

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOHN BOSCO R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108844

Headteacher: Mrs A. MacKay

Lead inspector: Mrs M. R. Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 May 2004

Inspection number: 257694

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	143
School address:	Bradford Avenue Sunderland Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	SR5 4JW
Telephone number:	0191 5536921
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. Coggrave

Date of previous inspection: 29th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John Bosco RC VA Primary School serves pupils who mainly live in rented accommodation. There are very high levels of unemployment and parents who have employment are in manual jobs. Up to two years ago the school served pupils from the parish of its church. There were 105 pupils on the school roll. The school then took in an additional 38 pupils from a closing school, increasing the size of the school considerably. The amalgamation of these pupils into the school ethos took a great amount of effort and time on the part of the staff. There are now 143 pupils, with 76 boys and 67 girls. There is a considerable imbalance between boys and girls in several year groups. Forty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above average. Ten per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is average. Less than one per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is below average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language and one per cent of pupils are from mixed race origins. Children enter reception with standards below average overall and well below average in speech and language and personal, social and emotional development. The school has separate reception, Years 1, 2 and 3 classes. There are two mixed age year groups with a Year 4 and 5 class and a Year 5 and 6 class. In the mornings an additional part-time teacher allows the school to work in single age groups for English, mathematics and religious education. The extra year group works in the computer suite, which also provides library space. The school is due to start a new building programme immediately after the inspection. This will provide a new classroom for reception and a brand new nursery class, with specially designated outdoor play for these classes. An additional teacher has been appointed to run this new class. The library will be relocated, ICT provision improved and there

will be additional facilities for staff. The school is part of an Education Action Zone project, which provides a range of different projects and the use of additional specialist teachers for dance and drama. A specialist teacher from the cluster secondary school provides French lessons for Year 5.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11328	Mrs M. R. Shepherd	Lead inspector	English, French, personal, social and health education
9986	Mr W. Twiss	Lay inspector	
29188	Mrs G. Ulyatt	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education
32559	Mr D. Haley	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, geography, history, pupils with special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school that is steadily improving. This is due to the headteacher's determination to continually extend the work of the school. Staff are dedicated to the school and work hard. Pupils achieve well, both in their academic and personal development. Teaching is good overall. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well overall and by Year 6 standards are average in English, mathematics and science, though standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below expectations.
- Pupils with statements of special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils achieve very well.
- Behaviour and relationships are very good, pupils have very good levels of confidence and self-esteem and spiritual and moral development are very good.
- The school is working hard to raise attendance rates and, although they are well below average, they are improving; punctuality is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and pupils work hard; learning is not consistently good in whole class sessions; classroom assistants are very good quality.
- Leadership and management of the headteacher are very good, she works closely with the very good quality deputy headteacher and the good quality co-ordinators and governors.
- The school provides a good quality curriculum and uses the Education Action Zone¹ (EAZ) project very effectively to enrich pupils' experiences. Reception children do not have direct access to outdoor learning facilities and access to the whole school library is restricted².
- The school takes good care of its pupils and has good quality partnerships with parents and the community.

There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. All the previous issues have been addressed thoroughly. Despite the considerable number of pupils transferring from a closing school, pupils achieve consistently well and standards are rising. Teaching has improved. The leadership and management of the headteacher are better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	E	D	E
Mathematics	B	E	B	B
Science	C	C	D	D

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

A high proportion of pupils joined the school between Year 2 and Year 6, which had a negative impact on the progress between Years 2 and 6. Compared with schools with similar levels of free school meals, standards are above average in English and well above average in

¹ EAZ stands for Education Action Zone and is a government funded initiative to raise standards in designated areas.

² These accommodation issues will be resolved as soon as the new building is completed this term.

mathematics and science. The inspection judges achievement as **good**. Standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are now average. Standards in French are high in Year 5 because of the excellent teaching from the visiting secondary school specialist. In Year 2 standards are above average in writing and average in reading and speaking and listening. Standards are average in mathematics and science. Standards in dance are well above expectations in Year 2. Standards in ICT are below expectations throughout the school. Reception children make a very good start to their education. When they enter the school their standards are below average overall and well below average in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Due to the very good teaching, standards are now average, with children on track to reach the early learning goals³. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and pupils with statements of special educational need and gifted and talented pupils achieve very well. Pupils have very positive attitudes and very good relationships with each other and adults. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall and very good in spiritual and moral aspects.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**.

The quality of teaching is **good**. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils concentrate well and try hard to complete their work. Teachers do not consistently provide enough opportunities for speaking in whole class sessions. Classroom assistants provide valuable support in group work and for pupils with special educational needs.

The curriculum is good quality. The school enriches the curriculum well and uses every aspect of the EAZ facilities to provide stimulating experiences for pupils.

There are good quality systems to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The school ensures that there are trusting relationships between pupils and adults. It has effective systems for involving pupils in making decisions and values their views.

Partnership with parents is good. The family literacy scheme plays an important part in extending parents' support of their children's learning. Community links are good, particularly the partnership with the parish. There are good links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good, with excellent features. She sets an extremely clear educational direction for the work of the school and sets up smoothly running systems through the school. The leadership and management of the deputy headteacher are very good and co-ordinators work well to develop their areas of responsibility. The secretary is very efficient. Governance of the school is good. Governors are very committed to the school and play an important role in shaping the direction of its work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents really value the work of the school. They appreciate the arrangements made for their children to settle into school. They believe that teaching is good and that their children make good progress because staff expect them to work hard. Pupils like being at this school. They

³ Early learning goals are the expected standard for reception children to reach by the end of their time in this class.

appreciate that teachers show them how to make their work better and enjoy learning new things in lessons. They expect to have to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise levels of attendance;
- raise standards in ICT;
- increase consistency of teaching in whole class sessions;
- implement the plans to provide direct access to outdoor learning for reception children and resite the library to allow pupils to use it more frequently.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** throughout the school with very good achievement in reception. Standards are average overall in both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with statements of special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils achieve **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reception rise from below average, with some features well below average on entry, to average by the end of the year.
- Year 2 pupils reach average standards in mathematics, science, reading, speaking and listening and above average standards in writing.
- Despite the high proportion of pupils who joined the school midway through their schooling, standards in English, mathematics and science are average by Year 6.
- Standards in ICT are too low throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and pupils with full statements make very good progress; gifted and talented pupils' achievement is very good.

Commentary

Reception

1. Children enter the school with standards that are below average overall and well below average in personal, social and emotional development and in speech and language. There is a strong emphasis on these areas of learning, with carefully structured learning opportunities for children to develop their skills. This emphasis ensures that children's attainment is average by the end of the year. This represents very good achievement overall. Children are willing to take turns and understand that there are routines to be followed each day. In communication, language and literacy, children are confident speaking in groups and the whole class. They present their writing neatly and enjoy listening to stories. Achievement in mathematical development is good and standards are at the expected level for this age group. Children enjoy handling numbers and most children form their numbers correctly. The teaching team provides a very good level of challenge to more able children and these children are working at a higher level than expected for their age. Children achieve well in knowledge and understanding of the world. They handle computers confidently and have a good understanding of their local area, but they lack confidence in investigating in their play. There was not enough evidence to make judgements in physical and creative development.

