

INSPECTION REPORT

St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School

Whitefield, Manchester

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105347

Headteacher: Mr D Burns

Lead inspector: Mr S Hill

Dates of inspection: 26th to 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 257606

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:	233
School address:	Abingdon Avenue Whitefield Manchester
Postcode:	M45 8PT
Telephone number:	0161 766 6098
Fax number:	0161 253 7342
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Forshaw
Date of previous inspection:	5 th to 8 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Bernadette's is in a suburban area of Whitefield, near Bury. Currently all pupils come from Roman Catholic families. Pupils' social circumstances are somewhat better than average, and a below average number are entitled to free school meals. The majority of pupils are of white British origin, with about 10 per cent from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. All pupils are fluent speakers of English. Relatively few pupils have special educational needs. Two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. The attainment of pupils when they start school is broadly average, although there are not many low attaining pupils. Few pupils start or leave the school at other than the usual times.

Since the previous inspection there have been significant improvements to the building, a new library has been created and an ICT suite has been installed. This year, the school has started to teach French in Years 5 and 6.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21277	Mr S Hill	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Music Special educational needs
31718	Mrs D Shields	Lay inspector	
2911	Mr E Steed	Team inspector	English French History Geography Personal, social and health education and citizenship
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	Foundation Stage ¹ Science Art and design Design and technology

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¹ The 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.

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES ONE AND TWO	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school** that gives **good value for money**. It is a thriving community where pupils feel secure and happy, and achieve well. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school and make good progress in its very positive, caring ethos. Teaching and learning are good, so that standards are good in most subjects. Leadership and management are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are good in most subjects.
- Pupils are greatly valued as individuals, and thrive academically and socially in this lively, caring Catholic community.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school.
- Pupils enjoy school, are very well behaved, have very positive attitudes to learning, and form very good relationships.
- Very good leadership from the headteacher has resulted in an effective team of staff who work together well.
- Management is good, but co-ordinators do not have sufficiently detailed systems for checking up on standards.
- Children get off to a good start in the reception class.
- Links with parents and the parish are very good.
- Assessment procedures are good, but not enough use is made of assessment information to set targets for what individual pupils should learn.

Since the previous inspection **the improvement in the school has been good**. Standards have risen and the quality and consistency of teaching have improved. The key issues identified then have all been dealt with well, although there is still a need to further refine the arrangements for monitoring work in different classes. The provision in the library and opportunities to learn about multicultural issues, have improved. Provision for information and communication technology has vastly improved, with consequent improvements in standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Results of national assessments at the ages of seven and 11 are consistently better than average. Fluctuations from year to year reflect the different ability levels of the groups of pupils involved. In comparison with similar schools, results have usually also been better than average. Similar school results for 11-year-olds for 2003 appear to have declined slightly. However, detailed analysis shows that pupils who stayed at St Bernadette's throughout the juniors did well overall compared to how they did at the age of seven, particularly in reading.

Inspection evidence shows that pupils' **achievement is good**. Children enter the reception class with standards that are broadly average. They achieve well and, in all areas of learning, are in line to

attain the Early Learning Goals² by the time they start in Year 1. A substantial number will exceed these levels. They continue to achieve well in Years 1 to 6. Standards are above average throughout the school in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Standards are particularly good in reading and in speaking and listening. Standards were also good in work seen in history, music and geography. Work observed in other subjects was of a satisfactory standard.

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education** is **good**. **Teaching** is consistently **good** throughout the school, and as a result learning is also good. Pupils respond positively to teachers' very high expectations of behaviour and standards, and work hard. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and give pupils lots of encouragement. As a result, they enjoy their work and are keen to do well. Provision to care for pupils is very good. There are particularly strong links with the parish and with parents, which contribute well to standards.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is very good, and other staff provide good leadership in their areas of responsibility. Management is good, and is focused on maintaining and improving academic and pastoral standards. Governors provide good support to the school and have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements apart from two minor omissions in the annual report to parents.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the school. They particularly appreciate how much their children like school, the quality of teaching, and the good progress their children make. Pupils enjoy school and praise many aspects of it. They enjoy work and get on well with the staff, but would like there to be a bigger range of clubs for them to attend.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make more use of assessment data to set targets for individual pupils and to plan work for them.
- Provide more systematic opportunities for co-ordinators to check up on standards in their subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Make sure all required information is in the governors' annual report to parents.

² Early Learning Goals are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards and achievement are **good** throughout the school. Results of national assessments have been consistently **above average** for several years. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage do well in all areas of learning.
- Standards are good in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Pupils' good standards in reading, speaking and listening strongly support their progress in other subjects.
- Work observed in geography, history and music was of a good standard.

Commentary

1. Pupils achieve consistently well throughout their time in school, and attain standards that are better than average in most areas of the curriculum. This is because of the consistently good teaching they receive, which is in turn supported by good leadership and management. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they get from teachers and classroom assistants. Higher fliers do well because they are given challenging work and respond positively to teachers' high expectations. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
2. The tables below illustrate that pupils do well in National Curriculum assessments at the ages of seven and 11, when compared to all schools. Other results show that pupils generally gain scores that are above average in relation to similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms this picture, with the standards in pupils' books and in lessons being higher than those usually found.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.9 (17.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.5 (16.4)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.2 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.4 (26.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.0 (30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Children go into the reception class with standards that are broadly average, and they achieve well because of good teaching. By the time they go into Year 1, almost all of them reach the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning. The provision in personal, social and emotional

development is particularly good, and most children exceed expectations in this area by the end of reception. A significant number also exceed expectations in the development of language, literacy and communication, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

4. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2, where teaching continues to be good. By the end of this key stage, their standards exceed expectations in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Their reading standards are good and this helps them to deal well with work in a range of other subjects, reading instructions capably, and finding information from books accurately. Their writing standards are good and they are able to express their understanding clearly, both in English and in other subjects such as history. In mathematics they handle number confidently and are not fazed by any difficulties or problems. In science, they have a good understanding of a range of concepts and undertake practical work carefully and with confidence. They are very confident users of computers, and many pupils in Year 1 are already attaining the standards expected a year later.
5. Good teaching enables pupils to continue to achieve well throughout Years 3 to 6, and to maintain standards that are above average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. By the time they leave they are fluent and enthusiastic readers, able to tackle a range of texts with confidence, and to research information independently and efficiently. They write fluently and accurately and make good use of this skill to support their work in a range of other subjects, expressing themselves clearly and effectively. They are confident with a range of concepts in mathematics, tackling problems with determination, and handling number accurately both mentally and in written calculations. In science they have good skills in devising, performing and recording investigations, and are able to think scientifically to explain what they have discovered, drawing on their good knowledge of a range of scientific concepts. They have good ICT skills, which they use well across the curriculum. They are very confident with using the range of facilities and programs on computers, and pupils in Year 5 are already working at the level expected by the end of the school.
6. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are particularly good because teachers take great care to encourage and develop this. Pupils are confident in expressing opinions and in explaining their thinking. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Their fluent speaking and attentive listening help them to explore ideas effectively and to develop their problem solving skills, as well as contributing significantly to their collaborative skills.
7. During the inspection, good standards were observed in history, and pupils show a good knowledge of the times they have studied and of the kinds of information, which contribute to historical knowledge. Geographical understanding and skills were also good in the work seen. Good standards were observed in music, both in singing and in playing instruments.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to school and to their learning. Behaviour is **very good**, and pupils' relationships with each other and with the staff are **very good**. The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance is **very good** and punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attitudes are shown in pupils' interest and enjoyment of all activities, and in the way they are polite, helpful and friendly to each other and to visitors.
- The school's Catholic mission creates a happy, caring environment.
- The school sets high standards and expects pupils to behave very well.
- The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- Parents and pupils are confident that any problems are dealt with effectively.
- The school council is helping prepare pupils for the responsibilities of adult life.

- Pupils are encouraged to become independent learners, but they are not always made aware how to improve their work.

Commentary

8. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. The school's commitment to the Catholic mission creates a caring and happy atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and secure. They respond by working hard and concentrating well in lessons and this has a very positive impact on their learning. In class, pupils show real enjoyment of the interesting activities provided. They co-operate willingly with each other, for example, when planning a joint investigation in science. They voluntarily arrive early at school for band practice, and give up their free time to represent the school at parish events. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. Staff provide very positive role models. Pupils know they are valued and feel staff care about their welfare and progress.
9. Behaviour is very good in the playground, around school and in lessons. Rules and sanctions are regarded as fair. Pupils understand that rules are for the benefit of all and help to draw up simple rules for their class. They respond very well to the high expectations set by staff in terms of relationships, behaviour and mutual respect. This has a positive effect on the quality of life within the school. Pupils are friendly, co-operative and show genuine interest in others. They initiate conversations and listen politely to responses, and eagerly open doors for visitors and younger pupils. Pupils are considerate of the feelings of others. In the playground, older pupils play carefully with consideration for the safety of younger ones. There were no incidents of bullying during the inspection, and parents do not think bullying is a problem at the school. Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable, and what to do should any problems arise.
10. Spiritual development is promoted very well in all activities and through assemblies, and pupils are genuinely excited by their learning. Pupils in Year 2 were thrilled to discover the variety of mini-beasts in different habitats around the school, and treated them with great care. Pupils are well aware of the difference between right and wrong, as they show by their very good behaviour and happy relationships. The new programme for personal and social education offers good opportunities for pupils to become aware of issues that may affect their lives. Older pupils offered mature and considered opinions in discussions about the misuse of power. The strong sense of community is enhanced by good links with the parish. Although the school council is relatively new, it is providing good opportunities for pupils to have a say in the running of their school. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities and carry out their duties efficiently. Pupils in Year 6 conscientiously help to look after younger pupils at wet playtimes and lunchtimes, for example. Pupils present their work with great care, and look after property and equipment with respect. Whilst they are encouraged to become more independent as learners, pupils are not always shown how they can improve their own work. Charity appeals are well supported because pupils want to help those less fortunate than themselves. Cultural development is good, and is enhanced by work in a range of subjects such as art and design and music. Other faiths and cultures are respected and pupils learn about the festivals and traditions of major world faiths to prepare them for life in multi-cultural Britain.
11. Pupils' interest in school life results in very good attendance, and punctuality is not a problem at the start of the day. Attendance is closely monitored. Both the governing body and the headteacher discourage parents from taking their children away on holiday during term time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.8
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** education for all its pupils. Teaching and learning are consistently good. The curriculum is wide and interesting. Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is very good. The school is making a good start in involving pupils more in its development. The partnership with parents and the community is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. The consistency in approach and delivery is a major factor in the consistency of pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are **good**. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, with a greater proportion of teaching being at least good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan interesting lessons, which engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
- Pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations of work, independence and behaviour.
- Teachers make very good use of the ICT suite to raise pupils' standards.
- Teachers and pupils have very good relationships, so pupils behave well and are confident in contributing their ideas.
- Assessment is good, and is used effectively to plan good lessons, but not enough use is made of targets for individual pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12 (27%)	28 (64%)	4(9%)	0	0	0

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

12. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. A significant factor is the hard work which teachers put in to ensure lessons are never boring. They make good use of a range of interesting resources, and give pupils lots of chances to have practical experiences, to contribute their views in discussion and to relate learning to the everyday world. Teachers present information enthusiastically, and consequently generate enthusiasm from their pupils.
13. The consistently good use of ICT contributes well to engaging pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers take every opportunity to use the very good facilities in the computer suite. They have good subject knowledge and prepare lessons well to develop pupils' skills systematically. High expectations of what pupils can accomplish are fulfilled as pupils work diligently and persistently on tasks, which, while often difficult, are carefully judged to be within their compass when they concentrate. The use of the suite to teach lessons in a range of subjects is very successful in promoting good standards in both ICT and the other subjects concerned.
14. Very good relationships underpin all lessons. Teachers are good role models. They treat pupils with respect and affection and pupils respond in kind. They are keen to do well and to please their teachers. Pupils' contributions are valued and respected, which makes them keen to join in, and they work hard and make thoughtful suggestions. Mistakes or wrong answers are treated sensitively and pupils are consequently not afraid to "have a go" even if they are not sure they are right.

15. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work. They set challenging work for pupils, but generally modify this so that pupils of all abilities can cope. Pupils respond well to this, and take a pride in their achievement when they succeed. Teachers consistently expect pupils to be independent, and pupils embrace such opportunities enthusiastically. They work well on tasks and are willing to persevere with difficulties, only resorting to asking the teacher when they really need to. High expectations of behaviour are consistently fulfilled and behaviour in lessons is very good. Routines are well established and understood, and pupils need only very occasional reminders to ensure that high standards are maintained.
16. The assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding is good, but the information known about individual pupils is not always used to the best effect. Pupils are not given enough detailed information, in the targets they are set, about what they need to do next in order to improve.
17. At the previous inspection assessment was an area that required development. The development of assessment since that time shows good progress. Tests are administered and analysed to discover weaknesses, for example, writing standards in English, which are properly dealt with as a whole school project. There is now a good degree of consistency across the school. The work so far carried out has played a significant part in raising standards in the school to the present levels.
18. Although data is properly collected and used to track progress and to set targets in English and mathematics, systems are not sufficiently developed to give pupils specific and individual targets. Currently, the targets being set are often too general in nature, and do not focus on specific issues where improvement is needed. An exception is the target setting for pupils with special educational needs, within their individual education plans. This is of good quality, and provides a model of good practice. Otherwise, tracking is not used enough to help individual pupils to maximise their progress.
19. Marking is regular, supportive and encouraging. However, there is inconsistency in the use of marking to inform pupils of what they need to do next in order to improve on current standards. Whilst pupils who were interviewed knew their targets, they did not always know when they had been achieved because of the non-specific nature of some targets.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** breadth of curricular opportunities and a **good** range of enrichment activities for all pupils. The school has taken note of the weaker areas of provision from the previous report and has addressed them well. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for equality of access and opportunity for pupils is good.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, but there is no register of gifted and talented pupils.
- Effective links made between subjects enable pupils to develop a deeper understanding of their learning.
- The programme of visits and visitors is carefully planned to enrich learning that is currently taking place in lessons.
- Subjects across the curriculum are used effectively to help develop literacy skills.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.

Commentary

20. The broadly satisfactory curriculum that was in place at the time of the previous inspection has been improved so that it is now good. It meets all statutory requirements and, with the exception of pupils who are occasionally withdrawn inappropriately from subject lessons to be

heard to read, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have equal access to all activities. Daily acts of collective worship are properly provided for each class. There is satisfactory provision for teaching sex education and a good programme is in place for countering the misuse of drugs. The personal, social and health education courses that were being introduced at the time of the previous inspection have developed into a well-planned integral part of the curriculum. Citizenship is a fast growing area of the curriculum, especially since a school council was introduced in January 2004. Policies and the impact of schemes of work are reviewed regularly. Whilst more time than is usual is still devoted to literacy and numeracy lessons, there are now much improved links between these subjects and the rest of the curriculum. In particular, pupils' literacy skills are used and developed well. They undertake writing in different styles in different subjects, such as history, geography and science, and do this well. They are given good opportunities for research in a number of subjects, using both books and ICT. This contributes well to their reading skills by giving them practice in a range of different contexts.

21. This is an inclusive school for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils from ethnic minorities are valued and make a full contribution to the life of the school. Provision for pupils with special needs is good, so that they make good progress against the targets set for them. There are good procedures to identify pupils' particular needs, and provision to help them is well organised. Individual education plans are of good quality. They identify clear, specific targets that enable teachers, parents and pupils to evaluate the progress being made. Good use is made of support available from the local education authority to help teachers to improve provision. Support for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is of very good quality, enabling them to take a full part in all aspects of the curriculum.
22. The school has no register for gifted and talented pupils, although pupils with talents in some areas, for example, music, are now challenged effectively in their learning. Greater use of individual assessments is needed to ensure that all pupils who would benefit from enrichment are catered for appropriately.
23. The school's provision for enrichment opportunities is good, with a wide range of sporting and musical activities. A good variety of opportunities are provided at different times of the year, particularly for the older pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the clubs provided, and say that they would appreciate additional activities that are not sport and music based, for example, art, or chess and board games clubs. There is good practice in the planning of visits and visitors to coincide with work currently being undertaken in school. Residential visits, for example, are planned to give pupils chances to practise social skills in a safe environment, and to use the skills learned in the classroom in practical situations whilst on field trips.
24. Improvements have been made to the accommodation since the time of the previous inspection, but weaknesses remain. The provision of both the new library and the well-equipped ICT suite, have had a positive impact on helping to raise pupils' standards of achievement in these areas. However, many classrooms are still barely adequate in size for the number of pupils on roll. Despite the best endeavours of the governing body to seek funding to improve the drainage of the field no progress has been made. It remains wet and boggy in places with many areas that are uneven, which could be dangerous. Resources in subjects such as ICT and in the Foundation Stage have improved since the time of the previous inspection. Resources in history and geography are supplemented well by use of the local education authority's loan service.

Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Pupils receive **good** support, advice and guidance. There are **satisfactory** opportunities for pupils to be involved in and to influence the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good emphasis is placed upon the development of pupils' self confidence and esteem.
- The school's systems and procedures ensure that boys and girls of all ages are safe and well cared for.
- Pupils think very highly of the school.
- Although some pupils are involved in the assessment of their work and in setting personal targets to improve their learning, this is not the case in all classes.

