

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

Newbury, West Berkshire

LEA area: West Berkshire

Unique reference number: 110094

Headteacher: Mrs C. Brickley

Lead inspector: Jeff Lemon

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 257751

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; 176

School address: Newport Road  
Newbury  
Berkshire  
Postcode: RG14 2AW

Telephone number: 01635 43455  
Fax number: 01635 552859

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Date of previous inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is an average sized voluntary-aided school situated in Newbury, Berkshire. Changes have been made to the buildings since the previous inspection with improved administration areas, an extra classroom and improved outdoor facilities for the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. Pupil numbers have dropped since the previous inspection and there are now 176 pupils in seven classes. This fall in numbers is due to a drop in numbers of primary aged pupils in the area and a decision by the governors to change the admission number. The housing around the school is a fairly even balance of privately owned and local authority housing but because of its Catholic status, pupils come from a wider area served by the three parishes that serve Newbury. There is some natural movement of families in and out of the school and this indicates average mobility. The socio-economic characteristics of the school have changed in recent years and now represent the full range, with evidence of some deprivation, but are average overall. There have been several staff changes in recent years and the school has experienced some difficulty in recruiting experienced staff.

The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are of white British origin, which is broadly typical of the areas served by the school. The number of

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

pupils with English as an additional language is slightly above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average with the majority of these pupils receiving support at the lower levels of the special educational needs Code of Practice. An average number of pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Attainment on entry is wide and represents the full range, but on balance it is average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21116	Jeff Lemon	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology Physical education
1305	Brian Rance	Lay inspector	
28288	Marianne Harris	Team inspector	English History Geography Special educational needs English as an additional language
7336	Lindsay Howard	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Music Art and design Personal, social, and health education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory** school with some important strengths and some key areas that require further improvement. Standards of achievement are generally satisfactory and the value for money provided by the school is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English are well above average, whilst standards in speaking and listening are very high.
- Some pupils in Years 3 to 6 could do better in mathematics and science.
- Children in the Foundation Stage do not achieve as well as they could in the development of their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures and in their writing skills.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well by pupils and helps their learning across the curriculum.
- The school cares for pupils well. They have positive attitudes to their work and behave well.
- The good range of assessment data is not always used sufficiently well to ensure that work is well enough matched to the needs of the pupils.
- Pupils and parents like the school, and links with parents and the community are good.
- Homework is used well to extend learning in school and there is a good range of out of school clubs.

The school has made some improvements since the last inspection and attendance is now monitored effectively and good improvements have been made to the accommodation for the children in the Foundation Stage. However, overall it is **not as effective** as it was reported in the previous inspection. Comparative national standards are not as high as they were in 1998 and judgements on the quality of teaching, and of leadership and management are not as good as they were previously reported. However, the nature of the school has changed since that time and the school now serves a much more diverse community, with increased mobility and growing levels of social deprivation.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall achievement is **satisfactory**, but some children in the Foundation Stage do not do as well as they could in specific aspects of some key areas of learning. Good use is made of ICT skills throughout the curriculum, but pupils could do better in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

#### Year 6 results

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

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

Children enter the school with broadly average attainment in most areas of learning. They achieve satisfactorily and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> in their personal, social and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, their creative development and in their physical development. Children meet almost all of the Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development, but some do not do as well as they could in their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures and in the development of their writing skills.

Inspection evidence shows that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average by the end of Year 2 and standards in reading are improving. Pupils in these year groups achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 6 standards in English are well above average and speaking and listening skills are very high as pupils speak clearly and maturely and can explain ideas well. In mathematics standards are average but some pupils do not reach the levels they should and therefore underachieve. Standards are above average overall in science, but some lower attaining pupils do not achieve the standards they are capable of. In other subjects standards are in line with expectations, with some good standards in some aspects of ICT and some areas of physical education. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language generally make satisfactory progress.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is **good**. Behaviour is good and pupils are positive about learning. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and are very good role models for them. There is an atmosphere of harmony and common purpose within the school, reflecting its Catholic foundation and mission. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and some teaching is good with teachers showing good knowledge and making good use of ICT to support learning. Good use is made of homework to support learning in class, but in some lessons teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support pupils' learning, and work is not always well matched to the different ability levels in classes. Although effective systems have been established to assess pupils, the information gained is not always used effectively to ensure all pupils make sufficient progress in some areas.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is enriched well with a good range of clubs, visits and visitors. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, but formal arrangements to provide a personal, health and social education programme are not yet fully established. The school takes good care of its pupils and has established good links with parents and the community. Accommodation and resources are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The headteacher leads the school effectively and is committed to improvement. She works well with the deputy headteacher, who provides a good role model for teaching. As with many other schools in the area the school has

