

INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Whitnash, Leamington Spa

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125719

Headteacher: Mr J Goggin

Lead inspector: Mr A C Matthews

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 April 2004

Inspection number: 257750

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	221
School address:	Rowley Road Whitnash Leamington Spa Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV31 2LJ
Telephone number:	01926 427552
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Malone
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a voluntary aided Catholic school which has close links with the parish community. The school is the same size as other primary schools with 221 pupils on roll (109 boys and 112 girls) taught in nine classes. Mobility is slightly below average - 5 pupils joined the school and 12 left other than at the normal times. The children have attended a large number of different playgroups, nursery and kindergartens. Ten per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is above the national average but only four pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Eight percent of pupils have free school meals. There are 30 pupils on the register of special educational needs, of whom two have statements of special need. These figures are broadly in line with the national average. The social characteristics of school's catchment area are average. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003 and is involved in the leadership development strategy for primary schools in the LEA. The school has a popular 'before and after' school care club and has undergone extensive building work to improve its accommodation since the last inspection. Children's attainment on entry is average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19410	Andrew Matthews	Lead inspector	Special educational needs, mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology
9837	Roy Walsh	Lay inspector	
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	English, geography, history, physical education
29989	Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, art and design, music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Joseph's is a very good school with some outstanding features that is very well regarded by both parents and pupils. Very good leadership and management have been instrumental in helping the school make good improvements since it was last inspected. The quality of education is very good and pupils of all abilities achieve very well throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's management is most effective because all staff have a thorough understanding of their roles and how they can help the school improve further
- Teaching is consistently good and ensures that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are fully included in all activities and achieve very well
- There is a very strong and positive climate, reflected in the very good relationships between adults
- Pupils are enthusiastic, very well behaved and hard working
- The school curriculum is very good, effectively planned and very well informed by the very good assessments of pupils' attainment and progress
- Teaching assistants are well qualified and provide very good support and care to individuals and groups of pupils
- The school lacks outside space and a covered area for the reception children

The school has improved well since it was last inspected in 1998 and has built effectively on the good standards described. The carefully planned response to issues from the last report has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, assessment, the curriculum, the school's leadership and management and pupils' achievement. National Curriculum test results have risen and key issues in information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology have been well addressed. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and other co-ordinators has been effective in raising pupils' achievement. The effectiveness of the governing body has improved even further and they now make a very good contribution to the school's development, with governors regularly visiting the classrooms and meeting subject co-ordinators.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Throughout the school pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are working very hard and achieving very well. This is particularly so in the acquisition of the skills of numeracy and literacy. Children enter the school with average attainment and, because of the consistently good teaching and very good support they receive, they achieve very well in the Foundation Stage. The great majority will reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year and a significant proportion will exceed them. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, art and design and physical education, pupils' attainment is above average and in ICT and design and technology it is average. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science, art and design, history and physical education. In ICT and design and technology, pupils' attainment is average. Higher-achieving pupils are consistently challenged and those with special

educational needs and English as an additional language are very well supported. All of these groups achieve very well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good, and often very good, and leads to pupils making very good progress through the school. The very good support of the experienced classroom assistants has a marked impact on the individuals and small groups with whom they work. The school has developed very good assessment procedures that are used to ensure that the curriculum is accurately matched to the needs of individual pupils. In general, pupils achieve very well because relationships are very good, the teaching is consistently challenging to all groups and the pupils are extremely enthusiastic learners. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and consistently inform them how they can improve their work and move towards individual targets. **Overall, the quality of teaching is good.**

The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements and is very good. It benefits from a very good range of visits and extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good and contributes significantly to these pupils' achievement. The school's accommodation has improved significantly since the last inspection but the youngest pupils lack a decent sized outside area and this limits opportunities for their physical, social and creative development. Resources are good in English, mathematics, ICT, physical education and history. The school benefits from its very good partnership with parents and effective links with the community and the local group of schools. The school provides a very good level of care for all its pupils and makes very good use of outside agencies to support pupils with specific learning difficulties.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher's leadership is excellent; his experienced deputy supports him very well. He has a very clear vision of what needs to be done and very high aspirations for every one of the pupils. He leads by example and has a very strong determination to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all the school's activities and achieve to their full potential. Leadership is a great strength of the school and has helped it make the good all-round improvement since the last inspection. The school's constant evaluation of all its practices is helping it to refine its provision even further. The school is managed very well, with subject co-ordinators playing a particularly effective part in its development. Governors give very good support to the school and fulfil all their statutory duties. They are very experienced and use their strengths very effectively when working with the school in planning its development and evaluating its achievements. The school provides very good in-service training for its entire staff that is meaningfully linked with targets in its development plan and in its performance management programme.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are very happy with the school's provision and pupils greatly enjoy their learning experiences.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Address the lack of a suitable outdoor space and a covered area for the Foundation Stage as detailed in the present school development plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils are achieving very well as they move through the school. At the end of the Foundation Stage, children's attainment is above average in all six areas of learning. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make a very good start to their education in the reception class.
- National Curriculum test results have been consistently high in recent years.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve very well against their prior attainment.
- Pupils are now achieving well in ICT because the teaching is consistently good.
- Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.9 (17.2)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.5 (16.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.6 (18.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The improvement in Year 2 results over the last three years has been in line with the national upward trend and pupils' attainment has been significantly above the national average during that time. The results for 2003 show that the pupils' attainment compared to all schools was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, pupils' attainment was also well above average in writing and mathematics but very high in reading, being in the top five per cent in the country. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels was also well above average but average in mathematics. Over the last three years, girls have slightly outperformed boys in reading and writing but boys have outperformed girls in mathematics. The teacher assessment of science showed that pupils' attainment was above average, both in the proportion gaining the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.5 (28.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.9 (29.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.9 (29.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Pupils' results at the end of Year 6 over the last three years have been consistently well above average overall, with mathematics being the strongest of the three subjects. The improvement trend is in line with the national average. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, pupils' attainment was well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. When compared to all schools, English was above average, science well above average and in mathematics attainment was very high, being in the top five per cent in the country. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels was well above average in mathematics, above average in science but average in English. The main reason for the comparative weakness in the English results was the much higher than average proportion of pupils with specific language difficulties in this group. However, because of the noted decline in its results, the school carried out a detailed analysis of the English papers and identified areas to develop in its provision for writing. This weakness has been thoroughly addressed this year, with pupils now achieving very well in this area.

