff have received recent training in child protection procedures and are able to support effectively the member of staff responsible for this work. There are few accidents in the school and appropriate care is taken to assess any possible risks in out of school activities.
27. The school liaises with support staff and outside agencies, and teaching assistants are thoughtfully deployed to give effective support. The school is keen to ensure that pupils can rely on all those working in the school to listen to their concerns and to offer informal help and advice if necessary. Praise and encouragement for pupils' academic and personal achievements are a high priority in the school. Staff foster the development of personal and social skills although these are not always fully developed as there are too few opportunities provided to encourage more pupils to take on responsible roles. The school takes pupils' views seriously and involves them in some projects in school, although at present there are no mechanisms for involving all pupils regularly and closely in the work and development of the school. The good procedures for the induction of new pupils take account of the individual needs of each child and enable pupils to make a good start in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents, the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school promotes a very high-quality partnership with parents.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and its efforts on behalf of their children.
- The school has very constructive links with partner schools, the parish and the local community.
- Much useful information is provided for parents about the work of the school and pupils' progress.

Commentary

28. Parents have a very good opinion of the school and appreciate the school's warm and welcoming environment. Concerns are dealt with immediately. Parents value this open relationship and express great confidence in the headteacher and the staff and feel positive about approaching staff when necessary. Many parents work hard to support the schools' provision, both in school and at home. The school provides much clear and helpful information

for parents, including high-quality written annual reports to inform parents of how well their children are doing. This encourages parents to support their children's learning at home and this raises pupils' achievement. The school is keen to gain parents' views on a range of issues and also engages in informal dialogue with them whenever there is an opportunity. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are involved in regular reviews and well informed about the progress of their children.

29. The school has very well developed partnerships with local schools that have resulted in the development of shared events and initiatives. These highly productive links with both the local community and the parish and members of the community give pupils valuable insights into the wider world that benefit pupils' learning. The school welcomes the use of the school by the parents of those with very young children who come to the weekly Parent and Toddlers group. This provision enables parents and toddlers to become familiar with the school at an early stage.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **very good**. The governance of the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a strong vision for the school, shared by all who work there.
- The school is very well managed, and there are very good systems to monitor its effectiveness.
- School development planning is very effective.
- The subject leaders contribute very well to the overall very good quality.
- The governing body is very supportive and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The finances are very well managed and monitored.

Commentary

30. The overall quality of leadership and management has improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear direction for the school. She is fully supported by all her staff, with the deputy headteacher playing an important role. There is a very strong team approach and high morale. The way all adults at the school work together, have built very strong relationships, and share common beliefs and values, are the key factors in the school's success. The school has a very positive ethos, and a very strong commitment to providing the best education possible for pupils of all ages and abilities. The very good climate of self-improvement is a critical factor that accounts for the school's ability to achieve and maintain such high standards. Systems for performance management are very effective, as are the opportunities for continuing professional development.
31. The headteacher and the subject leaders play a key role in monitoring the school's work and in identifying priorities for development. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Long-term strategic planning is very well thought out, and is reflected in a very good school development plan. This clearly outlines the main priorities for the short and long term. Subject leaders are given the time, funding and support to enable them to carry out their roles and are highly effective in the way in which they develop, maintain and share good practice so that there is continuous improvement. A rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation identifies relative strengths and weaknesses and highlights areas for whole-school development.
32. The governing body takes its role seriously and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. This is a great improvement since the previous inspection. Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses and a good number of governors come into school regularly both to support the school as well as gain a first hand view of the school's

work. The committee structure within the governing body is very effective, and enables the governors to use their individual and collective expertise well.

Financial information

Financial information for the Year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	285,890	Balance from previous Year	13,322
Total expenditure	277,429	Balance carried forward to the next	8,461
Expenditure per pupil	1,954		

33. The school has a very efficient administrative assistant and a governor with considerable financial expertise. Their skills are used very well, together with those of the headteacher, so that the finances of the school are managed very effectively. The financial management of the budget is very good and the school provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

34. The 19 reception-age children are taught as a separate class each morning. The teaching is good, frequently very good and the good procedures for tracking and assessing children's progress ensures that the work is planned to match their individual needs. As a result the children achieve well. All are in line to reach the expected standard in the six areas of learning by the time they move into Year 1, with three quarters exceeding this, particularly in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good.
35. The Foundation Stage (reception) is well led and managed. The school has improved the resources and quality of the overall provision since the previous inspection. However, the lack of an appropriate outdoor area, noted in the previous report, has not been sufficiently addressed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children make good progress because of the good teaching.
- Children's confidence and independence grows rapidly.