Commentary

25. The school provides a very caring and happy atmosphere in which pupils say they feel safe. Pupils have very positive views about school life. Pupils in Year 6 say they will be very sad to leave the school. Pupils' very good relationships with the adults in the school gives them confidence to ask for help with their work if they need it. Teachers notice when pupils are having particular difficulties with their work and take action to put matters right. One pupil said "Teachers will help you with your work, but you must try yourself first". Careful monitoring of pupils' progress helps in the identification of pupils with special educational needs, and staff then work together to ensure that pupils have the guidance they need to improve. This enables them to achieve as well as their friends. Until very recently the school's formal provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education had not been given a high profile in the school. This means that pupils are not fully aware of the school's arrangements to support them.
26. In response to the questionnaires almost all pupils indicate there is an adult they could go to if they are worried or unhappy. For some older pupils, a culture of not "telling tales" means that they can be reluctant to complain directly about minor issues. In discussion many pupils said they would approach their parents in the first instance, although they were very clear that the headteacher would deal quickly and very effectively with their concerns. Some pupils said that they do not feel that some adults always take their worries seriously.
27. Staff follow the agreed policies and very clear practices relating to health, safety and child protection very well. These procedures permeate all aspects of school life and are very clearly understood by all who work or help in school. Teachers monitor pupils' personal development very well, and keep a good track on their academic development, through the records they keep, discussion and because they take time to get to know the pupils in their care. The headteacher, in particular, knows the pupils extremely well. Pupils are sensitively encouraged to behave well, to respect, respond to and value the views of others. This results in very good behaviour and a very high level of harmony throughout the school. A pupil commented, "The children are kind and generous and most teachers are as well". Pupils' work and effort is valued and celebrated and pupils appreciate this. Many opportunities are made available to pupils that contribute to raising their self-confidence. Parents appreciate the fact that their children develop into well-rounded young citizens.
28. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the very new school council and are looking forward to raising points for discussion at meetings. Pupils feel their views are listened to when they offer opinions in lessons. However, they are not yet actively enough consulted or involved in setting their own personal or academic targets for improvement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents and links with the community are **very good**. Liaison with schools and other education providers is also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent involvement with the church and parish permeates many aspects of school life and enhances pupils' personal development.

- Parents make an exceptional contribution to the school.
- Arrangements to provide parents with information are not consistent across the school.
- Liaison with other schools benefits both teachers and pupils.

Commentary

29. The school is very much involved with and at the heart of the church community. There are many parish activities which the whole school community and parents take part in. Members of the choir and orchestra support the church events such as communion, confirmation and reconciliation. During Lent, and at other times of the year, Mass is held at the school which parents and parish members attend. At harvest time a considerable number of hampers are assembled by the pupils and delivered locally. These opportunities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal, social and spiritual experiences. The summer fair is also organised jointly with the parish and other local community groups, so that all who participate benefit from the proceeds.
30. Members of a local volunteer group regularly come into school to hear pupils read and this has a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. In addition, members of the community enrich pupils' curriculum experiences, for instance, by making a video giving an account of their experiences when evacuated during World War II. There are very close links with the on-site nursery and with the secondary school. This means that pupils are well prepared when transferring to their next stage of education. The links with the nearby special school provide opportunities for pupils from both schools to socialise and this contributes well to developing pupils' self esteem and confidence. Joint curriculum and staff development meetings take place in conjunction with the Catholic secondary school, which brings mutual benefit to all involved.
31. Parents are encouraged to come in or telephone the school at any time, if there are concerns or issues to discuss. They appreciate this and state how comfortable they feel about approaching the school. The contribution, which parents make both to the school and their children's education, is very much valued. Parents raise significant sums of money for the school and this has considerably improved the accommodation and resources and, as a result, helped to raise pupils' standards of achievement, for instance, in ICT. Parents also provide help in many other ways such as helping with sport, pottery and general classroom activities. They also support the work their children have to do at home and this too has a positive impact on the standards their children achieve. Some parents' views have been sought on specific issues, such as the recent review of the sex education policy. However, the views of all parents are not currently sought on a regular basis or taken into account when the governors are agreeing priorities for school improvement. Whilst the provision of written information is good overall, there are weaknesses. Not all classes send home information about the curriculum or homework. Although information is said to be shared verbally, this disadvantages those parents who work and cannot always speak to teachers. End of year reports whilst providing a good insight into pupils' strengths in individual subjects, do not identify weaknesses or targets for improvement. This means that parents are not as well informed as they could be about how they might help their children improve. There is some information missing from the governors' annual report to parents and statutory requirements are not met in this respect.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership, management and governance are **good** overall.
The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He has a clear vision to raise standards and provide a high quality and happy learning environment.

- Governance is good. The governors know their school well. They successfully ensure that the school receives best value from all its spending.
- Self evaluation procedures are good and are used well to plan for further improvement.
- Staff with senior management roles, carry them out effectively, but co-ordinators' opportunities to monitor provision have been too limited.
- Financial management and control are good.

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has a clear vision for school improvement and development. His high aspirations are clearly reflected in the school improvement plan, and through the strong teamwork of the staff, well supported by the governors. Together, they rigorously evaluate the performance of the school in all areas and draw up the school improvement plan. The deputy headteacher and the senior management team provide good support for the headteacher, and lead their teams well. In order to sustain improvement, the senior management team is undertaking a national course for school leadership. The effectiveness of the aims and vision for the school set out in the mission statement is demonstrated in the way standards have risen and in pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour, and commitment to their school. The attention given to the provision of equal opportunities and to the full inclusion of all pupils in all activities is very good.
33. Governance is good. The governors have good knowledge of their school. They support the senior management team well and have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They question and challenge decisions, and are equally committed to raising standards and providing a caring environment in which children can develop academically and personally. Effective links between governors and subject co-ordinators contribute to good understanding of the school's performance. The chair of governors visits the school frequently, as do many other governors. A good number have attended training to increase their knowledge, and all governors carry out their duties in an organised way. They bring a good range of expertise and experience to the school, which they use effectively through a system of committees that meet regularly.
34. The management of the school is good. The school evaluates its own performance well and acts on the outcomes. The school improvement plan is a clear, well-structured management tool. There is a positive link between raising standards and performance management procedures. This led to the focus on raising standards in mathematics. The senior management team meets regularly to review the work of the school and to monitor the progress of the school improvement plan. Although most subject co-ordinators have not previously had opportunities to monitor teaching, learning and assessment procedures, good management now provides them with some time out of class to develop their subjects. The procedures to support the induction of new members of staff are excellent, and enable them to become effective members of the staff team very quickly. Financial management at all levels is good, and fully supports initiatives in the school development plan, for example, the development of investigational work in science. The school administration is very efficient, makes good use of ICT and ensures day-to-day management runs smoothly. The school budget is carefully monitored, and the principles of best value are rigorously applied to all budgetary decisions.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	473,061	Balance from previous year	14,137
Total expenditure	487,198	Balance carried forward to the next	0

Expenditure per pupil	2,013
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good.

35. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and very good in the area of personal, social and emotional development. The different areas of learning are linked together particularly well. When children enter school, their attainment is broadly average, although there are not many lower attainers. The children exceed the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They meet the goals for mathematics, for physical development and creative development. This represents good achievement, due to the good quality of teaching, and the good learning experiences offered to all the children. Children with special educational needs are supported well, and fully included in the wide range of activities. The children behave very well, and show very good attitudes because they are well cared for, enjoy all their activities and feel safe and secure in school. Leadership and management are good. The staff form a strong team and contribute equally to the well-planned learning activities. Activities show a good balance between those directed by adults and those chosen by the children. Staff have established a warm, calm atmosphere, in which all children and parents feel welcome and valued. Very good links with parents and good procedures make transition smooth and easy for the children when they start school and move to the next stage of education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, so the children achieve very well and exceed the Early Learning Goals.
- Children show great enthusiasm for school because they enjoy the varied learning activities.
- Children are helped to become independent and develop a good sense of responsibility.
- Warm, friendly relationships make the children feel secure and valued, and their attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Children show care and consideration for each other, have good social skills and understand the difference between right and wrong.

Commentary

36. Personal and social development is very good due to very good teaching and the provision of varied learning opportunities. Simple routines provide a secure framework for the children, and this develops their self-confidence. They show an increasing sense of personal responsibility, getting changed and looking after their clothes and equipment efficiently. They are helped to become independent in their choice of activities, and must 'sign in' to use different learning bays in the classroom. The children know they are valued and cared for, and this is reflected in their considerate behaviour towards each other. They are co-operative and helpful, happily assisting their partner when practising how to balance a bean-bag on their head in physical education. Class discussions about fairness produced some very sensible and thoughtful responses, and they are helped to think about others when the teacher asks, "How would you like that to happen to you?"

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, and children achieve well.
- Many children are working at a level above that expected for their age.
- Children listen well and speak confidently and clearly.
- Reading skills are good and children have good knowledge of letters and their sounds.

Commentary

37. Good teaching provides a varied range of meaningful activities. Most children have a good vocabulary and can name various exotic fruits, for example. They speak confidently, clearly and at length when contributing ideas to a class discussion of fairness. They listen well, and this ensures they know and understand their tasks. The children enjoy writing at the 'mark making' tables. The great majority write their names clearly, and 'sign in' to the different learning bays conscientiously. There is good emphasis on learning letter sounds and children use this knowledge in their writing and when reading new words. More able children make very good progress and successfully write simple stories. They know that each sentence begins with a capital letter and recognise question marks. Bright, attractive books and stories capture the children's interest in reading, and they all enjoy sharing books with adults. They have learnt several strategies when reading, and carefully 'sound out' and blend letter sounds into words. The school systematically encourages children to do extra reading practice at home and parents willingly support this.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures the children meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in reception.
- Good resources encourage children to investigate mathematical concepts.
- Children's understanding of number is developed well.

Commentary

38. Good teaching with a strong emphasis on practical activities provides the children with a wide variety of opportunities to investigate mathematical ideas and concepts. They are successfully encouraged to develop and use their mathematical vocabulary. The mathematics area is well resourced with equipment for counting, matching, sorting and recognising numbers and shapes. Children enjoy investigating how much sand or water different containers hold. Many children can count to 100. They are beginning to calculate mentally. More able children know that if there are ten eggs in a nest and three hatch there will be seven left. Others need support from the teacher to take one away from a given number. Nearly all the children meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the reception class.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Most children exceed the Early Learning Goals before the end of the reception class.

- A varied range of interesting activities makes learning interesting and exciting.
- The outside area provides some good opportunities for outdoor learning.

Commentary

39. Good teaching provides exciting and worthwhile activities for the children to broaden their knowledge of the world around them. Most meet the Early Learning Goals before the end of their time in reception. Regular lessons in the ICT suite ensure they use the various computer functions competently. They log on and off, send their work to the printer, and use different tools on the drawing programme. Other activities are closely linked to the class story, which during the inspection was *'Handa's surprise'*. They understand that Africa, where the story is set, is 'a long way off'. They planted sunflower seeds, and know it will take time and care before they grow. They found the idea of a tiny seed growing into a large plant exciting, and called it "a miracle", showing spiritual awareness in the wonder of nature. The outdoor area provides some opportunities for gardening and outdoor learning. The class rabbit lives in the courtyard, and the children gain first-hand experience in caring for him. They enjoy designing and constructing buildings and vehicles. The children remarked on how much they had grown and changed already whilst watching a tiny baby being bathed in class. A walk around the school provided early geographical experiences, and the children then used their writing skills to make labels for the various rooms. A visit to the church supported work on the Christian religion, and the children learn about other cultural beliefs and practices, including the Chinese New Year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, and the children meet the Early Learning Goals before they leave reception class.
- Children use the large space in the school hall for physical education lessons.
- Reception children have limited outdoor play facilities.

Commentary

40. The children's very good attitudes and behaviour ensure they use all equipment confidently and safely. The outdoor area provides limited opportunities for the children to gain experience of physically challenging activities, so lessons are taken in the school hall or playground. Children move and climb with good control, balance and co-ordination. They put their mathematical skills to good use to count the number of steps they took whilst balancing a bean-bag on their heads. They take responsibility for their physical education kit, and change efficiently. Children show good control of small equipment and modelling materials, use scissors safely and handle pencils and brushes competently. They carefully threaded small beads onto string to make African style necklaces. Children achieve well in this area of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Well-planned role-play activities encourage imaginative activities and language development.
- Children express their imaginative ideas by using a wide variety of materials.
- The children sing well due to regular lessons with the specialist music teacher

Commentary

41. Good teaching ensures the children meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the reception class. The role-play area is well resourced with costumes and equipment, and labels on electrical appliances help children to recognise technology in the home. At Christmas, the children enjoyed dressing up and acting the Nativity story. They created coloured patterns making good use of colour and line. There was great excitement on seeing their designs transferred to fabric when the nursery nurse applied the hot iron, and they also learned about the effects of heat. Children boldly mix and blend colours with paint, collage, pencil and pastel. They produced well-observed pictures of Handa's fruit basket, and have painted in the colourful style of Paul Klee.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

English

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning are good and some lessons are very good.
- Good links are established between English and other subjects.
- The use of assessment to set targets to ensure individual achievement is not sufficiently precise.
- The leadership is good.
- The library provision is much improved, and is used well to teach library skills and to promote independent learning.