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



experienced great difficulty recruiting and retaining teaching staff over the past few years because of the very high cost of housing in the locality. A major focus in recent times has been the recruitment and development of staff and the school makes a very positive contribution to the training and continued professional development of teachers. Management is satisfactory overall but senior managers have not always been successful in tackling quickly enough the weaknesses that have been identified in specific aspects of the teaching. New subject managers have not always adapted procedures sufficiently to meet the needs of new less experienced staff and the previously high academic standards have not been maintained in some subjects. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities and recognise the need to hold the school to account for any drop in standards.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are mostly happy with the school. Parents appreciate the care that the school takes of the pupils, the high standards of behaviour and the general ethos of the school. A small number of parents were concerned with how the school deals with complaints and the quality of information provided to parents but the inspection team judged that the school has appropriate and effective procedures. Most pupils like the school. They report that lessons are interesting and that they are expected to behave well and work hard.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that all pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve the standards in mathematics and science that they are capable of.
- Improve the development of knowledge and understanding in shape, space and measures and the teaching of writing in the Foundation Stage.
- Make better use of the data that is available to the school to match work more accurately to the needs of the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Achievement is **satisfactory** across the school. Standards in the core subjects are **average**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Year 6 achieve good standards in English, and standards in speaking and listening are very high, but standards for some pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not high enough in mathematics.
- Pupils are confident and competent in ICT and use their skills well in other subjects.
- Higher attaining pupils do well in science but some lower attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve the standards they are capable of.
- Children in the Foundation Stage do not achieve as well as they could in their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures and in the development of their writing skills.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children enter the school with broadly average attainment in most areas of learning although a growing number now join the school with limited skills in communication, language and literacy. Achievement in the reception class is satisfactory overall in all of the areas of learning and the majority of children are on course to achieve most of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Whilst achievement in communication, language and literacy and the mathematical area of learning is satisfactory overall, there are some specific weaknesses in the teaching of writing skills and the development of a clear knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures and standards in these areas are not as high as they should be. Achievement in ICT skills is generally good, as is achievement in certain aspects of the creative area of learning. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given satisfactory support and achieve appropriate standards.
2. In the 2003 tests for seven year olds attainment in reading was below average compared to all schools and well below average compared to similar schools. Standards in writing were in line with those reached by all schools but well below those reached by schools in similar circumstances. Standards in mathematics were above average when compared to all schools and average when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that there have been recent improvements in teaching and that pupils are now making satisfactory progress and are gaining broadly average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils in these years make satisfactory progress. In other subjects standards are in line with expectations with some good standards in some areas of physical education and ICT.

#### **Key Stage 1**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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Reading	15.5 (15.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.6 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.3 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In the 2003 national tests for 11 year olds, attainment in English was above average compared to all schools and to similar schools. In mathematics attainment was average when compared to all schools and to similar schools. In science attainment was broadly average when compared to all schools and above average when compared to similar schools.

## 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	27.7(28.0)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.8 (25.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.2 (28.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Inspection evidence shows that by Year 6, standards in English are well above average and that standards in speaking and listening are very high. Pupils speak clearly and maturely and can explain ideas well. In mathematics standards are average, but some pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not reach the levels they should. The school and the inspection team attribute this underachievement to previous weaknesses in the provision for the subject and the number of staff changes that these pupils have experienced as they have moved through the upper years of the school. Despite the underachievement of some lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 in science, achievement is satisfactory overall and standards are above average, with many higher attaining pupils gaining well above average standards. In other subjects standards are generally in line with expectations with some higher standards seen in aspects of ICT and physical education.
- Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use the skills learnt in literacy lessons for a range of purposes in other subjects, for example, recording their science findings. Pupils use their numeracy skills satisfactorily in other subjects. Standards are in line with expectations in ICT. The school has recognised the importance of ICT and plans its use very carefully so that good opportunities are given in all subjects to make use of ICT skills, which helps learning and has a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily in all subjects. The strategies that have been used to support pupils are having a growing impact on standards, and the school's own data shows that pupils who have received extra literacy support make steady progress.
- Pupils with English as an additional language are satisfactorily supported when they join the school so that they can be included in lessons and in the general life of the school. There is no difference in the achievement of boys compared with girls.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes to their work and behaviour is **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' personal, moral and social development is **good**. Their spiritual and cultural development is **satisfactory** overall. Attendance is **satisfactory** and punctuality is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils like to come to school. They enjoy lessons and the clubs they attend.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, which helps them to learn.
- There are good relationships between all groups within the school.
- More could be done to promote multicultural education throughout the school.