Commentary

36. The children join the school with a range of personal, social and emotional development needs. Strong relationships are quickly established between staff, children and families. Daily routines give children a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The teacher and teaching assistant provide a secure environment where children feel safe, cared for and nurtured. They enter the sessions happily and confidently. They sit attentively and answer politely when the register is taken. They co-operate well with each other in group activities and work independently without adult support when necessary.
37. Teaching is good. The teacher provides a good balance of carefully planned directed and self-chosen activities and there is an air of harmony at all times in the classroom. From the outset staff teach the children rules and responsibilities. Children are encouraged and rewarded with praise for their efforts. They are helped to maintain concentration by the interesting range of activities on offer. As a result children are able to sit quietly and work independently and are already achieving above the expected standards.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers and teaching assistants create very good opportunities to develop the children's language skills.
- Reading and writing skills are taught systematically and well.
- The children's speaking and listening skills are very good.

Commentary

38. Teaching is very good. The teacher and teaching assistants provide many opportunities for children to develop their spoken language. They provide good role models for the children, often through repeating what they have said, talking about what they are doing, and encouraging them to do the same. All children recognise and write their name. They write simple sentences with capital letters and full stops and use an alphabet sheet to help them tackle the spelling of unknown words. Staff use the “Alphabet flower” song regularly to reinforce the link between letter names and their sounds. The children have access to a good range of books, which stimulate interest and enjoyment of the written word. Well thought out practical activities enable children to make very good progress in this area of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of oral and mental mathematics is very good.
- Good use of visual aids helps to develop number language.
- Good questioning checks on and extends learning.

Commentary

39. The good teaching together with the wide range of interesting tasks ensures that the learning is good and children make good progress. The teaching of oral and mental mathematics is very good and uses a wide range of approaches that gain the children’s interest. Through the use of attractive visual aids, such as puppets, the teacher helps children develop early addition and subtraction skills. The singing of counting songs with matching actions supports the children’s counting techniques and they learn through having fun. The staff use good questions in order to make accurate assessment of the children’s understanding and extend their learning even further. Children count confidently in ones and twos to 30 and most identify numbers to 20. This is above the level normally expected for children of this age.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of interesting and exciting activities to enhance children’s learning.
- Sensitive support and intervention by staff ensures children achieve well.

Commentary

40. Very good teaching and well thought out activities enable pupils to make good progress in this area of learning. Learning is very well matched to the needs of the children because the activities are so practical. For example, children used a simple map of the solar system to choose which planets they were going to visit in their space ship. The children playing in the spaceship were supported well in the activity through the use of carefully planned and phrased questions. They had the opportunity to compare modern and old nurses’ uniforms when a governor visited the school dressed in her uniform and the teacher dressed up as Florence Nightingale. In science, they experiment with water and tubes and funnels and observe ice to see how it melts. They use books like “The Three Little Pigs” to learn about properties of different materials. Children work together well to use a wide range of construction toys to plan and build.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children move with good control and co-ordination.
- Children's handwriting skills are good.
- There is no effective outdoor provision.

Commentary

41. Teaching is good and provides many opportunities to develop physical skills. The good range of wheeled toys has enabled children to attain good pedalling and steering skills. They demonstrated very good control and accuracy in a physical education lesson when they were throwing, bouncing and catching balls. They understand the reasons for warming up before physical exercise and know the changes that take place to their heart rate when they exercise. The children can put on and take off their own shoes, clothes, coats and aprons. They are given many opportunities to use a range of brushes, scissors, paper, boxes and glue to make and decorate models. They have developed good handwriting skills through the good teaching and many opportunities to use a range of writing materials.
42. The lack of suitable outdoor provision limits the opportunities to further develop some aspects of physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children benefit from a wide range of well planned activities.
- There is a good balance between activities led by staff and opportunities for the children to experiment for themselves.