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	15.1 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (13.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.8 (14.9)	16.3 (16.5)

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

- Standards in the national tests in 2003 in Year 2 were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. Compared with schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds, standards were well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. The impact of a high proportion of pupils entering from the closing neighbouring school has had a negative impact on standards over the past two years. Prior to this the school had received achievement awards for raising standards. The headteacher sets a high priority on literacy and numeracy and uses the very good quality EAZ initiatives to the full. This has had a positive impact on standards. Pupils achieve well in these subjects and the inspection judges standards in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics as average. Pupils enjoy reading and tackle new words systematically. There has been a particularly strong emphasis on writing and pupils write very interesting stories and poems. Standards in writing are above the expected level overall, with all pupils writing at length and with enthusiasm. However, standards in handwriting are not as high due to too few opportunities to practise this skill. In mathematics pupils tackle problem solving confidently and enjoy using mental mathematics at the beginning of lessons. Standards in science are at the expected level. Pupils carry out experiments confidently. Although standards in some aspects of ICT are at the expected level, pupils lack confidence in some skills such as saving and retrieving their work independently. Standards in dance are above the expected level due to the support of a specialist teacher from the EAZ project.

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	25.5 (25.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.9 (24.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.3 (28.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in the 2003 national tests were below average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Compared with schools with pupils from a similar background, standards were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Standards showing progress between the Year 6 and Year 2 national tests are lower when compared with similar schools. This is due to the negative impact of the high proportion of additional pupils coming into the school during their junior education. The initiatives that raised standards in the infant classes are having the same impact in the junior classes and pupils achieve well. By Year 6 standards are at the expected level in English, mathematics and science. Pupils speak confidently in formal situations such as assemblies. They read with enjoyment and their writing includes very interesting personal responses. They are particularly good at writing poems. Standards in mathematics have dropped from last year because there are more pupils with special educational needs in this subject this year. In mathematics pupils handle numbers at a higher level than expected for their age because the school places a high emphasis on this aspect of mathematics. However, standards in the other areas of mathematics are at the expected level. Pupils carry out scientific investigations with confidence and have the

expected level of scientific knowledge. Pupils achieve very well in French in Year 5. This is due to the excellent contribution from the visiting teacher from the local secondary school.

4. Standards in ICT are below the expected level throughout the school. This is due to the key focus throughout the school on raising standards in English, mathematics and science after the large number of pupils joined the school two years ago. The school is aware of the need to extend their provision in this subject and is working well with the EAZ to improve their provision.
5. Pupils with statements of special educational needs achieve very well. This is due to the high quality support that they receive and the carefully structured individual education plans. Other pupils on the special educational needs register make good progress. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils carefully and provides stimulating opportunities for them to extend their learning. These strategies result in these pupils achieving very well.
6. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection when the negative impact of the large number of pupils joining the school since then is taken into account.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good** and feature strongly among the principal strengths that contribute to the success of the school. Behaviour in classes and around the school is **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance is **poor** and punctuality is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' attitudes are very good and enable them to achieve well in their learning and personal development.
- Behaviour is very good during lessons as well as at play, maximising the opportunities for teaching and learning.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is particularly strong and their social and cultural development is good.
- Rates of attendance are poor and, although improving through the school's efforts, they remain well below the national average.

Commentary

7. The most striking feature for many visitors to the school is the way that everyone works together. The whole-school commitment of caring for each other is good and reflects the strong spiritual ethos of the school. Through the high quality of its leadership, the school devotedly caters for the needs of everyone. Pupils follow the very caring role models seen among staff and never hesitate to help anyone. This shows itself in the delightful way pupils treat visitors. Their self-esteem is high and this is reflected in the pride pupils have in their achievements and the confident way they talk about their work. In lessons they support and help each other well, especially when working in pairs or in groups.
8. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. This results in pupils developing very good concentration skills. Pupils feel safe and secure within the school

environment and are very welcoming to new pupils, helping them to mix well and make friends. There are good incentives in place to reinforce good behaviour. When things go wrong pupils know exactly what to do. They know that adults deal quickly with any problems. The school promotes moral development very well by giving pupils many opportunities to reflect on important issues such as friendship and care. These are well linked to the Christian ethos of the school. There have been no exclusions for the past two years.

9. The school promotes pupils' spiritual development very effectively through all its work. During assemblies pupils display excellent examples of personal expression and feelings through dance, music and drama. Older pupils are very good role models and give an excellent example to younger ones. In lessons all are encouraged to listen well to each other's points of view and all pupils are secure that their ideas will be valued. Pupils are keen to take responsibility to help the school run smoothly and they take their jobs seriously. For example, pupils value the recently established school council and see that it is already having a very positive impact on the school. Pupils have a good awareness of local and national heritage and learn about multicultural issues through planned events where they look at European countries, for example. Teachers have had training on the faiths of others and the school now ensures pupils learn to respect these through good quality resources and planned activities.

10. The headteacher has worked assiduously with her team and partner agencies to improve attendance. In the previous inspection the rate of absence was above the national average by 0.9 per cent. The considerable increase in the pupil numbers since then has compounded the attendance problems in the school. Procedures for promoting good standards of attendance are strong and draw on all the resources, including the EAZ, available to the school. Registration sessions are efficient and registers are checked each day to identify any unexplained absences or trends. The school has a good partnership with the Every School Day Counts⁴ initiative. Through this, it is able to offer good rewards to the pupils who have consistently high levels of attendance. It has also developed some innovative practices such as offering discounts through a local travel agent in an attempt to dissuade the practice of taking pupils out of school for holidays. The school immediately follows up all unexplained absences with a home visit if necessary. Good working relationships with the education social worker help the school's work in promoting attendance. In order to act as good role models for attendance staff also display their attendance records alongside those of the pupils. Because of the supportive systems and the priority that is focused on attendance, it is improving. The pupils in Year 2 are now achieving 96 per cent attendance and overall the school is issuing many more certificates for 100 per cent attendance. There has been a good level of improvement in procedures for promoting attendance since the previous inspection, although last time the level of attendance was judged as satisfactory.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	7.3

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.3

⁴ This is a regional project designed to support schools in raising levels of attendance.

National data:	5.4
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National data:	0.4
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. The quality of teaching and the curriculum is **good**. The school takes **good** care of its pupils and links with parents and the community are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall and very good in reception. Assessment is **satisfactory** overall in infant and junior classes and good in reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage behaviour very well and pupils work hard in lessons.
- Classroom assistants support group work very effectively but teachers do not deploy them consistently well in whole class sessions.
- Planning is very good quality in literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers organise pupils well in pairs to discuss their learning in group work but do not consistently use this strategy in whole class sessions.
- The use of the interactive whiteboards in lessons is inconsistent.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good in English, science and the reception curriculum, but there are some weaknesses in mathematics and ICT.
- The homework clubs for older pupils make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Assessment in English is good and very good in mathematics except for marking; assessment is not fully in place in other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	9 (26%)	16 (47%)	8 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.