3. When the children enter the school, evidence shows that there is a broad range of ability but that attainment overall is average. The very good provision in the Foundation Stage enables the children to make a good start to school and achieve very well in all areas of learning. The great majority of the children attain the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of reception with a significant proportion exceeding them.
4. In the present Year 2, standards have improved since the last inspection and are now well above average in reading, writing, speaking and listening and mathematics, and above average in science. These pupils are achieving very well overall because the teacher plans consistently challenging work that successfully builds on the pupils' prior learning. While the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels is comparatively lower in mathematics, the higher attaining pupils are being very well challenged and achieving very well. At the end of Year 6, standards are again well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. There has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of writing in the present Year 6. Throughout the school, standards in science, art and physical education are above average because teachers consistently build upon the pupils' previous learning experiences. By the end of Year 6, standards are also above average in history where visits and visitors make a marked contribution to the pupils' attainment. In design and technology, which was a key issue at the last inspection, standards are now average, with pupils having a much improved understanding of the design and evaluation processes. There has been a very good improvement overall in the school's provision for ICT; standards are average and pupils are achieving well because of the consistently good teaching they receive. Although it was not possible to make a judgement on standards in music, standards in singing and in instrumental playing are high and contribute significantly towards pupils' spiritual development. Standards in other subjects inspected are average.
5. The school has high expectations that pupils of all abilities will achieve to their full potential. This is particularly applicable to pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. It is successful in reaching this aim because it makes very good provision for the individual needs of all its pupils. In lessons, the teachers and teaching assistants interact very well with these two groups of pupils. They ensure that the pupils are fully integrated into the work of the class and that extra support provided focuses on challenging these pupils to do their very best. The planning and assessment is particularly effective. Gifted and talented pupils are also achieving very well because their needs are clearly identified and appropriately challenging work is set for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes are excellent because of the quality of teaching and the positive climate for learning created by the school.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved and is now very good.
- Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities, which develops their confidence, independence and self-esteem.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils have led to improvements in pupils' personal development.
- The majority of the reception children achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Foundation Stage and many exceed them.

Commentary

6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, greatly enjoy being at school and strive hard to achieve the targets set for them. Virtually all pupils approach their lessons with great enthusiasm, concentrate very well on their learning and behave very well both in lessons and around the school. Playtimes and lunchtimes are positive, social occasions where friendships and confidence are developed. The school sets very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and works hard to promote good relationships, both of which create a positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils behave very well in lessons because they enjoy the challenge of their work and respond positively to the strategies to reward their endeavours. Behaviour support plans are effective for the small number of pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. These plans ensure that any incidents are dealt with in a consistent way and that all concerned know and understand the individual pupil's targets for future improvement. Some bullying has occurred in the past, but the school takes these incidents very seriously and deals with them quickly, involving parents if necessary. There have been no exclusions from the school in the present year.
7. Pupils' personal development is managed very well. The very good relationships help pupils to share any worries or concerns with staff. Pupils are eager to show initiative and take on extra duties and responsibilities. They talk proudly of their roles as class monitors or members of the school council. Teaching assistants give invaluable help to pupils, often in small groups, and all staff work hard to ensure that all pupils learn to their capability. Individual education plans, which are developed with parental help, are provided for pupils with specific learning needs and help these pupils succeed and develop strong self-esteem.
8. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Its strength lies in the school's strong Catholic and caring ethos generated throughout the school. Pupils treat each other with respect and are given very good opportunities to develop their self-knowledge through reflection in religious education, circle time and assemblies. The presentation of certificates in front of the whole school does much to raise pupils' confidence and feeling of self-worth. The teaching staff make lessons fun and it was noticeable that a number of instances during the inspection generated a true sense of awe and wonder in pupils. A good example was noted in science, when pupils talked of how they had set up a microscope, linked to a computer, to record a strawberry decaying over a period of time.
9. The children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage because the adults have high expectations that they will behave very well, play and learn well, both independently and together. The children develop very good relationships with the adults who work with them and with each other. The arrangements for the reception children to be introduced to the full school day mean that they come into school happily and confidently. The children enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic to learn and concentrate very well and persevere to complete tasks.
10. All staff promote a strong moral code and pupils appreciate the time teachers take to discuss what is right and wrong and the impact of their actions on others. They also like the opportunities provided during circle time and personal, social and health education lessons to discuss problems or gain understanding of different views and feelings. The school engenders a strong community spirit and many opportunities are provided for pupils to work in pairs and small groups. This approach is fostered in all years, and pupils throughout the school collaborate in a very natural way, showing patience and tolerance towards each other. The many extra-curricular activities and the annual residential visit for Years 6 help pupils to develop independence, confidence and relationships in a less formal setting.
11. Pupils have a very good appreciation of cultural diversity. The school celebrates major religious festivals and is sensitive to pupils' own religious observances. Visits to local museums, theatres and places of interest are built into the planned curriculum. Pupils learn to respect

other faiths and the Inter-Cultural Support Service helps to promote appreciation of cultural differences and values.

Attendance

12. The levels of attendance at the school are well above the national average. This is mainly due to the excellent attitudes to learning displayed by the pupils, who genuinely enjoy being at school and value the progress they are making. There have been no exclusions in the last two years

Attendance in the year 2002-2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.2	School data :	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are consistently good in all phases of the school. The school's assessment procedures are very good. The curriculum is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently good through the school.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language has a very positive impact on their learning.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in the pupils' learning.
- Assessment procedures are very thorough and used very well to inform both the curriculum and teachers' target setting.
- Teachers' planning and marking are very good.
- The teaching of the creative and physical development in the Foundation Stage is limited by the lack of a covered area and a discrete play area.

Commentary

13. The good teaching of the reception children has a number of strengths, enabling the children to make a good start to school and achieve very well. The teacher plans the learning activities very carefully to ensure that there are opportunities for the children to have access to all six areas of learning with a strong emphasis on linking closely with the literacy and numeracy strategies for the higher attaining children. The teaching of basic skills is very well planned and organised and this results in the children achieving very well in reading and number work. The teaching assistant supports individual and group activities very effectively and makes a significant contribution to the children's behaviour and the way they concentrate on the carefully planned and challenging learning tasks. A number of volunteer helpers regularly help in the reception class, and all the adults help the children to feel secure, gain confidence and communicate well with others. Very good arrangements check what the children know, understand and can do, and the information is very well used to plan the next steps children need to take in their learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (7%)	11 (24%)	24 (52%)	8 (17%)	0	0	0