Commentary

42. Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. The previous report stated that standards were average and only sometimes above the national average. The school has addressed this issue well, so that in the latest national tests the number of pupils attaining above average standards was above the national average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Over time both boys and girls score above the averages for boys and girls nationally, and do better than pupils in similar schools.
43. Throughout the school, pupils' listening skills are good. This results in teachers not having to repeat instructions and saves valuable learning time. Speaking skills are equally secure and these are further strengthened as each teacher introduces pupils to 'new' words, encourages them to speak grammatically, and draws attention to alternative ways of expressing thoughts. In each lesson seen, teachers encouraged pupils to speak in whole sentences. Owing to this persistent encouragement, pupils engaged in conversation in Year 6 were confident and often spoke at length. The school works hard to provide opportunities for speaking and listening, not only in the normal school day, but also by the use of outside speakers and appropriate visits. Consequently, pupils make good progress over time.
44. All pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 2, standards in reading are above average. Phonics (the relationship between groups of written letters and the sounds they represent) is taught well in Year 1 and pupils become aware of the pleasure that reading can give. By Year 2 pupils know about title, author, illustrator and blurb. They are able to say what a book might be about from illustrations, whilst higher attaining pupils are beginning to have opinions about the type of books that they like best. By Year 6 pupils use reference skills very effectively to find information in non-fiction books and web sites. They retrieve fiction and non-fiction books from shelves. The use of these skills shows good improvement since the

previous inspection when the use of reference skills was a weakness. Library provision has much improved, although access is restricted in the mornings whilst it is used as a teaching space. It is used effectively to promote independent learning at other times. Those pupils who were heard to read stated that they received regular support in their reading at home. This home support included some pupils who use the local public library as part of a family visit.

45. The school implements effective measures to raise standards in writing. Good emphasis is placed on handwriting and presentation of work. Owing to good work in the infant years, by Year 3 the majority of pupils are using a clear style of joined-up handwriting, with sound attention to neatness. The quality of writing shows improvement as pupils move through the school and the majority of pupils attain the expected level by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school recognises that writing skills are not so well developed as other English skills. An increase in the number of pupils achieving above the average standard in writing is a school target for improvement. The current attention given to encouraging pupils to seek out more interesting words, through the use of thesauri and dictionaries, is also an improvement made since the previous inspection. Pupils are developing good skills in word processing their writing through the frequent use of the ICT suite for lessons. Opportunities to use ICT for writing in English lessons back in the classroom are not always taken.
46. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was usually good, with several examples of very good teaching also observed. All teachers make good use of learning resources. Teachers use discussion and questioning well within a secure learning atmosphere brought about through very good relationships. The staff's management of pupils is good and adherence to sensible routines means that all pupils know what is expected of them as the lessons commence and proceed. Assessment of the previous lesson's outcomes is used effectively to set work. However, planning is variable because no single format was presented for planning lessons. Where planning was thorough, all groups of pupils received appropriate work. Elsewhere pupils were too often given the same task and the work produced relied upon the support that was given. In these instances pupils often still made good progress because adults kept a careful check on how they were doing, providing help where it was needed. Whilst the pace of lessons enabled pupils to always work at a reasonable pace, in the most successful lessons groups of pupils were given timed tasks to make the pace brisk in accordance with their known abilities. The marking of work is always encouraging and offers appropriate praise. Targets are set, but the quality is variable. The best are specific and aimed towards the correction of a recurring weakness. Less meaningful targets are too general – of the "Continue to improve your writing" variety. Pupils who were interviewed did not always know why targets had been set or when they had been achieved.
47. During the inspection, the lessons that were seen engaged the pupils' interest so that attitudes and behaviour were overall very good.
48. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and provides good leadership. Management is satisfactory, although she is able to scrutinise planning and pupils' books, her access to monitoring of standards through classroom observations is limited. She has overseen the development of the library, being careful to make sure that the pupils value books placed in it. She is also building up a relevant collection of books written in French that are familiar to pupils in the English versions.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. A strong feature is the use that teachers make of opportunities to present literacy skills in subjects other than English. Pupils are given good opportunities to write for different audiences within a variety of purposes. Especially interesting examples of this approach were seen in geography and history where pupils in Year 6 were encouraged to use their reference skills to find information, make notes and to turn them into individual reports.

French

50. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about the provision in French. However, there are very positive indicators. A visiting specialist teaches French to pupils in Year 6, and she and a member of staff teach Year 5. Good lessons were observed in Years 5 and 6, during which all pupils had extensive opportunities to speak French and many did so very well for their age, given that they only started to learn the language this year. Pupils produce a good amount of written work, covering a wide range of vocabulary.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain good standards in all aspects of the curriculum.
- Teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy.
- Teachers have high expectations and encourage pupils to think for themselves.
- Assessment is good, but target setting for individual pupils is not precise enough.
- Good use is made of ICT to support teaching.

Commentary

51. The vast majority of pupils reach the expected standards at the ages of seven and 11, and the school has only a very small 'tail' of pupils who do not manage this. This is because of good teaching in class, and good support given to help pupils who struggle to achieve well. In addition, a greater proportion of pupils than is usual exceed the expected levels, principally because of good teaching and the high expectations of teachers. Data handling is covered particularly well and standards in this are often much higher than those usually found. For example, pupils in Year 2 showed good skills in using Venn diagrams to sort numbers into sets. The results of national assessments in Years 2 and 6, and the evidence from the inspection, bear out this positive picture. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, particularly in the younger classes.
52. Teaching is consistently good, and examples of very good teaching were seen during the inspection. Teachers make good use of the elements of the National Numeracy Strategy in planning their lessons, particularly in their demand for good mental skills, and the clear specific teaching of strategies for tackling different problems. Pupils are encouraged to think mathematically, and their thoughtful and imaginative contributions are welcomed. They are fluent in using number mentally or on paper, and tackle problems with competence. Relationships are very good, so that pupils are happy to make suggestions or attempt answers, even if they are not sure they are correct. The positive and enthusiastic approach of their teachers is 'caught' by the pupils, who enjoy mathematics, work hard and are keen to succeed. They behave very well in lessons, collaborating with each other very effectively if required, but also showing great persistence when they work on their own, even when they find work difficult.
53. Teachers set high standards, and in the best lessons work is carefully matched to the needs of individuals and groups. Staff monitor pupils' progress very effectively in lessons, and are quick to spot if pupils need help, and provide it effectively. This strongly supports the needs of all pupils, and particularly those who sometimes struggle with the work. Occasionally, higher flying pupils work their way through tasks that are too easy for them, before moving onto more challenging, difficult work. Because they finish the easy work very quickly, they still make good progress once they get onto the more difficult work, but to some extent they are marking time in the first part of such lessons. Although pupils have targets for mathematics, these are not