11. The headteacher sets a high priority on the management of pupils' behaviour and teachers all do this very effectively. Their skills ensure a calm working atmosphere in lessons and good levels of concentration. Teachers build very good quality relationships with individual pupils. They organise lessons carefully to ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. There is a high emphasis on moving sensibly within the classroom and around the school. Lessons start promptly, with pupils settling down quickly, eager to start their learning. Pupils expect to work hard, particularly during group work and take a pride in completing their work.
12. Teachers organise classroom assistants very effectively during group work. Classroom assistants are very good quality and have a significant impact on pupils' learning because they know each pupil's individual needs very well. There is a very clear focus to this group teaching and the individual attention that pupils receive gives them confidence to try out new ideas. However, in whole-class sessions classroom assistants often do not play an active enough role in supporting individual pupil's learning. This reduces their contributions during these parts of the lesson.
13. The planning in literacy and numeracy is very good quality. Teachers produce detailed weekly plans that cover each part of the lesson thoroughly. Lessons are carefully linked to each other across the week and produce a careful sequence of tasks for all pupils. The planning of group work considers different pupils' learning needs carefully. Teachers produce in-depth evaluations of these lessons, identifying individual pupils' achievement very well. This is taken into account when teachers plan the next set of lessons. These very good quality planning systems are having a very positive impact on pupils' learning because they meet their specific needs so well. However, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not give clear enough targets for future improvement.
14. The headteacher has introduced the strategy of having talk partners⁵ throughout the school. This supports pupils' learning well because they extend their ideas through sharing them with someone else. This strategy also develops their speaking and listening skills effectively. However, teachers do not use this consistently during whole-class sessions or allow pupils to make enough contributions to this part of lessons. This reduces pupils' opportunities to contribute to discussion or to share their responses with the rest of the class.
15. There is a wide variety in teachers' use of the interactive whiteboard during lessons. In some cases this is excellent, as in Year 1. In this class multi-media presentations support key learning very effectively, capturing pupils' attention and extending their reading skills.

⁵ This is a system where pupils have a regular partner and work with them to share their ideas and their written work during lessons.

However, in some lessons teachers do not use the equipment at all, which reduces the impact of their teaching, particularly in whole class teaching.

16. Teachers have good subject knowledge in English and science. They have a particularly good understanding of how to develop pupils' personal responses in writing and in investigative science, which has a positive impact in pupils' learning in these areas. Subject knowledge in mathematics is good throughout the school apart from a small proportion of weakness in the understanding of shape and space. Teachers are not confident across the full ICT curriculum, although they work well with the aspects that they use regularly. The reception teaching team have a very good understanding of the curriculum for reception children, particularly in personal, literacy and numeracy aspects. This has a very positive impact on children's achievement over time.
17. A high proportion of teachers are involved in the homework clubs for older pupils. This ensures that all pupils get individual attention to extend their understanding and skills. Teachers receive careful briefing to ensure that they support pupils' effectively. Reading homework is organised consistently through the school and pupils expect to carry this out regularly.
18. Assessment systems are good in reception and in English and mathematics. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, because teachers have a good understanding of their individual needs. However, the school has not yet set up effective systems in other subjects. There are good systems to assess pupils' progress in English and mathematics at the end of the year. The headteacher and deputy headteacher analyse these test results and this information is used very effectively to plan appropriate teaching activities. The school keeps on-going records of pupils' progress in English and mathematics, which ensures that pupils' individual needs are being met and that they make smooth progress between classes. This is used particularly well for supporting pupils with special educational needs. Teachers make very detailed evaluations on their weekly plans, which are monitored thoroughly by the headteacher. This is helping teachers to plan work which is very carefully matched to pupils' needs. The school has introduced good quality individual targets for pupils in English, mathematics and personal development. The targets are reviewed each term and shared with parents. Although older pupils discuss their targets with their teachers, they are not given enough responsibility for meeting the targets during the term and do not refer to them regularly enough in lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** quality overall. There are **good** opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad with good links between subjects and a clear emphasis on literacy and numeracy.
- The school enriches the curriculum well with a good range of after-school activities in sports, arts and ICT.
- Specialist visiting teachers provide high quality enrichment to the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good for pupils with statements of special educational need; provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good.

- The use of the library is restricted and there is no outdoor learning area for the reception class with direct access from the classroom.

Commentary

19. The school provides a broad curriculum that matches the pupils' needs well. There is a high emphasis on literacy, numeracy and personal development, which is ensuring that standards are rising in these areas. In reception, the teacher covers the areas of learning systematically, although the lack of direct access to the outdoors reduces opportunities for learning. The plans for the new building have very good provision for this aspect of the reception curriculum. The curriculum in the infant and junior classes is broad and provides pupils with regular opportunities to learn across all the different subjects. The school works hard to create links across different subjects, which reinforce pupils' learning well. Numeracy across the curriculum was a weakness in the previous inspection and is now firmly in place.
20. The organisation of single age groups in the morning for literacy and numeracy is having a very positive impact on standards. The family literacy and numeracy programmes provide high quality support for the curriculum, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. The school makes very good use of EAZ curriculum projects and research initiatives. The writing and speaking and listening projects are making a very positive contribution to the English curriculum. The Year 4 / 5 teacher is involved in a very good quality project considering different learning styles. These strategies are having a very positive impact on raising standards, particularly in writing. The headteacher also uses visiting specialist teachers from various sources very effectively. The EAZ support is raising standards in dance and the links with the secondary school ensure a high quality French curriculum for Year 5.
21. There is a wide range of visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum. The school provides a good range of activities for junior pupils to attend after school clubs and activities across several different subjects. There are plans in place to extend this to infant pupils. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the after-school clubs and values the contribution that they make to pupils' personal and social development. There are good quality links with the wider community to extend the curriculum, including a Youth Inclusion project that helps Year 3 pupils to work together and co-operate through work in dance. Pupils develop their confidence by performing in local dance festivals and musical concerts. There are good opportunities for older pupils to extend their curriculum through the use of local secondary school initiatives.
22. The provision for special educational needs is good. The school is particularly successful in organising the curriculum for these pupils. This ensures that they have access to the full curriculum and the extra activities that the school provides. The school plans the curriculum carefully to ensure that work matches the pupils' individual needs and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational need is very good quality. Support staff provide very well targeted support, which ensures that pupils are fully included in the curriculum, including French lessons. The curriculum for gifted and talented pupils is very good. These pupils are identified early and very effective programmes put in place, which results in them making very good progress.
23. The accommodation is adequate and well maintained and teachers use the available space well. The library is underused because it is situated in the ICT suite, which means

that pupils do not make enough use of books for research. The provision of interactive whiteboards is good but teachers do not use them consistently enough across different subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring the pupils' care welfare and health and safety are **good**. The support, advice and guidance given to the pupils are **good**. The school has **good** procedures for involving the pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The newly formed school council is making a good impact.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils are well cared for and that they work in safety.
- The monitoring of the pupils' personal and academic achievements is good.