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

14. Pupils of all abilities, and particularly the higher-attaining pupils, are well challenged and achieve very well, especially in literacy and numeracy where the quality of teaching is consistently good. For mathematics, Year 6 pupils are set into three ability groups. The teaching is consistently very good and sometimes excellent and is resulting in a significant proportion of pupils attaining very high standards. Throughout the school, the needs of the lower attaining pupils are likewise very well met through the use of national literacy and numeracy intervention programmes. These pupils are identified in the very thorough assessment procedures that the school carries out at regular intervals. Extra support is given where the need is identified and outside expertise brought in when appropriate. Teachers' planning is very thorough and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teachers evaluate pupils' progress very carefully. The consistency of this cycle of high quality teaching followed by accurate evaluation of learning fed back into planning which enables the pupils to achieve so well. Teachers' marking is also very good and gives pupils a clear understanding of how they can improve. Evidence from pupils' books shows the positive impact of marking, particularly in the development of pupils' writing.
15. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are high because teachers create very regular opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in lessons. The quality of teachers' questioning is particularly good and encourages pupils to share their ideas. In the most effective cases, the teachers reinterpret pupils' responses so that all pupils benefit from their peers' answers. Teachers are also particularly good at allowing extra time for pupils with special educational needs to formulate their answers. As a result, pupils are very confident in lessons and extremely enthusiastic about their learning. Concluding sessions at the end of lessons are carefully planned to assess pupils' understanding of their new learning. In all lessons the management of pupils' behaviour is very good, ensuring that maximum use is made of the time. As a result, pupils produce large volumes of work, giving them adequate opportunities to practise and reinforce the new skills they have learnt. Teaching assistants are used particularly well to work with groups of pupils and also with individual pupils with identified learning and behavioural problems. As a result, these pupils are very well included in lessons and achieve very well. Excellent systems ensure that all pupils are fully included in all activities; much of this is due to the very strong working partnership between the teachers and teaching assistants. Homework is set regularly and has a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics where skills learnt are constantly revised. Resources are used well in English, mathematics, science and ICT to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. The school makes very good use of the ICT teaching assistant who gives good support to teachers and to small groups in the ICT suite.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and receive very good support. Teachers and teaching assistants effectively develop these pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' individual education plans are used well to plan work for these pupils. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are also very well met by teachers' careful planning and by the well focused support of volunteer parents, teaching assistants and the expertise of a very experienced language assistant.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Additional activities enrich the curriculum very well. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for literacy and numeracy is very good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good
- Very good curriculum planning across the school identifies relevant cross-curricular links which help pupils apply their skills and knowledge effectively
- Innovative practical opportunities make pupils very enthusiastic learners
- Personal, social and health education is very good
- The school's staffing, accommodation and resources contribute well to the very good quality of education
- There are limitations in the outside provision for the reception children

Commentary

17. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught effectively and the curriculum is very well balanced and has good breadth. Good progress has been made since the last report. The school has implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies very well and linked pupils' learning across subjects to raise standards. Innovative ideas support the development of other subjects. Provision for ICT has improved from the last inspection when it was a key issue. The good use of new ICT resources enables pupils to have frequent access to computers and other equipment to support learning. This is raising standards. History has a high priority. Visitors lead theme days with staff; for example, to explore life in Tudor times. This brings history to life, involving pupils in dramatic and practical activities that support their learning well. Provision for sport enables pupils to become competent team players. Coventry City Football Club supports after school training sessions for boys and girls, and the school has a successful record of participation in competitive matches.
18. The richness and variety of curriculum experiences promote the school's excellent ethos and pupils are eager researchers and enthusiastic learners. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is now very good. The key issue raised in the last inspection to implement sex education has been addressed in full. Policies are implemented effectively and pupils have a very good understanding of issues such as drugs awareness and healthy eating.
19. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive the support they need and are fully included in all activities. Many achieve very well in relation to their starting points because staff adapt work to ensure pupils achieve their targets. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and make valuable contributions to these pupils' learning.
20. The curriculum is enriched with initiatives such as the 'Fit for Learning' project, which engages pupils in regular physical exercise and through competitions. The school has recently won two regional awards for poetry and stories. This has raised the self-esteem of pupils, influenced interest in writing styles and improved pupils' confidence to write independently.
21. The school has a good number of teachers and teaching assistants. Well focused in-service training ensures all staff receive the support they need to build on their skills and knowledge. Resources are good overall and the school is now well resourced to deliver the planned curriculum for teaching ICT. It also has a new bright, welcoming and well-stocked library that provides good facilities for personal study and group work. There are two new purpose-built classrooms for the oldest pupils giving them a workmanlike and positive learning environment.
22. The very good provision for the Foundation Stage means that children make a very good start to their education. The classroom is well organised and provides a vibrant and interesting environment for learning. Because opportunities are very limited if the weather is hot or rainy, the school has recognised the need to develop a discrete outdoor area.

Care, guidance and support

Pupil's care, welfare, and health and safety are very good. Provision for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good. Involvement of pupils in the work of the school is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a caring and secure environment where all pupils feel equally valued.
- The advice and guidance available to pupils supports their learning and personal development very well.
- The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school's work and development.
- Induction arrangements are good.

Commentary

23. The staff have worked hard to provide pupils with a calm environment in which they are able to enjoy and concentrate on lessons. Staff provide good role models. Teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors know the children and their families well and provide good support to individual pupils. The school's child protection procedures are fully in place. Staff are aware of the importance of child protection, and update training has been completed. The before and after school 'Kids Club' is very well organised, appreciated by parents and compliments the work of the school very effectively. The school is working towards a Healthy School Award and promotes a healthy lifestyle by encouraging pupils to eat fresh fruit at break times and to have access to water throughout the school day. The school is also following a 'fit for learning' programme, in which pupils take a short time out of long learning sessions to exercise and redress the balance of physical inactivity. The pupils agree that they enjoy these short sessions and think they are a great help to their concentration and work output
24. Pupils' academic progress and their personal development are monitored and supported well. Assessment is used very well in teachers' planning and pupils know their own individual targets. Teaching assistants provide very good support to teachers and pupils. This has a very positive impact on the standards achieved. Pupils with special educational needs or those experiencing emotional difficulties are particularly well monitored and cared for. Parents are involved in the development of their children's individual education plans and this helps to ensure a continuity of learning between school and home. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language receive very good support and, as a result, achieve very well both academically and in the development of their speaking and listening skills. Individual targets, both academic and personal, are allocated to each pupil in the school and are monitored and updated on a regular basis
25. The school has good arrangements for reception children starting school. The arrangements for the day-to-day exchange of information between parents, carers and the school staff are good, and the children leave school safely in the care of a known adult. Pupils who join the school at other times are allocated special friends who help them settle quickly into the life of the school.
26. All pupils, and particularly class representatives, hold the work of the school council in high regard. Their peers democratically elect pupils each year, and the school takes the views of the council seriously. Recently, the council suggested the need for quiet areas for each playground. The one created for the infant playground has been a great success and they are now planning one for the junior playground. It has also been instrumental in ensuring that Year 6 has its own common room for their use at lunchtimes. Pupils are also responsible for ensuring that there is no litter in and around the school buildings. It was notable that, almost without exception, the survey of pupils' views indicated that they greatly enjoyed being at school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with its parents and the community are very good. Links with other schools are good.