### Commentary

8. All adults in the school work hard to maintain a positive atmosphere and a caring environment so that all pupils, regardless of ability or social background, can flourish. Children settle quickly into school when they join the reception classes and this good start is built on as they move through the school. The majority of children reach the Early Learning Goals for personal, social and emotional education by the time they enter Year 1. Good relationships exist throughout the school. As a result, most pupils listen to their teachers and try hard to do their best.
9. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good in and out of lessons, and very good in assemblies and during lunch. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and are very good role models for them. There is an atmosphere of harmony and common purpose within the school reflecting its Catholic foundation and mission.
10. Pupils' moral and social development is well supported by the good examples set by the adults, who show them tolerance and understanding, and encourage them to respect the needs and views of others. Spiritual development is reinforced effectively during assemblies when themes such as the gift of the Holy Spirit are explored and related to the everyday life of the pupils. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactorily supported through the curriculum for history, geography and religious education but more could be done to provide pupils with a better understanding of the diverse cultures and beliefs within the multi-cultural society in which they live.
11. In comparison with national statistics, pupils' attendance was close to the average in the last academic year as it was in the previous year. The procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are good and have improved since the previous inspection. However, a significant number of pupils are absent from school each year through taking family holidays in term time. Each day gets off to a good start because very few pupils arrive at school after lessons have begun. There have been no exclusions during the year prior to the inspection.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.6

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.0

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 school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. The school takes good care of its pupils and links with parents and the community are good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** throughout the school. There is a **good** range of assessment procedures but there are some weaknesses in the use of assessment to match work to the needs of pupils in some subjects in some classes.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage their classes well and have high expectations of behaviour.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to help learning.
- Satisfactory systems have been set up to assess pupils' progress but the information gained is not always used sufficiently well to ensure work is well matched to the needs of some pupils in some classes.
- ICT is well planned and effectively taught.
- Homework is used well to support learning.
- There are weaknesses in the development of knowledge and understanding in shape, space and measures and in the teaching of writing in the reception class.

### Commentary

12. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall throughout the school and span the range from very good to unsatisfactory, with only one unsatisfactory lesson being observed. There are several important strengths and there are some areas that require improvement. Teachers generally have satisfactory knowledge and some teachers show very good expertise, for example, in the teaching of ICT and physical education which helps pupils to acquire knowledge and develop their skills. There have been a lot of changes to the staff over the last three years and the management of the school has correctly identified areas that require improvement. Some of these improvements have been achieved very effectively but the rate of change has meant that some gaps in teaching and learning have yet to be remedied effectively and as a result some standards have dipped since the last inspection. The school has made good recent improvements to teaching and learning and standards are now rising.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2 (6%)	10 (31%)	19 (60%)	1 (3%)	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.

13. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships are good. Pupils say they like their teachers and that lessons are usually interesting. Teachers insist on good behaviour and, as a result, lessons are calm and ordered. Teachers are confident in teaching ICT and make good use of the interactive white board and the ICT suite to engage pupils in research and in presenting their work. Homework is set regularly and pupils are well aware of what they have to do. As a result of this consistent approach pupils acquire greater understanding and knowledge and are keen to learn more.
14. Teachers understand the need to set clear objectives for each lesson and share these with the pupils. Sometimes, however, these objectives are not set out in language that pupils can easily understand and some pupils, particularly lower attaining pupils, are unsure of the purpose of some lessons. On these occasions learning is not so effective. Questioning is used satisfactorily by teachers to assess learning but is sometimes too focussed on higher attaining pupils. This has a negative impact, for example, on the learning of lower attaining pupils in science. The school has invested significant resources in its teaching assistants. However, these are not always used as well as they could be. The school has given some training in this regard and is aware that more training will be required, since some teachers do not involve the assistants enough in some lessons.
15. The school carries out regular and frequent assessments of pupils particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The school recognises the importance of analysing data and sets individual targets for pupils that are shared with the pupils and their parents. However, in many of the lessons seen, and from the evidence gained from examining teachers' planning and pupils' work, it is evident that teachers do not always make sufficient use of the available assessment data when planning subsequent lessons and do not consistently match work to the ability of the pupils. As a result work sometimes lacks challenge, or is too hard, and pupils do not learn as well as they could. Marking is carried out regularly and in the best practice gives effective praise and encouragement whilst setting out what the pupil needs to do next.

## **The curriculum**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities for enrichment through visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs.
- Pupils are well prepared for their transfer to secondary school.
- Arrangements to provide personal, social and health education and citizenship are not sufficiently formalised.
- The ICT suite is well equipped and used, which helps pupils develop their ICT skills.