Commentary

24. The school council is newly formed and is already having a good impact on the support and personal development of the pupils. Pupils of all ages talk enthusiastically about its work and how it has given them a say in the running of the school. The councillors take their responsibilities seriously. For example, they recently surveyed their peers and offered views and advice to the headteacher on desirable and suitable equipment for the school playground.
25. The staff work as a cohesive and committed team to provide good standards of care and welfare to the pupils. The policy and procedures for child protection are well understood and all staff are aware of what they must do if they have any concerns. The school takes health and safety issues very seriously and ensures that its policies are carried out. Staff and governors are vigilant and carry out regular assessments of any risks from potential hazards. The school makes sure that timely action is taken to remedy any hazards. In lessons the teachers are quick to point out any safety hazards. Even the children in the reception class explained to the teacher why they should not run in a lesson held in the grounds of the school. The school has good links with the professional support services. It uses these well to provide routine health screening and to offer advice to pupils, carers and their parents. The school nurse makes regular visits and works sensitively with the pupils and families that need help. The school has enthusiastically taken part in health promoting initiatives and has achieved the Healthy Schools award for this work. Trained first aid staff ensure that there is always someone on hand to comfort and support the pupils through mishaps and minor traumas. Visitors contribute to the well being of the pupils. The community police officer alerts the pupils to dangers that they may face outside school and reinforces the message that the police are there to help people. The good quality care and welfare offered to the pupils make them feel welcome in the school and enable them to enjoy their learning.
26. The staff know the pupils in their care well. They closely monitor academic performance and encourage pupils and their parents to celebrate successes. All pupils have targets for their academic and personal development. A succinct record of their achievement is kept in their individual profile document. The school supports pupils who need extra help well. It provides extra help for literacy and numeracy studies, for example. Personal development is also well supported. The staff have the confidence of the pupils and can deal sensitively with deeply personal issues. Through a well thought out programme of pastoral care, the school provides the pupils with an avenue to discuss personal issues

like behaviour and relationships. The school's induction procedures are effective in welcoming the very youngest pupils into the school. Because of the caring efforts of the headteacher and her team, the induction procedures have also been successful in integrating a significant number of older pupils who transferred from another school.

27. The good levels of care and support build trusting relationships between the pupils and adults. They feel safe and valued by the school community and this helps them to achieve well and to their full potential. The previous inspection judged child protection procedures to be satisfactory and care to be good. Child protection is now good and all aspects of care, support and guidance overall are now good.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with the parents are **good**. Its links with the local community are **good**. The school's links with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good opportunities for parents to support its work.
- The quality and range of information for the parents are good.
- Links with the community and other schools are good.

Commentary

28. The headteacher has worked tirelessly with the full support of her staff to build the school's good relationships with the parents and community. Good opportunities are offered to the parents and a significant number of them support the work of the school. The family learning programmes identify where help is needed. These programmes not only advise parents on how to help their children learn but also offer them the chance to build up their own confidence and skills. The majority of parents regularly hear their children read and frequently make useful comments in the home/school reading diary. Parents keenly support school performances, assemblies and important events in the pupils' lives such as preparation for the sacraments. The school enjoys the support of the parents for its fund raising efforts and, as a result, it has been able to buy additional resources such as playground equipment. The contribution of the parents to the work of the school is having a good impact on the achievements of the pupils.
29. The school provides good quality information for the parents. Annual reports provide an accurate picture of what the pupils have learned and, through targets, they give guidance on what to do to improve further. Parents are invited to termly consultation meetings, which inform them about the children's academic and personal progress. Regular newsletters keep the parents informed about school successes and events. Each term, the school gives the parents well presented and easy to understand information on what it will be teaching. There is an abundance of relevant and topical information for parents in accessible places such as close to the entrance to the reception class. The school prides itself on being open and parents like the facility of being able to talk to staff informally at the start and end of the school day. The parents value the openness of communications between them and the school and are very satisfied with the ways in which it responds to them. Parents of pupils who need extra help with their learning appreciate and value the efforts that the staff put into providing high quality support.
30. The school's links with other schools and the wider community are good. It succeeds in building good relationships with the secondary schools. The pupils visit the secondary

schools and benefit from introductory lessons in science and French, for example. There is a good flow of information between the schools and individual attention is given to highlighting the needs of pupils who find learning difficult as they move on to the next stage of education. The school hosts a parent and toddler group that volunteers run in order to help children prepare for their first steps into formal education. The school has good relationships with its community. It uses the locality well to promote an understanding of the environment amongst the pupils. A programme of visits introduces the pupils to the theatre and arts, for example. The school has good links with the church. The pupils enjoy their visits to the church and the parish priest regularly supports the work of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. Leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. Management of the school is **good**. The governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher sets an extremely clear direction to the work of the school and has high aspirations for raising both academic and personal standards.
- The headteacher manages the school very well and works in a close partnership with the very good quality deputy headteacher.
- Overall co-ordinators lead and manage their areas of responsibility well.
- The governors are very committed to the school and play a key role in shaping the direction of the work of the school.

Commentary

31. The headteacher has a long-term commitment to the school. She provides an extremely clear vision of the educational direction for the work of the whole school community. She is determined to raise academic standards for all pupils by continually looking for ways of improving the school's provision. She introduces new systems sensitively and checks carefully that they are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. She is sensitive to the different needs of staff and ensures that they work in a harmonious team. She sets clear priorities for developments, with a consistent focus on literacy and numeracy. She has a deep belief in the importance of pupils developing personal skills and of raising their self-esteem. The importance she attaches to providing a Christian context for the work of the school is obvious across the different features of the school's provision. She knows each pupil by name and she prides herself on supporting each one by celebrating individual achievements. She sets a very good example by responding to everyone courteously and with genuine interest.
32. The management skills of the headteacher are very good. She considers all available resources and makes sure that she gets very good value for money for the school. Her use of the EAZ project is very effective and is having a significant impact on raising standards. She sets up rigorous performance management systems that contribute very effectively to extending the expertise of staff. She leads the process of school improvement planning rigorously, with everyone contributing to the different stages of the annual plan. Annual development is set firmly in the context of longer term aspirations. Targets for action are clearly identified and efficiently reviewed. She organises the daily running of the school very efficiently and makes very good use of the high quality school secretary.

33. The deputy headteacher works in a very effective partnership with the headteacher. She has a very good understanding of the school and its community. Her time as acting headteacher gave her a wide perspective of the school's work. She shares the headteacher's educational beliefs and supports her very effectively. She plays an important role as the special educational needs co-ordinator and makes very good use of external expertise and support. The headteacher sets up clear systems for co-ordinators to lead and manage their responsibilities. She identifies sensible priorities for co-ordinators to lead key developments through the school. Co-ordinators all have a good understanding of the development needs of their subjects. They monitor each other's termly planning carefully. The school secretary plays an important part in reducing teachers' workload in producing these plans.
34. The governors have a long-term commitment to the school, with some governors travelling considerable distances to sustain their role in the school. The headteacher provides detailed reports for governors and several governors supplement this with visits to the school during its working day. Governors have a clear understanding of the role of the school in the community. They consider key changes to the life of the school very carefully, such as the inclusion of a high proportion of new pupils coming into the school two years ago. They fully support the headteacher's priorities to raise standards in English, mathematics and science and to ensure that pupils have good levels of behaviour. Governors use available training opportunities well, both with the diocese and with the local education authority. They follow up this training well by monitoring the work of the school in the light of their new understanding.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	447,962	Balance from previous year	22,113
Total expenditure	426,542	Balance carried forward to the next	28 ⁶
Expenditure per pupil	2,982		