Commentary

- Parents hold the school in very high regard and many help with school activities.
- Links with parents support pupils' learning and the progress they make.
- Links with the local community enrich the curriculum provide by the school.
- The school works very well in partnership with parents to ensure that the children have a very good start to school life.

Commentary

27. Parents have great confidence in the ability of the school to meet the needs of their children. The pre-inspection meeting and parental questionnaire indicated that, almost without exception, parents felt that teaching in the school is good, and that their children like being at school and are making good progress. All of the parents returning the questionnaire believed that the school is well led and managed and that behaviour in the school is good. Inspection findings support all these views. A very small number of parents had concerns about bullying and the quality of information on their children's progress. A small amount of bullying has occurred in the past but the school has dealt with it quickly and effectively and teachers are extremely vigilant on this issue. The school provides good quality information on pupils' learning through annual progress reports and parents' evenings. This detailed information, including future targets for their children to work towards and curriculum booklets for each year group, is much appreciated by the majority of parents.
28. The school has a very active parent teacher association that arranges fund raising and social events, both for the school and the local community. A number of parents and member of the local community are generous in offering help with supervision on out of school visits, helping in classes and running after school clubs. The before and after school 'Kids Club' provide very good extended support at the beginning and the end of the school day and contributes well to the achievement the pupils make.
29. The school has developed good links with its main secondary school, Trinity Technology College. Joint school projects in mathematics, English and science give Year 6 pupils added confidence about moving to their new school. The college also supports the school's ICT facilities by seconding students to work alongside the pupils in their computer work.
30. The very good partnership between the parents and the school gives the children in the reception class a good start to school and makes a significant contribution to the progress and achievement made by the children. The parents are given clear guidelines on areas to help their children with at home and this they do with commitment and consistency. A good number of parents and grandparents help out on a regular basis in the reception class and this adds to the breadth of experiences that the school provides for the children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance is very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The leadership of key staff is very good and management is very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher succeeds most effectively in enriching the pupils' learning experiences and improving the school's provision since the last inspection.
- The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff has ensured that pupils' achievement has improved and that the excellent ethos permeates all aspects of school life.

- Governors have a wealth of experience and are very knowledgeable about the school's performance.
- The school has very good self-evaluation procedures and tracks pupils' progress very carefully.

Commentary

31. The leadership and management of the school have improved markedly in all areas. Governors meet all statutory requirements and provide very good support, making a major contribution to its management and development. The combination of information gleaned from governor visits and from the headteacher's detailed termly reports, gives a very secure appreciation of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to be improved. This information is used most effectively when the school improvement plan is drawn up. Governors have a very good understanding of the end of year targets for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils and their progress towards those targets. They also receive information about the results of standardised assessments for other year groups. Very good progress has been made in the development of the link governor initiative. Information from regular meetings between individual governors and subject co-ordinators ensures that the governing body is now well informed about standards and developments in all areas of the curriculum. The school's target setting and tracking systems are very thorough. Information from regular meetings between the headteacher, deputy headteacher and class teachers about individual children is regularly shared and successful interventionist strategies used when required.
32. The headteacher has worked very hard and most effectively to improve the school's provision since the last inspection. He provides excellent leadership for the school and is extremely well respected by governors, staff, pupils and parents. He has developed a most effective staff team that puts the raising of pupils' achievement at the forefront of the school's work. He liaises extremely closely with the deputy and together they provide a very clear vision for the school so that all staff know exactly what they are working towards. He leads the curriculum development extremely well and has implemented initiatives to ensure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are successfully supported and challenged in all areas of their learning. This work is aided by the school's very effective target setting and tracking systems which enable the senior managers of the school to keep a very close watch over the achievement of every pupil in the school. The school has an excellent ethos and is a highly respected and well ordered community in which pupils feel secure and valued.
33. The management of the school is very good. All members of staff have a clear understanding of how the school is expected to run from day to day and carry out this policy in a consistent fashion. The role of the co-ordinators, which was a weakness at the time of the last inspection, has been particularly carefully developed and in all subjects experienced teachers are developing their areas of responsibility with flair and commitment. Co-ordinators are observant and perceptive and use the results from regular formal and informal monitoring visits to identify strengths and weaknesses in their subject. A real strength of the school is the speed with which it identifies and addresses individual weaknesses. This was clearly seen in the school's response to weaknesses in pupils' writing.
34. Co-ordination of the school's special educational needs provision is also very good. The co-ordinator works closely with other teachers in drawing up individual education plans for these pupils. Every term she discusses the progress of all pupils in the school with their teachers to ensure that the needs of those pupils on the register of special needs and those giving concern are consistently addressed. Similarly the co-ordination of pupils with English as an additional language is very effectively organised, enabling these pupils to achieve very well not only in the acquisition of English language skills but in all areas of the curriculum.
35. The school has developed comprehensive self-evaluation procedures, which it uses most effectively to plan its priorities. The views of staff, governors, parents and pupils are carefully considered. These, together with information from the school's monitoring systems, enable the school to set very specific targets for its improvement plan. These are having a direct and

positive impact on pupils' achievement. The three year subject development cycle works extremely well and offers enough flexibility to ensure that any immediate needs can be addressed. New staff are very well supported, quickly initiated into the school's working practices and speedily become an effective member of the team. The school is particularly good at supporting and developing teachers new to the profession. Performance management is very well implemented and cohesively linked to developments in the school development plan. This maximises the impact of individual initiatives. The school rightly prides itself on its inclusivity and its support for individual pupils. Teaching assistants give particularly good support to these pupils and their work is made more effective by their very regular training and encouragement to further develop their professional careers.