## **Commentary**

16. The curriculum satisfactorily covers all six areas for learning for children in the Foundation Stage and the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Provision for a separate unit of work on sex education is made for pupils in the latter part of Year 6, but these arrangements are under review so that it can be taught in a more meaningful context. Personal, social and health education and citizenship is not taught

formally as part of the curriculum. Issues from these areas are dealt with in Circle Time<sup>3</sup> when the need arises and the school has purchased a published scheme that it plans to use in discrete lessons in the future. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are given opportunities to access the full curriculum.

17. The curriculum is enriched in many effective ways by numerous visits and visitors to school. The Year 6 residential visit to Kingswood gives pupils opportunities to develop new physical skills alongside social ones. There is a valued programme of visits to secondary schools for Year 6 pupils that ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. A wide variety of sports, arts, music and other clubs are run at lunchtimes and after school by staff, parents and other members of the community. There is a good attendance at all clubs by pupils of all ages. The link club serves pupils before and after school and is valued by pupils and parents for the social opportunities it gives them as well as for the care.
18. Generally, resources for all subjects are good. Accommodation in classrooms is generous and shared areas are used well. Good use has been made of one such area to provide a well-used ICT suite.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school takes **good** care of pupils. Pupils receive **satisfactory** guidance. The school takes **satisfactory** account of pupils' views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are effective procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- Child protection procedures are good.
- Staff know the pupils well, care for them and guide their personal development well.
- Monitoring academic progress in order to ensure all pupils do as well as they can is not always fully effective.

### **Commentary**

19. The school has worked hard to ensure that all appropriate health and safety and related policies and risk assessment procedures are in place and in operation. Routines for dealing with first aid and accidents are well established. Safety checks on potentially dangerous equipment take place annually and practise evacuations of the premises take place each term. Good child protection procedures are in place with the headteacher having the role of designated person. All other members of staff understand their responsibilities in this regard.
20. Class teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and share in supporting their personal development by listening to their ideas. Pupils respect the staff and feel able to share their feelings and concerns. Although there are detailed records of pupils' personal and academic achievements these are not yet used well enough to identify the problems pupils may have and to remedy them.

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<sup>3</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

21. There are suitable ways for pupils to express their views and have them heard, for example, pupil questionnaires, and some Year 6 discussions with the headteacher, have been used to make changes to the school's reward procedures and introduce additional sporting activities such as netball and volleyball.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's partnership with parents and the community is **good**, and with other schools it is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have a high regard for the school and give good support to help their children learn.
- Parents receive detailed information about the school; annual reports on pupils' progress are well presented.
- Links with the church and the wider community through school visits and visitors coming into the school effectively enrich the education of pupils.

### **Commentary**

22. Parents are generally happy with the school, and express few concerns. Many appreciate the care that the school takes of the pupils, the high standards of behaviour and the general ethos of the school. The school provides parents with relevant information through regular newsletters and they find the notice explaining the topics that pupils will be studying in the next half term particularly helpful. Parents generally feel able to approach the school at any time if they have any worries about their children. Although a very small number of parents expressed concerns about the way that the school handles complaints, the inspection team found that the school has appropriate and effective procedures in this regard. At the end of the spring term parents receive annual reports on their children. These reports are well written and appreciated by parents.

23. Parents give good support to the learning of their children. They help their children at home in their homework assignments, and a number come into school to assist in class. They also support the work of the Friends of St Joseph's, which regularly raises substantial funds, which have been used to improve the school's facilities and provide additional resources.

24. The school is very closely linked to the parishes of St Joseph's and St Francis. Pupils attend services at church on special occasions and the priests regularly visit to celebrate mass and join in the life of the school. The local community and parishioners support the school's big events each year like the School Fete and local companies are generous in their support by donating prizes. The involvement of the church and the various members of the local community enrich the educational experience of the pupils. Parents and pupils raise considerable sums of money for charity.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. Leadership by the headteacher is **satisfactory**. Management is **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.



### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has been very effective in recruiting teaching staff and makes a very positive contribution to initial teacher training.
- The school improvement plan is comprehensive and detailed, but is not sufficiently focussed on raising standards.
- There is a rigorous programme of monitoring and self-evaluation.

### **Commentary**

25. The headteacher is very focussed and committed to improvement. There has been a high turnover of staff in the past three years and because of the difficulties of attracting staff experienced by schools in the locality the headteacher has had to focus her energies on the recruitment and retention of staff. This has resulted in the school making a good contribution to the training of new teachers, but means that a large proportion of the current staff are relatively inexperienced. Much time has therefore been spent supporting these new teachers and ensuring that they have settled into the school effectively. Whilst this process has been managed effectively by the headteacher and senior managers there has been a dip in standards as newly appointed staff have been establishing themselves. This has been particularly hard to manage, particularly as some cohorts have had several teachers in a very short time. The new staff have taken some time to get used to the school's assessment procedures and have not always been able to make effective use of assessment data to match work accurately to the needs of individual pupils.

26. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked together well to draw up a comprehensive school improvement plan that lays out the areas that have been identified as needing development and tasks that need completing each year. Whilst this document contains numerous carefully considered areas for development it now needs to be prioritised more carefully with greater emphasis given to raising standards.

27. The headteacher and curriculum managers monitor teaching and learning rigorously. Many lessons are observed, strengths and weaknesses are identified accurately, and constructive feedback is given to staff. There is a rigorous and comprehensive timetable for evaluating the quality of work in books and checking lesson plans. However, because of the number of staff changes and the proportion of relatively inexperienced staff this monitoring has yet to have a significant impact on raising standards in some lessons and some of the weaknesses in teaching identified in the school's own monitoring remain as a focus for school improvement.

28. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed satisfactorily. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and pupils have the opportunity to assess how well they have met their targets. Past plans are archived well so that it is possible to track pupils' progress over a period of time.

29. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. The governors are very supportive of the headteacher and staff, and are concerned that new teachers settle into school and stay. They visit whenever possible and some governors help in school. The governors are very aware of the strengths of the school and the areas that require improvement and are committed to raising standards. The finances of the school are carefully managed with the significant balance carried forward

allocated to fund new building work and further improvements to the provision of ICT equipment.

### Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	471,546
Total expenditure	495,012
Expenditure per pupil	2,199

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	98,849
Balance carried forward to the next	75,383

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

## AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **satisfactory** in the Foundation Stage.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are eager to learn and behave well.
- There are too few opportunities for children to work in small groups to develop social skills.
- Some children make insufficient progress over time in the development of their writing skills.
- Children achieve good standards in the development of their numerical skills, but some do not achieve well enough in the development of their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures.
- ICT skills are well taught.
- Interesting role-play areas are provided for the children.
- Some lower attaining pupils are not always sufficiently well supported in whole class sessions.

30. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is broadly in line with national expectations for this age group with about a third of the children attaining higher than expected levels in some areas of literacy, numeracy and personal, social and emotional development, but with a growing proportion of children who enter the school with limited skills in language. Whilst the provision is not as good in all areas of learning as was reported at the time of the previous inspection, it is **satisfactory** overall.

31. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and children make at least satisfactory progress in almost all aspects of all areas of learning and the majority will reach all the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. However, there are some specific weaknesses in the provision for writing within the area of learning associated with communication, language and literacy and in the development of children's knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures within the mathematical area of learning. Planning is satisfactory overall but does not always sufficiently focus on the Early Learning Goals through the structured play opportunities and the focussed class and group activities in some areas of learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and the teacher has made a good start in developing her understanding of the provision that is required by very young children. Assessment procedures are good, but the information gathered is not always used effectively when planning subsequent work. The accommodation is good and the range of good quality resources are well used by the children.

### Commentary

32. The development of **personal, social and emotional development** is satisfactory. The majority of children behave well and are keen to do their best. Most learn many of the routines of the class quickly, but a small number of children find it difficult not to call out during whole class lessons. This sometimes limits the progress that some quieter and less able children make in speaking and listening. There are many opportunities for the children to interact together, but too few planned opportunities for them to take part in small group discussions with adults. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children make sound

progress. Most children achieve satisfactorily and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

33. Teaching and learning in the area of learning associated with **communication, language and literacy** are satisfactory and the majority of children will achieve most of the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Children are effectively taught the skills of phonics and reading on a daily basis, but there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop the basic skills of writing. As a result some children have not made the expected progress in writing. The interesting role-play areas provide a good stimulus to learning, but are not always used sufficiently to develop speaking and listening skills, as there is too little adult intervention.
34. Children make satisfactory progress overall in their **mathematical development** and the majority will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Children make good progress in the development of their numerical skills but are given insufficient opportunities to develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures. Some lower attaining children do not always receive sufficient support in class sessions and do not always achieve as well as they could.
35. Children achieve satisfactorily in their **knowledge and understanding of the world** and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Interesting themes such as “*The Garden Centre*” and “*The Arctic*” help children enjoy the world around them and to begin to understand its diversity. Information and communication technology skills are well taught. Instructions are clear and, as a result children understand what they are to do and make good progress in the development of these skills. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children make sound progress.
36. Children are provided with a satisfactory range of activities to develop the **physical** area of learning. These take place in the large, well-equipped, outdoor play area and in more structured lessons in the hall. Teaching is satisfactory and children make sound progress. Children’s achievements are satisfactory and they are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.
37. Children are given numerous appropriate opportunities to develop the **creative** area of learning. They draw, paint, make models, and use glue with a range of materials and tools. They have plenty of opportunities for singing and playing untuned instruments. Teaching is satisfactory and children make sound progress. Children enjoy the opportunities they are given to develop skills in this area. Levels of achievement are satisfactory and almost all of the children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in speaking and listening are very good throughout the school, and are promoted well in other subjects.
- Standards in reading and writing are in line with the national average by the end of Year 2.