⁶ The headteacher and governors have ensured that this year's budget was used in full in order to ensure the new building opportunities were used to the full.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of provision in the reception class for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

35. Children get off to a very good start in the reception class. Their overall attainment on entry is below average. Team work is very good and staff work very hard to ensure that children, including those who have special educational needs, settle well to their learning and that all have equal access to the range of experiences on offer. Children make very good progress in their year in the reception class and achieve very well. Standards are at the level expected in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics by the end of reception because staff give very good emphasis to these key areas. Teaching is very good. Leadership is good because the teacher has a great commitment to this age group and leads with enthusiasm. The very good provision has been maintained since the last report through improvements and developments to the curriculum and assessment in response to national initiatives. Staff know children well and address individual needs very well. The current reception classroom is small in size and on two levels; this restricts free play at times. At present children do not have easy access to the area outdoors and this limits some learning opportunities. The building of a new Early Years⁷ area is about to commence and this will include a nursery for the school as well as outdoor facilities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn at an accelerated rate because teaching is very good.
- Children value each other and play and learn together because adults are very good, caring role models.

Commentary

36. Children achieve very well because staff encourage children to show high levels of concentration in all they do. Staff spend time talking with individuals so there are good levels of interest and excitement in their learning. Children are proud of their achievements, for example the vehicles made with construction equipment. They laugh spontaneously at the antics of characters in storybooks. Many children have established friendships, sharing equipment and taking turns, even when not closely supervised by adults. For example, two children were sharing pens and discussing their drawings in a mature way in the *travel agents*. Staff have high expectations and consequently behaviour is very good and children are very sure about what they may or may not do. They follow rules and routines very well, lining up sensibly when moving around the building. They sit quietly during whole class teaching sessions and listen carefully to the opinions of their friends. Staff praise children and value what they have to say so all children show high levels of self-esteem. Children are confident and contented and

⁷ The Early Years unit will provide new facilities for reception children and will introduce nursery education for the school.

happily talk with adults and visitors. They take part in assemblies and develop a sense of the school community. They learn about their own and different cultures in practical ways.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn well because staff adopt a systematic approach to teaching basic reading and writing skills.
- Staff offer very good opportunities for children to express their ideas.

Commentary

37. Children are very good listeners and this has a significant impact on their learning. Teaching is very good and children achieve very well, especially in their speaking and listening skills. This is because staff give children many opportunities to talk about their learning in small groups and to the whole class and this helps improve their vocabulary. They act out in role and use many new words in their play. The very good, focused teaching has resulted in most children knowing and using letter sounds in their reading and writing. Children achieve very well in their writing because staff make sure they learn how to form letters correctly. More able children are encouraged and supported to write short phrases and sentences and spell simple words accurately. All children enjoy books, handle them correctly and some are already fluent readers, attempting unknown words with confidence and accuracy.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because staff know exactly what children understand and can do, and build systematically on it.

Commentary

38. Teaching is very good and children achieve very well. Staff place very good emphasis on number skills and mental work and make learning fun, so children are enthusiastic about mathematics. Teachers are very focused on what they want each child to learn. They plan a good range of practical and interesting activities that challenge each individual child. Children play games with good adult support so they learn, for example, to add and subtract through play. More able children can identify and put in order numbers up to 20. They know how to calculate using numbers and the symbols of addition, subtraction and equals. Most children know how to form numbers clearly and accurately. Teacher assessments in children's workbooks show that most have a good understanding of size and pattern. They know and use words such as *above*, *below* and *next to* with good understanding. They recognise two-dimensional shapes correctly and use solid shapes confidently in their play.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to explore the immediate locality and to learn about the natural environment.
- Opportunities to investigate and explore through play are underdeveloped.

Commentary

39. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Staff place good emphasis on the immediate locality so children learn about the area in which they live. They learn how animals cope through the seasons and how weather changes affect them. They learn about parts of plants and welcome the spring by growing their own plants. Visitors, including firefighters, share their work experiences with the children. Children play with sand and water, but activities here are not always sufficiently focused and therefore opportunities to investigate and explore through play are underdeveloped. Children have daily chances to use the computer and know how to use the mouse to play the games linked to mathematics and reading successfully. They enjoy constructing vehicles with commercial equipment and scrap materials. They learn to cut and join materials confidently. They celebrate religious festivals and cultural events as they occur throughout the year.
40. In terms of their **physical development**, it is not possible to make a judgement because there was not enough evidence. Children are taught well to control such things as paintbrushes and pencils. Through the provision of a variety of equipment, children develop skills in manipulating construction equipment and small objects with good control. There are fewer chances to use large apparatus and wheeled toys because of lack of space and so this limits their physical development. The school has a Healthy School Award and actively promotes a healthy lifestyle. Reception children are well included here and enjoy fresh fruit every day. They know when they need to wash their hands and when to wear warm or cool clothing.
41. It is a similar picture in **creative development** where there was not enough evidence to make a judgement. Children are carefully guided by staff when painting pictures of trains, for example. This helps develop their sense of colour and shape. Children develop a good level of skills in creating collage through activities such as the production of stunning sunflowers using tiny plastic beads whose colours overlap to create a strong visual effect. Staff teach children ring games and a good variety of songs and rhymes. They have regular music sessions and children show a good sense of rhythm when they recite repeating phrases in well-known stories. Staff provide good quality opportunities for role-play and dressing-up activities to develop children's imagination. However, the reception classroom is small and this restricts freedom of expression through lack of space.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising due to the high priority the headteacher sets for this subject.
- Pupils achieve very well when speaking in formal situations and when writing from personal experiences.
- Standards in handwriting are not as high as the other aspects of writing.
- The school makes very good use of the high quality opportunities of the EAZ.
- Teachers manage behaviour very effectively but do not use whole class sessions consistently well.
- Achievement in reading is being reduced because the school library is not available for use throughout the school day.