usually detailed enough, or specific enough to the individual. An exception is in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs, which are models of good practice in this regard. Otherwise, not enough use is made of the good assessment information available to set and share specific targets with pupils.

54. A strength of the subject is the effective use which is made of computers. Teachers regularly schedule mathematics lessons in the well-equipped computer suite. Lessons in the suite help pupils' understanding of mathematics and of ICT, generate a lot of enthusiasm, and contribute in particular to pupils' understanding of data handling. The subject is well led, and the co-ordinator provides a clear lead to colleagues. Management is satisfactory. Some useful monitoring of planning helps maintain consistency. However, the monitoring of pupils' work and teaching is not systematic or extensive enough to give the co-ordinator the information she needs, to help raise teaching standards from their current good level to be even better.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Teachers plan lessons that make good use of pupils' mathematical skills in a range of other subjects, which contributes to their understanding of both mathematics and the subjects concerned. For example, the use of graphs and tables is very effective in science, and measuring and calculating skills are used well in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and have risen since the previous inspection.
- Achievement is good.
- Teaching is good, and teachers have good knowledge of the subject.
- There is very good emphasis on learning through investigation.
- Pupils behave very well and show very good attitudes in lessons.
- Assessment information is not used sufficiently to set targets and help pupils understand how to improve their work.
- The subject is well led but the co-ordinator has too few opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

56. Inspection evidence, including lessons and the work seen in pupils' books, shows standards are currently above average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. Results of national assessments show that standards were above average last year at age seven, and have been well above average for several years at age 11 years. Predictions for the tests at age 11 in 2004 suggest that fewer pupils will attain the higher levels, due to differences in the ability of the pupils.
57. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Strong emphasis on learning through practical investigations provides many good opportunities for pupils to use and extend their scientific knowledge. They show secure knowledge and understanding of important scientific ideas, such as the effect of friction on moving objects, how materials alter when heated or cooled and which habitats best meet the needs of different animals. This good emphasis on practical work enables pupils to devise a test, make sure it is fair and then carry it out, often independently of the teacher. This was evident when pupils in Year 6 planned investigations to test and measure air resistance as a force. Younger pupils record investigations of reversible changes and give clear explanations for their results. They know that ice melts, and explain that, "it freezes again if you put it back in the freezer". Good speaking and listening skills enable all pupils to discuss and predict what they think will happen. They carry out their tests

then check the results for accuracy. Older pupils use ICT to produce graphs of results of work on forces. Other pupils successfully use a range of programs and the Internet for research.

58. Pupils behave very well and show very good attitudes to science because they enjoy their lessons. All pupils are fully included in every activity, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development because they are excited by their discoveries, treat creatures and the environment with care and respect and co-operate well together.
59. Teaching is consistently good, and is sometimes very good at each key stage. Teachers use their good knowledge of the subject to plan a varied range of meaningful activities that capture their pupils' interest. They ensure pupils use correct scientific vocabulary, and pupils confidently refer to 'air resistance', the effects of 'gravity', 'magnetism' and 'friction'. Good quality books and resources, including the school grounds, are used well. Pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical skills to produce graphs and calculate results, and their knowledge of friction helps with their designs for moving vehicles in design and technology.
60. Classroom displays celebrate pupils' work and provide good support for learning, and Year 2 pupils hurry in to class each day to observe the progress of the mini-beasts they collected on the field. Pupils record their investigations with great care. Work is marked regularly, but does not often show pupils how they could improve or develop their work. Thorough assessments are made at the end of each topic. The information gained is used to set class targets rather than to help individual pupils know what to aim for.
61. Leadership is good. The knowledgeable co-ordinator has great enthusiasm for the subject, acts as a good role model for colleagues and has ensured that all issues raised by the previous inspection are fully resolved. Management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has not yet had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school. Good links with the local authority adviser for science and visits outside the classroom enrich and broaden pupils' experiences. There has been good improvement in science since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use is made of the computer suite to raise standards in ICT and in other subjects.
- Standards are above the national expectation throughout the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, because of good professional development.
- Very good leadership and management have helped to raise standards.

Commentary

62. There have been major improvements since the previous inspection in both provision and standards. All pupils achieve well and standards throughout the school exceed the national expectation, and continue to improve. This is a result of consistently good teaching, backed by good subject knowledge, and good use of the high quality equipment that is available.
63. Pupils in all classes show good skills in using computers, confidently making good use of the facilities of different programs from an early age. Pupils in Year 1, for example, can log on, find and load a program, and print out their finished work with only minimal help. Most of them are already at the levels expected of pupils a year older. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 are already attaining the standards expected by the time they leave primary school. In using a control program, they understood the different elements well, and all succeeded in writing a procedure to operate three different outputs in a given sequence. Examples of pupils' work

throughout the school show that they cover the full range of topics and programs and attain well in all of them.

64. Teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the possibilities of different programs and give pupils good explanations, often making very good use of the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate things. They ensure that pupils have good hands-on opportunities to use computers, and set high standards. Pupils respond positively to these high expectations, work hard and show persistence in the face of difficulties. They take a pride in what they accomplish, and are happy to share ideas and to help each other if they are “stuck”. Good use is made of extra adults (both classroom assistants and parental volunteers) to provide help where it is needed, and this is very effective in helping younger pupils, in particular, to achieve well.
65. The very well equipped computer suite has been a major factor in raising standards. Pupils have good opportunities to use the suite’s computers in ICT lessons and in other subjects. The suite is seldom ‘free’, as there is always a class or group using it. This is partly because of teachers’ and pupils’ enthusiasm for ICT, but also because of the co-ordinator’s insistence that the suite is used for ICT lessons and other subjects. The subject has been the school’s major focus for some time, and the leadership and management have been very good. Very effective use has been made of the local education authority’s detailed scheme of work, ensuring a broad and interesting curriculum. Extensive training has been provided for staff, resulting in their good levels of subject knowledge. Observations of all teachers’ lessons by the co-ordinator (who is the headteacher) have enabled detailed feedback to staff, and have supported the consistently good level of teaching.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. A wide range of use is made of ICT throughout the curriculum. For example, older pupils used the Internet to research pottery before making coiled pots, and younger pupils make good use of the drawing program on the computer. All classes are time-tabled to use the computer suite for other subjects as well as for their specific ICT lessons. This helps raise standards in both, but also helps pupils to understand the relevance of ICT in everyday life. Good use is made of lessons in the suite for a range of subjects, from the frequent use of ICT to support data handling in mathematics, to the use of computers for pupils in Year 6 to compose, play and refine melodies in music. Back in class, teachers in the older classes make some good use of the interactive whiteboards to promote pupils’ enthusiasm, and to clarify their explanations.

HUMANITIES

67. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision and standards in geography and history because there was insufficient evidence available during the inspection. Religious education was inspected by the Diocese of Salford, and is reported upon in a separate document. Two geography lessons and a single history lesson were observed. These, together with scrutiny of pupils’ books and interviews with pupils in Years 2 and 6, indicate that standards are above average and that teaching is good. This shows an overall maintenance of the standards reported following the previous inspection. There have been significant improvements in provision since that time, including a new library and an information technology suite, which enables pupils to use reference skills to access information. During the interviews pupils displayed an enthusiasm for both subjects. In discussions pupils used the ideas of change over time, similarities and cause and effect very well to offer reasons for their opinions. The humanities curriculum is enriched by field trips, including residential visits, which provide good first-hand experiences. In both geography and history written tasks contribute effectively to pupils’ writing skills. Book and allied resources held by the school have much improved, and very good use is made of comprehensive loan collections, and articles and artefacts provided by parents.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

68. It was not possible to gain enough evidence to give secure judgements about overall provision in these subjects. Three lessons were observed in music and pupils were heard singing and playing instruments in assemblies and in extra curricular sessions. Two lessons were seen in physical education and clubs in sport and dance observed. In art and design and in design and technology, one lesson was seen in each, and inspectors examined samples of work.
69. Standards observed in **music** were good. In the lessons observed, teaching was generally good. Pupils in Year 1 sang tunefully and showed good emerging skills in identifying different elements in recorded music. Pupils in Year 3 sang tunefully, with a good sense of pulse and dynamics, in response to the teacher's very clear instructions. Pupils in Year 6 showed good skills in composing, evaluating and refining melodies, making good use of a computer program. The school makes good use of the skills of a specialist teacher, and of those of several instrumental teachers. Singing skills are good, as was heard in lessons, assemblies and hymn practice. The school orchestra gives pupils who are learning an instrument good opportunities to play as an ensemble, and they do so well, listening to each other carefully and keeping together effectively.
70. In the **physical education** lessons observed, standards and teaching were at least satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 showed good skills in throwing and catching rugby balls, because of the clear, specific teaching they received. Pupils in Year 6 showed satisfactory standards in their gymnastic skills, showing good agility, although for many their performance lacked polish. When working as a group, they showed good awareness of each other. There is good attendance at a range of after school clubs. In dance, about 40 girls from the juniors worked enthusiastically and energetically, showing good standards overall in keeping in time to the music. Similarly good contributions to pupils' physical education standards and social skills were seen in a netball club attended by 24 girls and a cricket club attended by about 20 pupils, including boys and girls. Hard work and enjoyment were factors in both.
71. In the lesson observed in **art and design**, pupils in Year 5 successfully explored ideas for still-life arrangements, after observing and discussing the work of Paul Cezanne. The quality of teaching in the lesson was satisfactory, attitudes and behaviour were good and the standard of work was in line with that expected. Samples of work seen from different classes were at least satisfactory. For example, Year 6 pupils made good use of their sketch books to practise working in the style of LS Lowry, blending pastels, pencil and charcoal well to represent his dark, industrial landscapes. The study of famous artists contributes to pupils' cultural development. Art supports work in other subjects effectively. For example, pupils celebrated their Christian faith in a collage on the creation of the world.
72. In the lesson observed in **design and technology**, pupils in Year 1 made a 'moving picture' with a hidden surprise. The teaching was good, and the standard of work was in line with that expected. Attitudes and behaviour were very good because pupils were enthusiastic about their task, and they manipulated scissors and materials competently, with good regard to safety. Work on display shows that skills are developed progressively, and the curriculum is fully covered. Throughout the school, pupils are taught to evaluate their products and seek ways to improve them, and use their writing skills well to report their results. They use their mathematical skills well to measure and calculate sizes and shapes. Good use is made of support from parents, who often help in practical lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

These subjects were not inspected in detail. The aspects of the provision which were observed were at least satisfactory, with good indications that the standards are set to rise in the near future.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a detailed plan for the development of these aspects of learning.

- The recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed to improving the subject.
- The newly instituted school council is beginning to give pupils a voice in the running of the school.
- Planned opportunities are giving all pupils the chance to discuss their views and beliefs on important issues.

Commentary

73. The school has moved forward in provision since the previous inspection. For example, they take part in the Healthy Eating Initiative and involve pupils in detailed discussions of their dietary needs. The members of the midday welfare staff have received training and play an important part in pupils' understanding. The recently formed school council has proved to be very popular with all pupils and they are keen to explain the democratic process by which council members were appointed. Observation of a Year 6 class council meeting clearly demonstrated pupils' acceptance of due process for discussion. Sex education and drugs awareness education are taught in accordance with the governors' policies. Pupils support a range of charities and use their initiative in suggesting and organising moneymaking activities. Good opportunities are planned to actively seek pupils' views about specific projects in order to offer school council representatives suggestions and ideas to take forward to meetings. These initiatives are already beginning to make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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