Commentary

43. The good teaching and well thought out practical activities enable pupils to make good progress in this area of learning. Children are given the opportunity to experiment with different materials such as fabric, clay, dough, and sand. The very effective role-play area is changed regularly and staff model imaginative play in order to stimulate and develop children's imagination. Children paint freely and confidently using their imagination and experiences. The well-presented displays of children's own work results in children feeling staff value their efforts.
44. Staff use the opportunities presented in creative activities to develop children's speaking and literacy skills. Books such as "The Cloth of Dreams" and "There's a rumble in the Jungle" are often used to stimulate creative work.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

English

The provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in standards that are well above average.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and achieve very well.
- There are very good systems of assessment in place.
- Skilled teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils' learning.
- The leadership and management of the subject is very good.

Commentary

45. Standards in all aspects of English are very high across the school. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. Two thirds of pupils in Year 6 attain above average standards and no pupils attain below the national average. In Year 2, around a third of the pupils are working at above average standards and no pupils are below average. Throughout the school, standards are so high because of the very high levels of motivation and the enthusiasm of the pupils.
46. Standards of reading are very high across the school because of very effective teaching. Teachers know their pupils well and set challenging targets. The school has a good range of reading resources particularly for younger pupils. These pupils benefit from a very structured approach to the teaching of reading where the early skills are very well taught. The school is very good at involving parents in encouraging and supporting their children's reading. Older pupils are encouraged to read and understand a wide variety of stimulating texts that are appropriate to their level. The work of a wide variety of children's authors is shared and discussed.
47. The teaching of writing across the school is very good and has steadily improved because of the initiatives the school has taken to raise standards. Teachers plan work very well to take account of the pupils' abilities. For example, the way Year 1 pupils are taught separately for literacy is very effective as is the use of very skilled teaching assistants working with individuals and particular groups of pupils. Lessons are very well planned with a good balance of teacher input and pupil activities and they proceed at a fast pace. Grammar and spelling are very well taught and pupils are motivated to improve their spellings. The skills of handwriting are very well taught. Standards of presentation are very high because of the high expectations of the teachers and the very good attitudes of the pupils.
48. Leadership and management are very good. The school has a very well planned programme for evaluating and monitoring the teaching and learning of English. This is one of the reasons why standards are so high and have stayed so over time. Although speaking and listening skills are very good, the current emphasis on improving these further is a good example of this. Regular and thorough assessments are carried out and pupils' progress, in all aspects of the subject, is carefully tracked. Class and individual targets are drawn up, with pupils being involved in their production. Test results are analysed very carefully, and appropriate action is taken to address any weaknesses that become apparent.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. Literacy skills are used very well across the curriculum. Much of the pupils' extended writing practice is carried out in other curriculum areas, for example, history, geography and religious education. Science and design and technology lessons also provide a good context for writing, and are frequently used for writing plans, instructions and results of experiments and

evaluations. ICT is used well to support literacy teaching and learning such as when pupils use the Internet for research.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 4, 5 and 6, leading to very high standards.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in problem solving.
- Teachers question pupils effectively and promote good use of accurate mathematical vocabulary.
- The leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

50. Standards in mathematics by Year 2 are above average and at Year 6 they are very high. The overall high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection but the proportion of pupils in Year 6 attaining the higher levels continues to improve. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in Years 1 to 3 but the rate of progress is even faster in Years 4 to 6 where achievement is very good. The pupils know their tables and number bonds well. As they get older the speed of their mental calculations increases and they use this skill very effectively, making their work quick and efficient. Pupils use a range of approaches to solve number problems. By Year 6, the majority of pupils have developed their own strategies for problem solving and try out their own ways of checking the accuracy of their answers.
51. The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good overall. Teaching Year 1 pupils as a separate group each morning means that work is very well matched to their needs. Teachers' planning generally matches work very effectively to their assessment of pupils' prior learning ensuring all pupils move forward at an appropriate rate. Classroom management is very good and pupils often work in pairs on activities, which enables them to share and clarify their ideas. The accurate use of mathematical vocabulary is promoted well throughout the school. Good use is made of calculators in conjunction with the overhead projector. There are particular strengths in the teaching in Years 4 to 6. Here, teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and understanding. This is seen in the high quality of the questions asked, which both checks on pupils' understanding and extends their thinking. Teachers' marking is supportive and encouraging but in some classes, it does not identify clearly what pupils need to do to improve further.
52. Subject leadership is good. The subject leader has identified appropriate priorities and monitors pupils' work. However, classroom observation in mathematics is currently carried out by the headteacher, which while thorough, limits the subject leader's more detailed knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. Nevertheless, through regular work scrutiny and analysis of test and assessment data, she does know what is needed to move the subject forward to keep standards high.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Pupils regularly use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. For example, they use graphs, tables and spreadsheets to record data in science, draw and measure in design and technology and use time lines in history.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 achieve very well and attain well above average standards.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge.
- Good planning presents pupils with many opportunities to undertake scientific investigations.
- Improvements have come through good subject leadership.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour support good achievement.