Commentary

42. The 2003 national tests show standards in Year 6 in English as below average compared with all schools but above average compared with schools where pupils have similar backgrounds. The teacher assessments for the current year show that standards have risen since last year and are now average. In Year 2 the national tests in 2003 showed standards in reading and writing as below average compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in reading and above average in writing. As in Year 6, the teacher assessment shows improvement. There has been a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels than expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school because teachers provide work that is matched carefully to their needs. Pupils with full statements of special educational needs achieve very well. Staff have high expectations of their work and make sure that they play a full part in lessons, which raises their self-esteem very effectively. The school supports gifted and talented pupils very effectively, resulting in very good levels of achievements such as winning the competition for Poet Laureate of the EAZ.
43. The inspection confirms the rise in standards since last year in both Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Children enter the school with a higher proportion of speech and language difficulties than usual. By Year 2 pupils listen and speak confidently at the expected level in formal situations. This is due to very good quality opportunities the school provides to develop these skills in situations such as whole school assemblies. Teachers expect pupils to listen carefully to each other and to adults. The talk partners project⁸ develops these skills well during group work. However, teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills during whole class sessions and do not systematically ensure that pupils answer questions at length. Standards in Year 6 in speaking and listening show the same pattern as Year 2. There are still a high proportion of pupils in the junior classes who did not experience the school's infant teaching due to their transfer from another school. Despite this situation, the changes brought about by the headteacher have benefited these pupils and they achieve well. Pupils listen courteously to each other and to adults and speak sensitively and sincerely in formal contexts such as assemblies.
44. Standards in reading are at the expected level in Year 2. As in speaking and listening, this represents good achievement when standards on entry to reception are taken into account. Infant teachers provide a clear framework for developing reading skills and pupils tackle unknown words confidently. They thoroughly enjoy talking about the

⁸ The talk partners project involves pupils working with a partner regularly during lessons to discuss their work and solve problems together.

characters and events in their texts because they receive good quality support in guided reading sessions and because parents support the development of their reading at home. The teacher in Year 1 is particularly skilful in creating a love of literature through her high quality story telling that leaves pupils pleading for more. Standards in Year 6 are at the expected level in reading. The school has worked hard to provide a breadth of texts in literacy sessions. Pupils expect to give their personal responses to their reading because teachers offer them regular opportunities to do this in lessons. The Year 4 teacher is particularly effective in using drama to analyse key events in stories. These pupils contribute sophisticated ideas about what may happen because this teaching has allowed them to understand the feelings of the key characters. By Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' understanding of the use of non-fiction books is at the expected level. However, they are not as sure about their organisation in a library or about choosing these books for individual reading. This is due to the position of the library in the computer suite, which greatly restricts its use during the school day. The school has identified this weakness and the new building includes the provision of new facilities that will be accessible all day.

45. Standards in writing are above the expected level in Year 2. The school has made writing a major focus for development and this is having a very positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school has used the two EAZ projects of 'Immerse in Verse' and 'Inspired to Write'⁹ particularly well and pupils at all stages of their development write with great vigour about their personal experiences. Spelling and grammar are at the same standard, with regular homework supporting these skills. By Year 6 standards in writing are at the expected level. Pupils are particularly good at writing poetry, using subtle phrases to capture feelings and emotions. Throughout the school handwriting standards are at a lower level than other aspects of writing. This is due to the lack of a system for developing this through the school or regular enough opportunities for pupils to practise outside literacy sessions.
46. Teaching is good overall with very good features in Years 1 and 4. Teachers all manage behaviour very well and pupils develop a real love of English through teachers' willingness to express their own opinions about literature. Planning is very detailed and takes into account the different pupils' learning needs very effectively. Teachers evaluate their planning very thoroughly, which ensures that future lessons are carefully based on pupils' previous achievement. Teachers do not use whole class sessions consistently well. Some sessions are too long and there is not enough use of interactive whiteboards to extend pupils' learning styles. Classroom assistants work very well in groups to support learning but do not always play an active part in whole class sessions. Teachers use questioning skills very well in group work but not consistently well in whole class discussions.
47. The headteacher is the co-ordinator and leads this subject very well. Her own love of the subject is evident. Together with her determination to raise standards and her use of the EAZ opportunities, she is ensuring that provision for this subject is systematically getting better. Taking into account the many difficulties the school has tackled over the past years, the level of improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

⁹ The Immerse in Verse project involves pupils in learning different poems or nursery rhymes at home and then reciting them in school. The Inspire to Write project involves a range of different strategies such as writing to famous people, which provides real audiences for pupils' writing.

48. Teachers are good in using writing across the curriculum to extend pupils' skills. They encourage pupils to use their own words when recording their learning in subjects such as science and history. The talking partners work extends across a range of subjects and develops pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively. The headteacher organises assemblies very effectively to ensure pupils receive regular opportunities to develop formal speaking skills to large audiences.

FRENCH

49. The school provides valuable additional learning for Year 5 pupils in a weekly lesson of French as part of the link with a local secondary school. The quality of teaching is excellent and these pupils achieve very well. There is a high emphasis on speaking and listening, which supports language skills very effectively. The great pace set by the teacher, together with her very high expectations, ensure that all pupils thoroughly enjoy her lessons. Pupils use accurate pronunciation of words in exchanges with adults and each other at a much higher level than expected because the teacher steadily builds on skills gained in previous lessons. The regular class teacher joins in enthusiastically in lessons and supports pupils with statements of special educational needs very effectively. These pupils play a full part in lessons. The teacher uses the interactive whiteboard skilfully, which extends pupils' reading of French very effectively. Her regular concentration on counting skills supports numeracy skills very well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 6 in mental mathematics.
- Smaller teaching groups in the junior classes are having a positive impact on standards.
- The well-focused teaching assistant support in the infant classes is having a very positive impact on standards.
- All pupils achieve well because of the good quality teaching.
- Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are very positive so they work hard.
- The leadership and management of mathematics are good.
- The quality and use of assessment data to raise standards are very good but the marking of work is inconsistent.

Commentary

50. The 2003 national tests show standards in Year 2 to be well below average. Compared with similar schools, standards were average. In Year 6 the national tests show standards in mathematics to be above average compared with all schools but well above average compared with schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. There is no consistent trend of girls achieving better than boys. The inspection judges standards in mathematics to be in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6. Standards in Year 2 have risen because of the thorough use of assessment to identify what pupils are finding difficult and to plan work, which helps them improve. Pupils confidently select different strategies for solving problems and use mental mathematics at the expected level. Teaching assistants work very effectively with groups of pupils, which helps them to learn new concepts quickly and make good progress in their mathematical understanding. In Year 6 the impact of the additional pupils from the closing school is still having a negative impact on standards. This year there are more pupils with

special educational needs in mathematics than last year, which explains the difference between last year's national test results and the inspection findings. Pupils' standards in number work are above the expected level. Pupils calculate percentages with accuracy. However, standards in the other aspects are lower and at the level expected for eleven year olds. This is due to the school's emphasis on pupils gaining confidence in handling numbers.

51. Teachers use assessment information well to identify what pupils find difficult and teaching has concentrated on these areas. For example, they use focused blocks of work on understanding how to interpret graphs and daily short burst mental number work. The use of a part time teacher allows the school to teach pupils in single-age groups for mathematics in the junior classes. This is having a positive impact on standards because the smaller teaching groups mean that the teacher is able to spend time helping each pupil.
52. The school has placed an emphasis on teaching number work because many pupils were finding it difficult and, as a result, standards have risen. However, this has resulted in insufficient time being given to other aspects of mathematics, particularly using shape and measuring, which means that pupils are not achieving as well in these areas. The use of calculation is being consistently well taught across the school and having a positive impact on raising standards. Pupils are able to use different strategies to solve mathematical problems because the teachers explain and question pupils effectively. Pupils are given a good range of opportunities to solve word problems, but there are not enough opportunities for them to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other aspects of the subject or to explain their mathematical thinking or give reasons for their answers.
53. The school supports pupils with full statements of special educational needs very well in mathematics, for example through the very effective use of classroom assistants and, as a result, they make very good progress. More able pupils are provided with challenging work which extends their learning, but there are some occasions when these pupils' work is not challenging enough.
54. Teaching is good overall, with excellent features in Year 1 and very good features in Years 4 and 6. This ensures that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. In the excellent and very good teaching, teachers expect pupils to learn quickly and have high expectations of what they can achieve. They set challenging tasks, which are well matched to the pupils' needs and use resources very well. The needs of pupils within each class are well met which means that they steadily build on their learning as they move through the school. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics overall. However, there are some weaknesses in the correct use of terminology in shape and space, which leads to pupils using incorrect terminology. In most lessons the whole class teaching at the beginning and end of the lesson is too long. This means that pupils are not having enough opportunity to record work in mathematics or to apply and practise their skills or extend their understanding. Teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards in mathematics lessons, which combines the learning of ICT and mathematical skills well. Termly and weekly teacher assessment is used very effectively to inform future planning. However, teacher's marking does not provide pupils with a clear enough understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Individual targets are set for pupils in mathematics and shared with parents, but teachers do not ensure