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in reading have improved by the end of Year 2, but handwriting could be better.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment data to match work to the needs of lower attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Teaching assistants are not deployed effectively in some lessons.

## Commentary

38. National test results in 2003 for pupils at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading and average in writing. This represents a drop in test results over the last five years. When test results are compared with schools that have a similar profile pupils' results are well below average in both reading and writing. However, these results were not reflected in the work seen during the inspection and the majority of pupils in the Year 2 class are now in line with the national average in reading and writing. There has been a very effective focus on reading in the school and this has led to standards rising. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs are generally supported well and make good progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language are encouraged to become fully involved in lessons and they too, make good progress, particularly in spoken English.
39. The 2003 test results for pupils in Year 6 last year were above average in English. The percentage of pupils who reached the higher levels was above that found nationally, and pupils achieved well when taking into consideration how well they performed in their Year 2 tests. Inspection evidence shows that overall the pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 3 to 6 and that by the end of Year 6 standards are well above average. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. In the 2003 tests boys did not perform as well as girls, but there was no difference in attainment, or achievement, in the work seen during the inspection.
40. Speaking and listening skills throughout the school are well above average. Pupils speak clearly and maturely. They listen attentively to each other and confidently share their ideas in lessons. The school has had a focus on this, to very good effect. Pupils are taught a wide variety of effective strategies that help them read fluently and confidently. Standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 are average. Most pupils understand about the importance of using correct punctuation and using capital letters at the beginning of sentences. However, the skills that pupils learn in handwriting lessons are not always used successfully when pupils are writing in their books. In Years 3 to 6 pupils read accurately and fluently and standards are well above average. Many of the pupils write neatly and use a variety of styles and genres very effectively. Achievement in writing is satisfactory and standards are above average by Year 6.
41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers insist on good behaviour and, as a result, lessons are generally calm and quiet. Homework is used well to encourage pupils to find out things for themselves, and not just to finish work. The teaching of reading is good in Years 1 and 2. The skills of speaking and listening are taught very effectively throughout the school and many very good opportunities are provided to develop these skills across the curriculum. However, teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support pupils in some classes. In some lessons work is not sufficiently well matched to the ability of the pupils, this hinders the progress of some lower attaining pupils who find the work too hard. Learning objectives are diligently shared with the pupils, but in some lessons they are

couched in overly complicated language and teachers are then required to explain what they mean.

42. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The curriculum manager has monitored quality and standards thoroughly and is making a positive impact on standards. Standards have been raised effectively in speaking and listening throughout the school and recent improvements have also been made in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2. The subject manager is aware of the shortcomings in some lessons in Key Stage 2 but has not yet had sufficient opportunity to have a significant impact on the teaching styles of the new staff members. Many new initiatives have been implemented including a reading club, and many pupils are now very enthusiastic about reading. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

43. Pupils' language and literacy skills are effectively promoted in other subjects. In science, pupils record their work accurately and write clear explanations about their findings. Pupils in Year 2 have written about Samuel Pepys and kept their own diary. In a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils prepared a report on mountain ranges and delivered their findings in the form of a television interview, demonstrating mature attitudes and very good speaking and listening skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils have good attitudes and work hard.
- Homework is used well to reinforce learning.
- The curriculum manager is a very good role model for other teachers.
- Assessment data is analysed but is not used effectively in ensuring pupils make enough progress.

### **Commentary**

44. In the 2003 national tests for seven year olds attainment was above average when compared to all schools and average when compared to similar schools. The evidence of the inspection shows standards in Year 1 and 2 are average and that achievement is satisfactory overall. In the 2003 national tests for 11 year olds standards attained were in line with all schools nationally and with those reached by similar schools. The inspection shows that achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and that standards at the end of Year 6 are average. However, this indicates that these pupils made insufficient progress over that four-year period since the majority gained above average levels when they were in Year 2. The subject manager is aware of these shortcomings and attributes this lack of progress to weaknesses in the teaching of the subject in the past compounded by the numerous staff changes experienced by these pupils in the past four years. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are satisfactorily supported in mathematics and their achievement is satisfactory.