Commentary

54. The high levels of attainment noted in the previous report have been maintained. The good progress of pupils in Year 1 and 2 has been maintained but there has been an improvement in the progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 from satisfactory to good. By Year 2, standards are above average and by Year 6 well above average, with half of the pupils working at the higher Level 5. Achievement here is very good because of the very good teaching and the very good attitudes of the pupils. The pupils who have special educational needs benefit from the extra support that they are given. Teaching assistants work sensitively with those children to ensure that they achieve as well as other pupils.
55. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, which is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use scientific vocabulary appropriately and consistently. Work is well planned to provide many good opportunities for pupils to design their own tests, investigations and experiments. Teachers use a wide range of effective teaching strategies and resources, which gain the pupils' interest and stimulate discussion. The high standards of behaviour result in calm, well-organised and orderly classrooms with pupils able to work independently or collaboratively as necessary. Throughout the school the high expectations of staff result in well-motivated pupils who are eager to extend their learning. Pupils use a variety of tables, charts and graphs to record their predictions and the results of their investigations in a neat, well-presented manner. They use a range of ICT resources in their science work including digital microscopes, spreadsheets and tables. This is a further improvement since the previous inspection.
56. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader monitors planning, the quality of teaching and scrutinises samples of pupils' work and has analysed test and assessment data. She is a very good teaching role model for other staff and her leadership has contributed significantly to the improvements in teaching and learning since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There has been very good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection.
- A well-structured scheme of work is taught well and enables pupils to make good progress.
- Very good subject leadership has improved teaching and learning.
- A great deal of training has improved the skills and confidence of teachers.
- The school makes very effective use of somewhat limited resources.

Commentary

57. Standards in ICT have risen since the previous inspection and are above national expectations by both Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils make good progress and achieve well because of a very well structured scheme of work. Younger pupils, for example, use a word search programme

to support their work in literacy, and older pupils use ICT to present information in mathematics and science. They use spreadsheets to manipulate data they have gathered. They confidently use software to develop skills in controlling events. The Internet is used to support personal research work in history and geography. Through email, pupils communicate with other schools. Across the school pupils use word processing and images from digital photography to produce attractive high quality work in all areas of the curriculum but especially in literacy.

58. Teaching is good and staff have benefited from a wide range of training. Their skills and confidence have greatly increased since the previous inspection. The way all staff help each other, share ideas and work very closely as a team has also ensured that the level of expertise across the school has risen. The school also benefits from the expertise of a governor who regularly works with pupils to add to and update the schools well planned website. Staff also value and use his expertise to develop their own ICT skills.
59. The subject leader gives very good leadership and has provided many opportunities for staff training. The structured scheme of work is very good and enables the progress of the pupils to be very effectively monitored. Both hardware and software have greatly improved. The school does not have a computer suite but very effective timetabling, coupled with the fact that the pupils are so good at working independently, enables whole classes of pupils to work together using all the computers around the school as well as additional laptops. The subject leader is also developing very useful links with local high schools to provide opportunities for pupils to benefit from specialist teaching. Progress since the previous inspection has been very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their work in other curriculum areas, for example, tables and charts in mathematics and science along with digital microscopes, and the use of the Internet for research. This enables pupils to see the relevance of computers and to appreciate their capacity as tools for learning.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