that pupils are given enough responsibility to use them in lessons to improve their own learning.

55. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning in mathematics because teachers make lessons fun, have very good relationships within the classroom and are enthusiastic. Pupils of all abilities respond very positively, concentrate hard and achieve well because they enjoy their work and their successes are celebrated and valued. This contributes effectively to their personal and social development.
56. The quality of leadership and management of mathematics is good. The newly appointed co-ordinator has accurately put in place a very good range of strategies to improve teaching and achievement in mathematics, and knows what needs to be done to raise standards further. She uses assessment information very well to identify where there are gaps in pupils' learning and has worked successfully with teachers to bring about improvements. The co-ordinator tracks pupils' progress well as they move through the school and monitors the support that pupils are given. The school has worked hard to regain the standards of the previous inspection after the fall due to the additional pupils entering the school. The 2003 national tests in Year 6 matched the standards in the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. The use of mathematics across other subjects of the curriculum is now satisfactory which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use mathematics particularly well in science and information communication technology, for example recording results from science investigations on a computer spreadsheet. Pupils use graphs and tables to record information in geography and history and understand the practical uses of mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Teachers have improved the way pupils investigate and experiment and this has a positive impact on their understanding.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy science lessons.
- Opportunities for pupils to express ideas are not consistent in classes.
- The use of ICT to support science is not used consistently across the school.
- Subject leadership and management are good with some very good features.

Commentary

58. Pupils are achieving well and standards are at the expected level for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement on last year's results for Year 6 pupils. All pupils make good progress in remembering and understanding scientific facts. This is because teachers' clear explanations of scientific ideas are based on their good subject knowledge and they place good emphasis in lessons to ensure scientific vocabulary is taught and understood by all. They achieve well in their skills in experimenting because teachers plan lessons well, and make sure the work meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. Those who have special educational needs make particularly good progress

because of the help they receive both from teachers and the strong team of teaching assistants.

59. In lessons, good emphasis is given to investigation and experimentation. In this way pupils' knowledge improves through practical hands-on experiences. In pupils' books and in all lessons observed it is clear that they are now developing their investigation skills well. Prior to experimentation pupils are encouraged to make predictions. They observe what is happening, record their findings and draw conclusions. All teachers insist that pupils write up their findings in their own words, which helps them to remember and understand their findings.
60. Teachers prepare lessons well and make sure that appropriate resources are in place. They explain clearly what pupils are expected to do with the result that all go readily to their tasks. In classes and through discussions with pupils it is clear that they are enthusiastic and excited about their discoveries in science lessons. Their attitude to their work and behaviour in lessons is very good. This is because the activities provided are interesting and challenging.
61. Although pupils have ample opportunities to express their ideas in small groups, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to contribute to whole class discussions so there are some opportunities missed for pupils to consolidate their understanding. Where teaching is very good in the Year 4 / 5 class, pupils are encouraged to talk in pairs during whole class teaching time and explain their ideas to the whole group. For example, one pupil in Year 4 explained in depth that 'the speed at which a sledge moves depends on the level of friction'. The ideas generated by this supported learning for all.
62. In Year 6 there are good links with ICT. Pupils carry out experiments on the forces of upthrust and gravity, recording their findings in newtons. They later record their results on the computer and the information discovered supports discussion and data analysis well. However, this good practice is not used consistently across the school.
63. The subject leader has worked hard to improve the way science is taught in the school. She has a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses and leads by example in her teaching. She has been particularly effective in developing monitoring strategies, keeping a careful eye on teachers' planning and pupils' work. She identifies key weaknesses, which she then includes in future school improvement planning. She has recently set up good assessment systems, but these are not yet working effectively across the school. Older pupils have good chances to improve their science knowledge through the homework club. Good use has been made of the EAZ initiatives and the local secondary schools to support staff development, which has improved teacher knowledge and understanding. The school has sustained the standards in Year 2 since the previous inspection despite the additional pupils entering the school but has not yet regained the standards in Year 6.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standard are below national expectations overall by Years 2 and 6 and achievement is inconsistent.
- The school has prioritised raising standards in English, mathematics and science and has clear plans to extend this to ICT.

- ICT is used well to enhance learning in science and mathematics.
- A strong partnership with the EAZ ensures that resources are improving and staff expertise is developing.
- The computer club extends pupils' skills well.
- Assessment systems are not yet in place.

Commentary

64. Standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are below the expected levels and pupils do not make the expected level of progress as they move through the school. This is because the school has focused on raising standards in English, mathematics and science since it received a high proportion of pupils from a closing school. It has clear plans to transfer the strategies used to raise standards in their prioritised subjects across to ICT.
65. Achievement in some aspects of the ICT curriculum is satisfactory. However, progress is not consistent across all the different strands of this subject. The co-ordinators have identified all the gaps in their software to ensure that they raise standards across the ICT curriculum. It has made effective arrangement with a local secondary school to extend older pupils' experience of working with different types of software. By Year 2 pupils use the mouse confidently to move pictures on the screen and change the size and colour of words, but they cannot access computer programs or retrieve and save their work on their own. Year 3 pupils work effectively with e-mails because they have a link with a school in another part of the country and regularly communicate with their e-mail partners. By Year 6 pupils use computers well for word processing and add simple graphics and sound to their work. However, these pupils have not had enough systematic experience over time to give them enough skills to tackle new projects. In Year 6 pupils confidently create spreadsheets to record results from a science investigation, but they are not challenged to use the computer to interpret and interrogate the information.
66. No ICT teaching was observed in the infant classes. Teaching in the junior classes is satisfactory overall. Teachers now use national guidance effectively to plan lessons. The lessons observed were well planned and organised, but all pupils carried out the same activity. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported to achieve what was expected, which allowed them to make good progress, but the level of work did not challenge some more able pupils and they did not make enough progress. Teachers extend pupils' understanding of ICT well when they include the use of computers in mathematics and science.
67. The school makes good use of the EAZ opportunities to extend its provision in ICT. There is a considerable improvement in the number of interactive whiteboards in the school, resulting in every teacher now having one in their classroom. The co-ordinators are working hard with EAZ personnel to extend staff expertise. This is having a positive impact but teachers' expertise on the interactive whiteboards is inconsistent. Some teachers use it very effectively, using multi-media presentations, which greatly contribute to pupils' learning. However, other staff miss opportunities to use it to reinforce and extend learning in ICT. Teachers work well with the part-time ICT technician. Teachers use his skills effectively to ensure that computers all work properly in lessons and no time is wasted because of technical problems. The school uses the expertise of a visiting specialist well to provide a good quality after-school club. This extends and enriches the school's ICT provision well. Pupils enjoy the opportunities it provides and achieve well, for example when using computer animation to create moving pictures.

68. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Co-ordinators plan to use the benefits of the new building to extend the use of the ICT suite across the school day. They are aware of the need for establishing effective assessment systems in order to track individual pupils' progress across the different aspects of the ICT curriculum. The school is extending its provision for more able pupils through new links with the local secondary. Standards are lower than those identified in the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. Teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to use computers to extend their numeracy and science skills, for example by using the computer to record results of science investigations. Pupils have some opportunity to apply word processing and data handling across the curriculum, in subjects such as geography and history, but this is currently underdeveloped. Pupils are not developing their literacy skills systematically through ICT and do not consistently use computers to edit and draft their work. Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' learning through ICT in art and design.

HUMANITIES

It was not possible to make overall judgements about these subjects.

70. In **geography** a scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations in Year 2 and 6 show that standards are at the expected level in both these age groups. Teachers use the 'Barnaby Bear'¹⁰ project well in the infant classes to develop pupils' understanding of what other countries are like. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of their local area and use correct geographical terminology to describe some of the important features because local study is taught well. Teachers use a wide range of resources and plan exciting activities. By Year 6 pupils use geographical words accurately and relate the way people live to the physical features of the environment. They use a good variety of sources of evidence to answer geographical questions. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to develop their map skills throughout the school and therefore by Year 6 some pupils find it hard to use and interpret maps. Very good links are made between the teaching of geography and history, which helps pupils to understand the relationship between these two subjects. In Year 6 teaching is good because resources, including the interactive whiteboard, are used very effectively and the teacher explains and questions pupils carefully to extend their learning. The school now ensures that the full geography curriculum is taught, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
71. In **history** a scrutiny of pupils' work and a sample of lessons show that standards are at the expected level in both Year 2 and Year 6. By Year 2 pupils know an appropriate level of key historical facts, such as the Fire of London, and develop the expected level of understanding of chronology through the use of historical timelines. They describe the past and present correctly in contexts such as comparing the seaside in Victorian times with today. By Year 6 pupils have the expected level of understanding of some of the important events in British history and justify and give reasons for their opinions. Pupils use correct historical terms and extend their use of historical sources of evidence well because the teacher provides a good range of evidence for them to analyse. Features identified in the teaching observed include good subject knowledge, the effective use of artefacts and resources and a good level of challenge in questioning. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to think about people's feelings and emotions during historical events, which contribute well to their personal and social development and help them develop a good understanding of British culture. The links between learning in history and literacy are particularly effective in promoting pupils' interest and understanding and in developing writing skills.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. **Design and technology** was sampled by looking at displays, pupils' work and talking with pupils. Pupils in infant classes develop a good understanding of different ways of joining materials when they carry out activities such as making finger puppets and designing and making swings. Older pupils in Year 4 develop their skills effectively by making detailed designs of chairs for different purposes, highlighting the resources and materials needed. Pupils in Year 6 develop an appropriate level of understanding of design skills through interesting projects such as designing fairground rides and making slippers. Pupils' work is of a good standard. All learn to evaluate their work and to use their mathematical knowledge to ensure accuracy in measurement. Pupils say they enjoy design and technology and teachers give them many chances to proudly show their work

¹⁰ The Barnaby Bear project involves pupils taking a bear away with them on trips and holidays and then reporting back to the school the experiences he had on his travels.

to others. The subject leader has worked hard to improve standards. She has attended courses, improved the quality and range of resources and disseminated information effectively to all staff. These strategies have had a positive impact on teaching and learning.

73. **Art and design** was sampled by looking at displays and talking to pupils in the one lesson observed. Pupils enjoy art and they willingly help and support each other in lessons. Teachers use this subject well across the curriculum. For example, to improve historical and geographical understanding, Year 6 pupils examine photographs of major landmarks in the locality and reproduce them well in art lessons. In Year 2 pupils enjoy learning about changes to seaside resorts and develop good skills of drawing through the use of photographs. Pupils have the expected level of understanding about the work of different artists such as El Greco and Van Gogh and reproduce work effectively in a similar style. Pupils in Year 5 develop their skills well when they work outdoors with natural materials and keep photographic records of their creations. Year 6 pupils develop appropriate skills in three-dimensions when they experiment in trying out different ways of making hats. The school has a good quality art club and about 12 pupils benefit from expert tuition each week. They develop good skills in drawing portraits using a range of materials such as pastels and chalk. They have recently made an interesting set of masks in the Venetian style.
74. **Music** was sampled by observing one lesson, talking with pupils and observing them performing in assemblies. In lessons they develop good quality listening skills and learn to differentiate between a solo performance and a duet. Pupils listen to music each day during assemblies and sing audibly and clearly. They particularly enjoy singing in rounds. The school links music effectively to productions in the school that involve the majority of pupils. The recent production of 'Joseph and his Multi-coloured Dreamcoat' involved pupils well in learning a wide range of songs. Pupils develop their social skills effectively when they take part in regular activities outside school such as a music festival at the nearby Hylton Castle. Pupils enjoy miming and dancing to music and perform with true feeling. A minority of pupils began instrumental tuition through external funding.
75. The school's provision for **physical education** was sampled through talking to pupils and looking at teachers' planning. Photographs of pupils engaged in sporting and gymnastics activities were seen and observation was made of games after school and a dance lesson funded through teachers working through the EAZ. In the dance lesson pupils moved with very good control, balance and an awareness of space. They co-operated well with partners and small groups and showed very clearly that they could work in teams. They responded to the music with good rhythm and sensitivity. Teachers' planning shows that the curriculum includes gymnastics, athletics and games. Junior pupils enjoy swimming lessons each year at a secondary school and the majority succeed in achieving their 25 metres certificate. There is a good range of lunchtime and after-school sports and physical activities for pupils of all ages. Here, pupils benefit from the expert tuition of a qualified coach.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

76. It was not possible to make any overall judgements about this subject. The school has ensured that it covers this aspect of the curriculum across other subjects such as science. There is a high emphasis on personal development throughout the school. Pupils respond very well to these opportunities and develop a good level of awareness of their

responsibilities to the school community. The school has effectively introduced the use of a school council and councillors are very proud to represent the school. There are clear systems for pupils to communicate their views to the council and meetings are held regularly. The headteacher ensures that the councillors extend their formal speaking skills well because they talk to the rest of the school in assemblies to explain the decisions they have made. The school is now in a good position to extend the work of the council by extending the membership from Year 6 pupils to younger pupils through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress in this aspect of their education because the school has high expectations of their personal development and supports them sensitively when they are expressing their views.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