45. Pupils in all classes try hard with their mathematics, they are keen to answer questions and work well together. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is now satisfactory overall. Most teachers plan carefully and try to make lessons interesting, for example, by making very good use of information and communication technology. Homework is set regularly, marked accurately and builds effectively on what is studied in class lessons. Pupils complete the work diligently and pupils say they enjoy the tasks, which are set. Good attention is given to learning number facts and tables and pupils reach average standards in number although some are not as confident or quick as they should be. In Key Stage 2 lessons and a scrutiny of work seen, indications are that across the school, work is set which is not sufficiently targeted at the different needs of pupils. What pupils will learn is set out in planning and copied into books at the start of each lesson, but it is not always explained in terms that the pupils understand and they, therefore, do not always have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve.
46. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum manager has very good knowledge, has a clear vision to improve provision and provides a very good role model for teaching. The monitoring of lessons is carefully carried out and inexperienced staff are given suitable opportunities to observe good practice. The high turnover of staff meant that previous weaknesses in teaching were not always tackled effectively and recent improvements and increased support have yet to make a significant impact on achievement, which has not been as good as it should have been. The school is aware of the importance of analysing data and has identified some groups of pupils who require extra support and the necessary intervention programmes or staff training have been introduced. The school recognises the need for all staff to be more carefully trained and supported in setting and tracking the targets for their pupils so that any underachievement can be identified and remedied.
47. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory because standards were judged to be well above average and progress was good, whereas standards are now average when compared to national norms. This decline is due to problems in recruiting sufficient experienced teachers, a higher than average turnover of teachers and weaknesses in teaching in the past that required significant intervention and support from the subject manager and senior management. These improvements have now been made and pupils are now making appropriate progress as they move through the key stage.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

48. The use of numeracy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils use their secure knowledge of measuring and of two and three-dimensional shape when constructing models in design and technology. They use data handling skills satisfactorily to draw graphs to record their findings in science investigations. Pupils use their satisfactory knowledge of addition and subtraction to make effective use of spreadsheets in information and communication technology.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Investigative skills are taught well.
- Work set is not always sufficiently well matched to the different ability levels within classes.
- More pupils reach the higher level in national tests at the end of Year 6 than in similar schools.
- Some lower attaining pupils do not achieve well enough in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology.

### **Commentary**

49. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and standards in Year 2 have been maintained and remain broadly average. In the 2003 national assessments an average proportion of pupils achieved both the expected and the higher levels. Inspection evidence shows that in the current Year 2 a higher than average proportion of pupils will reach the expected level although the proportion reaching the higher level is likely to be lower.
50. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6 and the national assessments administered by the school in 2003 showed that whilst the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 was below average, a higher than average proportion achieved the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence shows a similar picture and by the end of Year 6 a higher than average proportion of pupils gain above average standards. Work in pupils' books for Years 5 and 6 shows that they cover the content of the units of work thoroughly and that average and higher attaining pupils have a very good understanding of scientific methodology. They reason well scientifically, make accurate predictions and can devise fair tests to investigate quite complex situations. The achievement of some lower attaining pupils is unsatisfactory because the work is planned to challenge the higher attaining pupils and is often too hard for them. As a result they do not fully understand the tasks, are given insufficient opportunities to complete the work and do not develop a suitable scientific vocabulary.
51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and manage classes well so that lessons are orderly and pupils are able to learn effectively. Teachers are particularly skilled at teaching scientific methodology and make good use of ICT to enable pupils to conduct extended research about the topics they are studying. Teachers are also becoming more confident in the use of the interactive whiteboard to help pupils' understanding of scientific ideas. In some of the lessons seen too much time was spent listening to the teachers' introduction so that pupils did not have sufficient time to complete the written tasks. In better lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2, teachers find alternative ways of recording information, including graphs, diagrams and labels and all pupils are able to complete work to an acceptable standard. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to develop investigative work and to plan a fair test well. Teaching assistants are sometimes used well during the introductory sessions to explain points to less able pupils so that they keep up with the content of the lesson, but this practice is not consistent.
52. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject through monitoring lessons and undertaking work scrutiny and is now aware of the need to ensure that planning places sufficient emphasis on the needs of lower attaining pupils. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities to use information and communication technology to help learning in other subjects.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of teaching assistants.
- The resources available are used well to ensure pupils develop skills and knowledge.