36. The school manages its budget very effectively. Funding per child is below the national average and the school applies the principles of best value very well to all decisions. As a result, the school is able to maintain a good staffing ratio, which has a direct impact on pupils' progress. The school has budgeted for a small carry-forward into the next school year. This will mainly be taken up for the planned construction of a discrete play area and covered area for the Foundation Stage.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	468015
Total expenditure	453831
Expenditure per pupil	1965

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	38132
Balance carried forward to the next	14184

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. The quality of provision for each of the areas of learning is very good and has improved since the last inspection. When the children enter the school, the baseline assessments show that the overall attainment of the children is average. The great majority of children attain the early learning goals in all six areas of learning and a significant proportion exceeds them.
38. The teaching of the reception children is consistently good with many strong features. As a result, the children make a very good start to school, are very enthusiastic learners, and achieve very well. The teacher and her assistants plan the learning activities very carefully to ensure that children have regular access to all six areas of learning and with a special emphasis on the areas of language and mathematical development. The teaching of basic skills is very well planned and this results in the children achieving very well in the developing the skills for reading, writing and number. The classroom assistants effectively support individual and group activities and makes a very significant contribution to helping the children to behave well and concentrate on their set tasks. All the adults help the children to feel secure, gain confidence and communicate well with others. Very good arrangements check what the children know, understand and can do and the information is used very effectively to plan the next steps children need to take in their learning. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. The teacher in charge works well with her colleague to promote the provision and development of the curriculum for the children. She has a clear vision as to how it can be further improved through, for example, the development of a dedicated and purpose built outdoor learning area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The quality of provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children develop a very good understanding of how to behave and look after themselves in school
- There are high expectations that the children will concentrate, persevere and try hard to complete challenging tasks

Commentary

39. The children settle quickly and happily when they come into school because all the adults make sure that they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. As a result, the children develop very positive attitudes to taking care of themselves and to their learning. They know the routines well on entering the classroom, such as putting their reading folders away and organising their dinner boxes. The teacher and her assistant have high expectations that the children will behave well and be thoughtful towards each other. The children speak confidently to adults and to their peers. Their personal and social skills are developed very well because they are provided with good opportunities to work and play together and to reflect on the effect of their actions on others. The children behave very well, persevere well with tasks and try hard to think things through for themselves. Very good relationships quickly develop between the adults who work in the school and the children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The quality of provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in learning the basic skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- The teaching assistant provides very good support for the children working in groups and individually.

Commentary

40. The children are given very good opportunities to respond to events in stories and adults extend children's vocabulary very well through question and answer techniques. There is a good range of role-play opportunities to develop the children's speaking and listening skills. Adults frequently make good quality interventions to promote the children's progress. For example, when the children become the characters in the story of *Handa's Surprise*, they quickly and confidently improvise dialogue to retell the story. The adults use many opportunities to engage children in conversations so that they begin to explain how things work and their reason for choices. The children's early reading skills are very well developed and built on systematically through the sharing of books and stories and the clear teaching of the sounds that letters make. By the end of the reception year, the majority of the children read simple books fluently and are able to retell stories they have read. Writing skills are taught carefully so that children learn to form letters correctly, as well as learning to write and spell a basic vocabulary of key words. They are developing independent writing skills and show good confidence when attempting to spell their own words. The children are provided with good opportunities to write for different purposes such as retelling stories, sequencing events, and writing captions to go with pictures.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The quality of provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in learning the basic skills of counting and using numbers

Commentary

41. The children make good progress and achieve very well in acquiring basic numeracy skills because the teacher uses the children's natural enthusiasm for counting and using numbers. Together with the teaching assistants she provides a very good range of activities and resources to make learning interesting. The children learn through practical experiences and by singing and acting out rhymes that demonstrate the early stages of addition and subtraction. An emphasis on the correct use of language enables children to acquire new words to use in number activities and this helps to ensure that they make quick progress in gaining mathematical understanding. The children can count and order numbers confidently to twenty and some beyond. The more able children add and subtract with assurance and record their work carefully. The class café provides good opportunities for children to practise using money. By the end of the reception year, children have a good vocabulary to describe mathematical features such as 'symmetry', the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes and comparing length and weight.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The quality of provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources for teaching and learning are well prepared
- The children are making good progress in learning to use computers and other ICT applications
- The area makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

Commentary

42. The children make good progress and achieve very well because the teacher plans the learning activities carefully to ensure that there are very good opportunities for the children to have access to all of the different strands within this learning area. The children are given very good opportunities to use computers, programmable toys and digital cameras. As part of their topic on living creatures, the children have taken photographs using the school grounds. These have been loaded onto the computers and the children confidently access their pictures and add a caption. They know how to use a program to choose colours, characters and objects. They confidently use the mouse to draw, point and click and fill areas with different colours. The children have very good opportunities to learn about the faith and customs of Christianity as well as other religions, cultures and traditions. They have a good sense of their own identity as part of a family, a class and a school. They have regular opportunities to reflect and think about things, for example, times that are happy or sad.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The quality of provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities overall to develop fine and gross motor skills
- The outdoor area is limited in its provision for physical activities

Commentary

43. Overall the children make good progress and achieve very well because the teacher plans the learning activities to compensate for the lack of a dedicated outdoor area. The children explore movement and body shapes by moving to a variety of music; they enjoy these lessons and show a good awareness of space. They interpret and follow instructions and respond well when asked to move in a variety of ways. The children dress and undress independently. They use paintbrushes, pencils and scissors with care and precision and have many opportunities to develop good physical control through joining together pieces, such as when completing jigsaws, using construction sets and building models.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The quality of provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of activities to develop creativity are provided and resources are of high quality
- Occasionally opportunities are lost to develop creativity independently because of the limited outdoor play area

Commentary

44. The children greatly enjoy art, story and imaginative play and have good opportunities to listen, participate and respond to a range of music. The children learn to sing and join in songs with

actions competently and enthusiastically. The children know a good range of colours and they paint with enjoyment, confidence and skill. Materials such as sand, water and stones are available for children to explore regularly. The children enter imaginatively into acting out stories under the guidance of an adult and also do so independently in the role-play areas. However, there are more limited opportunities for them to develop independent scenarios in outdoor play where the area is limited by its size and the difficulties of access in very hot or wet weather.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in speaking, listening, reading and writing at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching is very good across age groups, with an excellent example in Year 6.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good
- The links between literacy and other subjects are very good

Commentary

45. Very good teaching of literacy in Years 1 and 2 builds on children's very positive experiences in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2 standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are well above average. Compared to attainment levels on entry to the school, all groups of pupils achieve very well.
46. The 2003 national tests showed standards for Year 6 pupils were above average but there was a fall in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing. The group included more pupils with special educational needs than usual. Neither were the targets for achieving the higher levels met. As a result of detailed analysis, writing was prioritised in the school development plan. The action taken has been very effective and the standards seen during the inspection indicate that performance has improved considerably across the ability range. Tracking procedures have been used very successfully to monitor patterns and rates of progress. This has led to the setting of short term, achievable targets which pupils understand and strive to meet. Very good use of literacy materials to support booster classes has enabled groups of pupils to extend their learning. In addition the very good links established between literacy and other subjects provide many well-structured opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge to a range of writing styles. Reading and writing are developing through meaningful situations that encourage pupils to use and develop their skills beyond literacy lessons. This creative approach is very effectively raising standards. The attitudes of both boys and girls to writing are also very positive.
47. Pupils draw on rich language and are confident to talk to others and share their ideas and opinions. Speaking and listening has a high priority and underpins the extension of language skills within writing. Pupils are given time in lessons to respond, question and formulate opinions and this has a significant and positive impact on learning, encouraging pupils to consider carefully their responses and choose appropriate language. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, the teacher led pupils through the stages of structuring their thoughts and ideas to present logical arguments orally and in report writing. The teacher modelled the process very effectively and asked questions that challenged pupils individually. His thorough knowledge of pupils and strong organisation and leadership made the lesson exciting and enjoyable. Pupils with special educational needs were very effectively included so self-esteem was high and their work celebrated along with their peers.