61. During the inspection, it was not possible to reach secure judgements about overall standards of teaching in history or geography, as only one lesson was seen in each subject. Evidence was gathered, however, from samples of pupils' work, teachers' planning and curriculum documentation. In the samples of work seen, standards and achievement in both subjects are satisfactory.
62. The leadership of both subjects is satisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection there was no scheme of work in place for history. The subject leader has addressed this issue by developing a scheme of work based on national guidance. In geography, the previous inspection report noted that resources were generally insufficient. This issue has been addressed and the level of resources is now satisfactory. Both subject leaders maintain an overview of the planning and monitor pupils' work. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school improvement plan has a review of geography and history planned on a regular cycle along with all other subjects. However, while the curriculum for both subjects now follows national guidance, not enough time is given to the subjects to enable pupils to achieve the higher standards they achieve in other subjects and the two-year planning cycle leaves too long between units of work for pupils to retain the skills they learn.
63. As a voluntary aided school, religious education was not inspected and is subject to a separate inspection by the diocese.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64. There was no opportunity to observe teaching in art and design or design and technology and therefore no firm judgement can be made on the overall provision in these subjects. However, teachers planning, photographic records, displays and samples of pupils' work show that the subjects are regularly taught and cover all of the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Music

The provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain above national expectations by the age of 11 years.
- The subject leader is very knowledgeable.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

Commentary

65. In Year 2, in singing, pupils show satisfactory control of pitch and rhythm. When they improvised long and short sounds to accompany their singing they performed well using un-pitched percussion instruments. Standards overall are in line with expectations.
66. By Year 6, pupils are achieving well and standards are above those normally found. Pupils enjoy singing and making music. Additional instrumental tuition enhances the provision for older pupils. Those pupils aged seven to 11 who play musical instruments achieve good standards in their ability to read music. The older pupils achieve well and lessons are demanding, involving the use of all their skills in singing, composing and playing. Pupils sing well with accurate pitch and good diction and phrasing. When required to sing a song with more than one part, the pupils kept good time and successfully created the intended effect. A great strength is their ability to work together to create and compose short tunes or repeating patterns from a clearly defined structure. This enhances their personal development as they work with others to create the intended effect.
67. The quality of teaching overall is good. Music is taught by class teachers and, for older pupils, by the headteacher, who is also subject leader. Lessons use a mixture of approaches, including taped music, and have a good balance between performing and composing. There is a good progression of skills as pupils move through the school and pupils have opportunities to evaluate their own performance. Subject leadership is very good. The headteacher demonstrates a high level of personal skill and knowledge and has high expectations of pupils' performance. The standards seen at the previous inspection have been maintained, as has the breadth of provision.

Art and design

68. The retained work and displays around the school show standards to be above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The curriculum covers a wide range of different elements and approaches including drawing, painting, printing and three-dimensional work. The work on display shows very good links to pupils' cultural development with well-executed examples of artwork styles from all around the world. As a whole school theme, this also provided good opportunity for pupils of all ages to work together, further enhancing pupils' social development.

Design and technology

69. The teachers' planning and pupils' previous work in design and technology shows that the curriculum is suitably planned to cover all aspects. Pupils develop a sound understanding of how to plan and execute their designs and to think about how these could be improved. Some good work on wind-up spiders in Year 2 and designs for different types of slippers in Year 6 illustrate this. However, the time currently given to design and technology does not ensure that the subject is covered in sufficient depth to raise standards further. The school has identified the need to revise the amount of teaching time for this subject.

Physical education

70. The curriculum for physical education meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. No lessons were seen at Year 2 or Year 6, which would enable a judgement to be made on standards. However, the school makes very good provision for physical education and all pupils have many opportunities during the week to experience a wide range of activities. The school has good grounds and outdoor space and facilities, and a good-sized hall. Good links are established with other providers and local schools to develop the range and quality of opportunity. Parents also give time to after school activities, which enhances the provision. These extra-curricular activities are popular and well supported by the pupils. Older pupils also have the experience of residential visits, for example, to the Lake District, which include adventurous outdoor activities and promote good personal development through team building activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

71. No lessons were seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgement is made about overall provision. However, a very well organised and structured scheme of work ensures that there is a very good emphasis on pupils' personal development and promotes this very successfully through work in most subjects, as well as in particular lessons when pupils explore and talk about pertinent issues. Pupils extend their understanding of a healthy lifestyle through work in science and physical education and through an initiative that provides fruit at break time. The school has participated in the Healthy Schools Award and has examined environmental issues such as recycling waste and encouraging pupils to walk and cycle to school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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