## Commentary

53. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school and standards are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show a good understanding of the correct vocabulary and are developing satisfactory keyboard skills and good mouse control. They confidently access information from a range of sources including databases, CD-Rom and the Internet and clearly enjoy this work. In Years 3 to 6, pupils use ICT effectively to present their work in a range of interesting ways, including the devising of quite complex PowerPoint presentations. In this way they develop a good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of using information and communication technology compared with other methods of presentation. Pupils develop their word processing skills suitably and change the font size and import pictures into their work effectively.
54. Although some teachers have very good skills the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school. Most teachers have good knowledge and are confident in using ICT in a range of different lessons. Resources are used well. The well equipped information and communication technology suite is fully used and careful planning and good staff training enable either the teacher to take part of the class into the suite or for the teaching assistant to take this role. The recent introduction of an interactive whiteboard is also helping to raise standards. Teachers and pupils are enthusiastic about this technology.
55. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum manager is knowledgeable and committed and recognises the need to further improve resources and has a clear action plan for the necessary improvements. Although standards at the time of the previous inspection were judged to be above expectations there is clear evidence that the provision has improved considerably and is at least satisfactory.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. Information and communication technology skills are developed well through other curricular subjects. For example, pupils show good speaking and listening skills when discussing how they could improve their presentations and they make good use of spreadsheets and databases to develop their mathematical skills. In history and geography pupils make good use of ICT to research and then present their findings.

## HUMANITIES

57. Religious Education was not part of this inspection and will be detailed in a separate report produced by the diocese. There were too few history and geography lessons seen to make a judgement on provision in these subjects. However, evidence from looking at work and talking to pupils, indicates that achievement is at least satisfactory and standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
58. In the one **geography** lesson seen Year 6 pupils prepared a report on various aspects of different mountains, and then presented their findings to the class. This lesson was good and promoted speaking and listening skills well. Pupils were confident in explaining the similarities and differences between two mountain ranges, and understood the necessity to take great care when preparing to climb.
59. Two **history** lessons were seen. One was linked effectively to geography so that pupils understood that crops grow along the River Nile because that is the main source of water in Egypt. The other lesson was very good and drew on pupils' own research and previous

knowledge so that they could explore Britain since 1945. This involved very good use of ICT as pupils researched their given topic and made notes to share with others in the class. Pupils were very enthusiastic about the lesson and spoke excitedly about their research, explaining clearly what they had found out. The leadership and management of history and geography are at least satisfactory.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

60. No art and design lessons were observed, but one music lesson and two design and technology lessons were seen. The planning for these subjects was examined and the work of pupils was scrutinised but whilst the leadership and management of these subjects seem to be at least satisfactory there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision in these subjects.
61. **Art and design** work on display around the school indicates that standards are broadly average. During the inspection pupils in Year 2 used watercolours to paint sections of fruit that met standards expected of pupils of similar age. Pupils' sketchbooks show accurate observational drawings and careful work on pattern and textures and designs for larger paintings.
62. One lesson was observed in **music** in Year 3. Standards in this lesson were in line with those expected of pupils of this age and the teaching was good.
63. Teaching and learning in the two **design and technology** lessons seen were good. Achievement is at least satisfactory and standards seem to be in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. Both lessons were well planned and gave good opportunities for pupils to use design and make skills. One lesson involved pupils plaiting, pleating, wrapping and sticking to produce tapestry linked to their work on the Ancient Greeks and, in the other, pupils showed developing skill in designing a house using simple shapes made from playdough.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in games and gymnastic activities in both key stages because of good teaching.
- Pupils enjoy physical activity and work well together.
- The curriculum manager has very good knowledge and leads well by example.
- There are a good range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities.

### **Commentary**

64. Pupils achieve well and overall standards are above expectations at both key stages, with particularly high standards being found in games and gymnastics. Pupils are keen to take part in lessons, they listen carefully, try their best and co-operate with each other well. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils develop their skills well because teachers plan lessons well and give good encouragement and praise to pupils for their efforts as well as showing how they could improve. Lessons are conducted with good awareness of safety procedures, for example, the need to warm-up before exercise and the careful setting up of apparatus.

65. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum manager has good knowledge and has carefully planned for the development of the subject although it is not a current priority area. A good range of extra curricular activities including volleyball, boules and football help pupils to develop their games skills outside of formal lessons. The school takes part in some competitions against other schools but there are few organised matches at present to help pupils develop a healthy approach to competition and the need to cope with winning and losing. Some parents express concern at this lack of organised sport but at present the school makes satisfactory provision. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory and standards have been maintained in those aspects of physical education, which were seen.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

66. No lessons were seen and there was limited other evidence so no judgement about provision can be made. However, the school is aware of the need to formalise the arrangements for teaching this area of the curriculum. At present there are no timetabled lessons for the subject and classes hold Circle Time sessions to cover specific topics. Some areas of the personal, social and health education curriculum are linked to other areas such as science and religious education and matters such as bereavement are discussed in assemblies. Sex education is taught to Year 6 pupils in the latter half of the summer term. Good use is made of the local doctor and the school nurse for this. The school is seeking to make the sex education programme a more integral part of the Year 6 curriculum.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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