48. Strengths in the very good teaching seen across the school include the challenge planned into lessons for different groups of pupils, strong subject knowledge of staff and imaginative questioning techniques to ensure all pupils are fully engaged at all times. The use of assessment techniques is very good. Oral and written comments are constructive, positive and designed to enable pupils to understand the next steps in their learning. Written marking is consistently very good.
49. By Year 6, pupils have a very good knowledge of grammar and their writing is technically accurate. Pupils write interesting sentences using complex structures and often telling description. All work is presented in neat, joined handwriting, reflecting a sense of pride and keenness to achieve the highest possible standards.
50. Pupils love reading and writing and all ability groups have a very good knowledge of books, authors and illustrators. Library skills are very well developed and applied well to research using books and the Internet. More able pupils distinguish between styles of authors and quote aspects of text to illustrate their points of view and opinions. Year 6 pupils say they enjoy the pace and adventure in J.K. Rowling's work and the sensitivity to feelings in the books written by Jacqueline Wilson. There was no contest between film and books, pupils prefer to use their imagination and, while enjoying the film genre, recognise the restrictions and limitations of this media. Very good teaching of phonics supports learning in Years 1 and 2, and from an early stage pupils read to different audiences during their services and assemblies. Pupils are confident and expressive readers.
51. The early identification of pupils with special educational needs ensures they are very well supported. Individual education plans are specific and well matched to individual needs. Teaching assistants provide very good support and pupils' achieve well. The subject is very well led and managed. Expectations are very high and systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and pupils' work ensure consistency across all age groups.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. There are very good examples of pupils' writing across the curriculum. In history, pupils wrote convincing accounts of life in Victorian times. Their writing showed an empathy with the lives of children. Opportunities for note taking in geography, report writing in science and discussions in personal, social and health education all link effectively to the teaching of literacy. Teachers remind pupils of the strategies they have learned in literacy lessons, for example, the process of planning a report or a story. New vocabulary is introduced and reinforced to extend language and learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and pupils of all abilities achieve very well.
- Consistently good teaching builds well on pupils' previous learning.
- The numeracy strategy has been well implemented and there has been a good overall improvement in the school's provision.
- The subject is well led and managed and target setting and monitoring procedures are very effective.

Commentary

53. Standards in the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were well above average compared to all schools and when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was average. Evidence from the inspection shows that the standards of the present Year 2 pupils are also well above average and that the proportion of

pupils working at the higher levels is the same as last year. The present standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. This is due to the carefully introduced National Numeracy Strategy, the good leadership of the knowledgeable co-ordinator, the effective use of the school development plan to improve the quality of teaching and learning in specific areas and the schools' very thorough target setting and monitoring procedures.

54. Standards in the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 were above average compared to all schools and very high, being in the top five per cent of schools in the country, when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils working at the higher levels was well above average. Statistics show that these pupils had made very good progress since they were in Year 2. The present Year 6 pupils are achieving particularly well and attaining well above average standards. Like all pupils in the school, they work very hard in lessons and produce a very good volume of work that enables them to practise and consolidate their newly learnt skills. Year 6 pupils are set by ability and this is leading to an even higher proportion of pupils working at the higher levels, compared to previous years.
55. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good because it consistently challenges pupils of all abilities. This leads directly to the very good progress that pupils of all abilities make through the school and their very positive attitudes to the subject. Instrumental in the pupils' high achievement is the teachers' very good questioning which helps pupils build well on their previous knowledge and the effective strategies they are taught to meet the lesson's objectives. This was particularly evident in an excellent lesson where pupils were using holiday brochures to calculate the cost of a family holiday. Teachers are particularly good at developing pupils' number work. Pupils' understanding is deepened when they explain the processes they use and the teacher reinterprets this explanation to ensure that all pupils in the class benefit. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to assess pupils' understanding and make very good use of this information to ensure that the work set is challenging for all pupils and that the pace of the lesson is appropriate. Older pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning and share this with their teacher who adjusts planning for future lessons. Improvements seen in the analysis of pupils' books confirmed that this is an effective strategy. The marking of pupils' work is very good, particularly in the older classes. Despite pupils benefiting from the teachers' marking, some teachers apply the school's correction policy inconsistently and pupils are not always learning from the mistakes they make. Homework is set very regularly and the challenging commercial booklets that the pupils use have a very positive impact on consolidating and extending pupils' mathematical skills. This is particularly the case in the way that pupils use and apply their knowledge of number.
56. The development of mathematics has been well led and managed by the co-ordinator since the last inspection and she has been well supported by the numeracy governor who takes a keen interest in the subject. Her thorough knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses feed directly into the subject development plan for the year. She has been instrumental in developing a very good curriculum. The school's very good assessment, target setting and tracking systems further refine this. These are used most effectively to monitor the progress of all pupils and enable teachers to refine their planning to ensure all pupils are on track to meet the challenging targets that are set for them. The co-ordinator has worked closely with the ICT co-ordinator to develop the use of computers to support pupils' learning in mathematics. The application of ICT in the subject is now good and pupils benefit from the good quality programs that support their work. For example, Year 2 pupils' understanding of line symmetry was considerably enhanced by using a program as part of their follow-up computer work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils use and develop their mathematical skills in a relevant way in different subjects. Some good examples were seen in pupils' measuring work

in design and technology and graph work in science and history, with pupils using their mathematical skills well to support their learning.

Example of outstanding practice

A numeracy lesson with a top set of high achieving Year 6 pupils

The extremely challenging mental hors d'oeuvre ensured the pupils were thoroughly warmed up for the lesson's main course. 'I want to take my family on holiday and I need your help to find out if I can afford it,' the teacher informed the top Year 6 maths set as he handed round the holiday brochures. A quick browse through these made the pupils realise they needed some essential information before they could proceed. Questions needed answering. 'Which airport do you want to fly from?' 'How old are your children?' 'Do you want health insurance?' 'What is your total budget?' 'How long do you want to be away for?' With essential information gleaned, the pupils set to work, some individually, some working together. 'I am afraid I can't wait too long' said the 'customer' injecting urgency into the pupils' work. Manipulating large numbers, calculating difficult percentage discounts is food and drink to these pupils. 'I am sorry, I have got to go now' caused shrieks from the pupils putting finishing touches to their calculations. Total costs were compared, differences argued showing great number competence. At the end, the 'customer' appeared to be pleased with the quoted prices, the pupils exhilarated by the task. A better way for pupils to use and apply their number skills would be very hard to find.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and in Year 6
- The teaching and learning in science are good and pupils achieve well.
- The subject is well lead and managed
- Some opportunities to develop a questioning and investigative approach are missed
- Limited use is being made of information and communication technology skills to support learning in science

Commentary

58. Standards are above average by the time end of Year 2 and when they leave the school because the teaching and learning are consistently good. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection, for example the role of the subject managers has been extended and they and the governors are now involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of the curriculum. The learning experiences for the pupils are well organised and delivered systematically throughout the school. The teachers have clear guidelines for what they are to teach and they ensure that the pupils cover all the areas of the National Curriculum well. The teaching is thorough and this means that the pupils achieve well and acquire a good knowledge and understanding of science. There are many opportunities for the pupils to carry out practical activities to support their learning with the pupils recording their findings carefully and neatly. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to devise their own experiments or to suggest ways in which predictions could be tested.
59. A particular strength of the teaching is the way activities are planned and the resources used to interest and engage the pupils. This results in pupils working with great enthusiasm and perseverance. They are attentive to what the teachers have to say and listen well to each other's points of view. All teachers have very high expectations of good behaviour and the pupils respond very well. The work is planned for either small groups or pairs, helping to develop the pupils' sense of co-operation and collaboration. Homework is also used well to promote learning. The leadership and management of science are good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of standards and monitors the teaching and learning across the school. The school is developing good systems for monitoring the attainment and progress of the pupils in science and this is helping to maintain the good standards seen.

60. As the pupils move through the school, their scientific vocabulary is well developed and when topics are re-visited they are studied at a more complex and advanced level. This ensures that the pupils' knowledge and understanding are developed on firm foundations. Pupils have increasing opportunities to predict the results of their investigations. Aspects of personal, social and health education are well covered in Year 5 when pupils learn about the dangers and benefits of different sorts of drugs.
61. There are some well planned links with mathematics and literacy. For example, good use is made of pupils' measuring skills when they record the results of their investigations by using graphs and written accounts. There is an increasing use of ICT skills in science. A particularly imaginative use of this was seen when the electron microscope was used to produce time-lapse photography sequences of salt crystals forming and of a strawberry decaying. The pupils display information using pie charts and they research information on the Internet to supplement their learning. However, despite these examples of good practice, greater use could be made of ICT through the school to support the pupils' learning and display the results of their investigations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well through the school and the subject is well integrated across the curriculum.
- Teachers are confident to teach all aspects of the subject.
- School makes very good use of the new ICT suite and of the skills of the computer teaching assistant.
- The subject is very well led and managed by the hard working and knowledgeable co-ordinator.

Commentary

62. The co-ordinator has overseen the very good improvement in the school's provision for ICT since the last inspection. Well-focused in-service training has improved the knowledge and skills of all the teachers and the development of the ICT suite is leading to effective teaching of computer skills in all the year groups. Very good use is made of the ICT suite throughout the day both for discrete ICT lessons and for using computers to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Instrumental to this work, is the very effective support that the trained teaching assistant gives to teachers during lessons and when teaching small groups on her own. Her teaching is good and leads to the pupils with whom she is working achieving well. During the inspection, the ICT suite was used constantly and the flexibility of the assistant's role enables teachers to make good use of her expertise to reinforce the learning in different areas of the curriculum. For example, some particularly good work was seen with Year 2 pupils in developing their understanding of line symmetry.
63. Pupils are most enthusiastic about the subject, with older pupils in particular understanding how its use and application can enhance their learning across the curriculum. Pupils work particularly effectively together and the subject contributes significantly to their social development.
64. The quality of teaching is consistently good and all teachers now have good subject knowledge and confidence to teach all aspects of the subject. Teachers make particularly good use of questioning to help pupils think logically about their learning. A particularly good example of this was seen when a group of Year 6 pupils successfully worked out how to programme a control box to sequence traffic lights. Teachers' planning is good and often involves innovative tasks for the teaching of a skill. For example, older pupils, when learning how to email an attachment, were asked to include photographs, taken with the digital camera, of improvements initiated by the school council. Pupils are achieving well in all aspects of the

subject because the curriculum is well planned, and weaknesses identified at the last inspection well addressed. The teaching of data handling skills is now an integral part of pupils' learning, with Year 2 pupils making good use of graphs to illustrate the different physical characteristics of their peers.

65. With pupils now achieving well in all aspects of the subject, the school has rightly decided to develop strategies to track pupils' progress more carefully through each year group so that pupils' progress can be judged more accurately, strengths built on and identified weaknesses addressed. Whilst this work is in the early stages of development, the school is hoping to introduce a system next year so that the target setting and tracking systems in ICT will be of the same very high quality as English and mathematics. The governor for ICT has worked particularly closely with the co-ordinator, giving very good support in the acquisition and development of the school's ICT suite and the acquisition of new hardware.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. Overall the school makes good use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Careful planning by teachers helps to ensure that new skills learnt in the ICT suite are then reinforced and consolidated by follow-up work in different subjects. Evidence from pupils' books and from lessons observed during the inspection show that there are some particularly good links with literacy and history and good links in mathematics, art and music. As a result, pupils view computers as a 'tool for learning', which they have access to as and when appropriate.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in **geography** so the quality of provision could not be judged. The curriculum is based on the national scheme of work and the subject is very well led.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work seen in history are above average by Year 6
- The teaching is good overall with an example of excellence in Year 4
- The leadership and management of history are very good
- There are very good links with literacy

Commentary

67. The standards achieved in history by the end of Year 6 are above average. The curriculum is of very good quality and provides an interesting and stimulating range of experiences. The strong emphasis on practical work and investigational approaches to learning motivate pupils and build effectively upon their experiences. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from teaching assistants. Pupils are fully included in activities and work is well matched to meet individual needs. All pupils are most enthusiastic about the subject and achieve well.
68. Pupils in Year 4 made very good progress during a day that was dedicated to learning about life in Tudor times. The day involved pupils in a range of practical activities linked to drama, role-play, design and technology and art. The quality of teaching in this session was excellent. In another well planned lesson, Year 6 pupils considered the contrast of the use of leisure between Victorian times and today. Good resources enabled pupils to identify similarities and differences.

69. The curriculum for history is based on national schemes of work. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 talk enthusiastically about the lives of famous people they have studied, such as Florence Nightingale and Louis Braille. They compare the similarities and differences in the roles of scientists in the past and present, and understand the important influence that people in the past have made to improve the lives of others. Pupils have a good knowledge of their local history and environment.
70. The coordination of history is very good. The school makes very good use of the subject leader's expertise and very good subject knowledge to ensure staff are well supported. His innovative ideas are evident through the imaginative delivery of the curriculum which leads to exciting teaching and learning. Very good links with other subjects, including literacy and numeracy, enhance the curriculum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

71. Two lessons were observed in art and design, one lesson in music and two in design and technology. It is, therefore, not possible to make a judgement on the quality of provision in these subjects.
72. There has been a good improvement in standards in **design and technology** since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has led the subject well and has successfully addressed the identified weaknesses in planning and designing and in the quality of the resources. In the two lessons observed, the teaching was consistently good, with pupils having a particular enthusiasm for the practical nature of the subject. Pupils now have a good understanding of the importance of design before beginning construction and in evaluating at the end of the project. Discussions with Year 5 pupils showed that they had a particularly sophisticated understanding of how to overcome difficulties during construction. For example, a side-mounted model of a fairground big wheel kept falling over. By lightening the wheel by cutting in spokes, the centre of gravity was changed thus enabling the wheel to remain upright in operation. Teachers make good use of focused tasks to improve pupils' specific skills. Year 3 pupils' practice of accurate cutting and scoring was a useful forerunner to an assessment task that the pupils will be undertaking in the next lesson. The school now has a good range of resources, clearly evident in a Year 5 lesson where pupils make a wide range of musical instruments from the vast array of different materials. The co-ordinator is at present benefiting from a ten day in-service training course. New skills and techniques learnt from the course are passed on to other teachers during staff meetings and when visiting classrooms.
73. Evidence from the wide range of work on display, pupils' sketchbooks and art-folders show that above average standards in **art and design** have been maintained since the last inspection and that pupils achieve well. The teachers' planning and the work on display indicate that there is a well-planned and worthwhile curriculum that focuses on the clear development of pupils' skills as they move through the school. The pupils very much enjoy art lessons and talk enthusiastically about the work they do and how they achieve various effects. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. For example, a visiting artist has worked with the pupils to produce large and emotive works based on Aboriginal art. Good use of the pupils' ICT skills is being made in art when pupils use paint programs to produce pictures and develop pattern making.
74. In art and design, the pupils have good opportunities to use a range of skills and media. Their work is valued and is well displayed around the school. Good links are made to other areas of the curriculum. When the older pupils study the Victorian era in history, they also learn about the work of William Morris through his patterns and designs and make their own complex printing blocks. Pupils learn about the work of a number of artists and have opportunities to work in their style. For example, Year 3 pupils became engrossed in building up a landscape using the pointillist method of Seurat and were disappointed when the end of the lesson came. Their comments included *'I love painting'*.

75. **Music** forms a vital part of the ethos of the school. It makes a major contribution to the pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Music is used in many forms throughout the school to promote and support learning. The school has a scheme of work giving the teachers clear guidelines as to what they are to teach and there is support for pupils' learning using CDs and other materials. These guidelines are systematically carried out. The pupils have access to all aspects of the music curriculum. For example, in Year 3 all the pupils learn to play the recorder and some use is made of their ICT skills to record compositions. The pupils sing very well, they know a variety of songs and hymns and effortlessly sing in parts and harmonies. The good standard of singing adds significantly to whole school assemblies and the weekly Mass, creating a very special and spiritual atmosphere.
76. A considerable strength of the musical provision is in the opportunities provided in addition to lessons. These features show a good improvement since the last inspection when it was noted that *'the links with the main musical life of the school were not particularly strong'*. There are individual and group instrumental lessons, such as the Irish music group, for which parents pay. However, teachers also give generously of their time to provide a number of music clubs that are open to all. These include recorder groups, a school orchestra and choirs. The talents of the pupils are very well fostered and valued and they often have opportunities to perform as part of school events. A particular highlight is the recent success of the Irish Music Group in winning through to the national finals to be held in June. They play with skill and verve, and their performances are greatly enjoyed by the rest of the school - and by visitors!

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is of good quality with a good range of sporting activities.
- Subject leadership is very good.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes and work very well together.
- Resources for physical education are very good.

Commentary

77. Pupils achieve well across all strands of the physical education programme and the strong encouragement for boys and girls to take part in competitive sports leads to the school's success in girls' cross-country and mixed football competitions. The school has very good links with local football and rugby clubs, and opportunities for additional coaching are supported enthusiastically. The curriculum is enriched with a very good range of after school activities that are well supported by parents.
78. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good with evidence of very good features. In a very good lesson seen in Year 2, pupils made very good progress in developing a range of ball skills. They worked effectively with partners, passing and receiving, changing speed and direction, dribbling balls and learning the techniques of hitting a ball with their hands. Pupils showed very good control and made very good progress as they enjoyed the challenge to improve their skills further. Very good use is made of the local leisure centre, with all pupils having the opportunity to learn to swim and the great majority achieving well. In a good games session for Year 6, pupils worked very hard to improve their athletic performances. The quality of coaching was often very good. Staff have good subject knowledge and the assistants work in close partnership with teachers and effectively support and coach groups of pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well.
79. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They listen carefully and work conscientiously to refine their skills. They take interest in measuring and recording their progress, for example in jumping, throwing and running activities. This leads to very good personal knowledge and

understanding of progress and pupils are delighted when they evaluate the improvement against their previous performances. Pupils work well together, and a feature of the school's inclusive commitment is reflected in the way support is given to pupils who perform less well. Success is celebrated enthusiastically across the ability range. Physical education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

80. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and provides a very good role model for staff and pupils. She has produced a very good assessment package to measure the progress of pupils. The quality of physical education is carefully monitored to ensure that provision meets the needs of pupils. There is recognition of the importance of the subject to promote self-esteem and the expression of ideas through physical activity.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well integrated into other areas of the curriculum.
 - The work of the school council is helping pupils understand aspects of citizenship.
81. The opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good and result in the excellent ethos found in the school and the very good personal development of the pupils. Each week the pupils participate in circle time where they have good opportunities to express and develop their feelings about a range of issues and concerns. Pupils' personal, social and health education is also addressed most effectively in other subjects such as religious education, history and science. There are clear procedures for teaching sex education and drug misuse with due regard given to the strong Catholic ethos of the school.
82. The school places a very strong emphasis on promoting the pupils' personal development within a Christian framework of caring for each other and helping those less fortunate. The excellent standards of behaviour are consistently reinforced throughout the school and older pupils express their views clearly that exceptional instances of bullying are taken seriously and are well dealt with. The well-established school council is making a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development and their understanding of citizenship. They feel that the school takes good account of the council's deliberations and ideas, which they feel have helped to improve aspects of school life, such as through the creation of a quiet area for use at playtimes and the revamped bike shed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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