

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY**

Burnham-on-Sea

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123847

Headteacher: Mr Simon Kingwell

Lead inspector: Mr Paul Nicholson

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 May 2004

Inspection number: 257752

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided¹
Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 231 plus 37 part-time children in the nursery

School address: Oxford Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
Postcode: TA8 1LG

Telephone number: 01278 784641
Fax number: 01278 790043

Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Father T Barry

Date of previous inspection: September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Joseph's is a large voluntary aided Catholic primary school situated in Burnham-on-Sea. It is a popular school that serves an area with a mixture of privately owned and rented homes. Currently there are 231 pupils (119 boys and 112 girls) on roll aged 4 to 11 years, plus 37 children who attend the nursery part-time. When children enter the school their attainment varies widely but overall is similar to that expected for their age. Almost all of the pupils are of white British origin. None speaks English as an additional language. A quarter of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is close to the national average. None has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times of first admission or transfer to secondary school is below that found nationally.

¹ Because the school is a voluntary aided Catholic school the inspection of religious education and collective worship is carried out under Section 23 of the Schools Inspections Act 1996 (Denominational Education) by the inspector approved by the diocese and appointed by the governing body.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25406	Paul Nicholson	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education
19369	Christine Wild	Lay inspector	
18703	Mary Farman	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Geography Special educational needs
22452	Christine Canniff	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography Music Personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about Ofsted Inspections', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St. Joseph's is an effective school that provides its pupils with a good quality of education. Teaching is good overall and pupils do well and reach above average standards. The school is viewed highly by its pupils and their parents. The school is well led and managed and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very effective teaching in nursery and reception ensures children make a very good start to their school life.
- In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good and so pupils do well in English, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership and, together with the staff and governors, manages the school well.
- Planning for the future is satisfactory overall, but does not provide a clear enough focus on whole-school priorities for improvement.
- There is scope to improve pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2 and to develop the use of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the school in supporting learning in other subjects.
- It is a caring school with good provision for pupils' personal development and so pupils have positive attitudes and behave very well.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics are good, but they are unsatisfactory in other subjects.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good links with parents and the community support pupils' learning.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The key issues identified at that time have been successfully addressed. Pupils' achievement has improved, particularly in reading, science and ICT. The quality of teaching has improved and is now more effectively monitored.

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	B	A	A
Mathematics	D	B	A	A
Science	C	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

Overall, pupils achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 do well, as do pupils with special educational needs. The work seen during the inspection indicates that:

- Children in nursery and reception make very good progress in their learning. Most are on course to reach, and the majority to exceed, the national standards (the early learning

goals) in all areas of learning, including personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.

- Pupils reach standards that are above average in reading, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. They make good progress in learning literacy skills but do not have sufficient opportunities to develop these in longer pieces of writing. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectations for their age.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectations.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are keen to do well and willing to work hard. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a strong Christian ethos within the school and relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is particularly effective in nursery and reception so children make a very good start to their education. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good, with very good teaching in Year 5, consequently pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. The school provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. It correctly recognises the need to develop links between subjects so that pupils can use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to support and extend their learning in other subjects. Good provision for pupils with special educational needs and a good range of after-school activities enrich the curriculum well. Good levels of care and positive links with parents and the community support pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall the school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides a very clear vision for the school and, together with the teachers, he manages the school effectively. The staff and governors manage the inclusion of all pupils successfully. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and they ensure all statutory requirements are met. Planning for the future is satisfactory but the lack of a clear overview does not enable staff and governors to have a sufficiently sharp focus on the priorities for improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the work of the school. They feel it is a caring school and that their children enjoy school. Parents believe the quality of teaching is good and they are pleased with the way the school is run. Inspectors agree with a small minority, who would like clearer information on how well their children are doing. Pupils expressed positive views of the school. They feel they have to work hard and they appreciate the help teachers give them. They know who to seek advice from if they have a problem.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- in planning for the future and in monitoring progress towards whole-school targets, provide a sharper focus on priorities through the school's improvement plan;
- in subjects other than English and mathematics, develop a more effective whole-school approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress in order to help teachers with their planning and the reporting of achievement to parents;
- provide more opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to use and develop their writing skills;
- develop links between subjects so that pupils can use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to support and extend their learning in other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement in nursery and reception is **very good**, and for pupils in Years 1 to 6 it is **good**. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are **above average** by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in nursery and reception make a very good start to their education.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do well in reading, mathematics and science.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils do well in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection.
- There is scope to improve pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils do not sufficiently extend or make full use of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to support their learning in other subjects.

Commentary

1. **Foundation Stage:** Children enter the school's nursery with a wide range of attainment, which overall is similar to that expected for their age. From this average starting point, the children in the nursery and reception do very well. A very good start is made in the nursery and this very good progress is continued and consolidated in reception. Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that any weaknesses in children's learning are quickly addressed and that by the end of reception almost all children reach the expected standards for their ages in all areas of learning. The majority exceeds these early learning goals² in all areas of learning, including children's personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development.
2. **Key Stage 1:** In Years 1 and 2, standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 vary from year to year and reflect differences in the attainment of specific groups of pupils. For example, standards in mathematics in 2002 were above average and in 2003 they were well above average. Over recent years the school's results have been improving at a better pace than the national trend and they compare favourably with those of similar schools. In 2003, the school's performance in national tests at the end of Year 2 was well above average because over a third of pupils reached the higher standard, Level 3, in reading, mathematics and science. In writing, the proportion reaching Level 3 was well below average. Inspection evidence indicates that in the current Year 2, overall standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science, and average in writing. These standards are slightly lower than those gained in 2003 because of the larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2. The proportions reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and science are broadly similar to 2003, and in writing the proportion has improved and is similar to that found nationally. In ICT, standards are in line with national expectations. These standards represent good

² Early Learning Goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the six areas of learning: communication language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy children should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

achievement in reading, mathematics and science, and satisfactory achievement in writing and ICT.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.5 (15.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.2 (14.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.2 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. **Key Stage 2:** The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science vary from year to year. This is because of the differing numbers of low- and high-attaining pupils in each year group. In 2003, results were well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. The proportions reaching the expected standard, Level 4, and the higher standard, Level 5, were above those normally found. The school's results have been improving at a similar pace to those nationally but at a higher level. Over the last three years, pupils' overall performance in the three tests has been above average and results have compared favourably with those of similar schools³. Inspection evidence indicates a similar pattern in the current Year 6 with above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is slightly lower than in 2003 as there are fewer higher-attaining pupils in the current year group. However, this represents good achievement for the pupils and an analysis of their work shows they make good progress in each of the three core subjects. In ICT, standards by Year 6 are in line with national expectations and this represents satisfactory achievement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (28.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.4 (28.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.7 (29.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school is currently lower than in previous years. This reflects the way in which the school classifies pupils' needs. However, pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics. They achieve well in relation to their individual targets because of the good support they receive in the classroom and in small groups. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
5. The school has worked hard at addressing the weaknesses in standards identified at the last inspection. Following the introduction of a more effective programme for teaching letters and their sounds, the below average standards in reading in Years 1 and 2 have improved. A more practical approach to the teaching of science has improved pupils' investigative skills and helped raise overall standards in science across the school. The school has improved its provision in ICT through the introduction of a computer suite, staff training and regular lessons in developing pupils' skills. Consequently, the unsatisfactory

³ Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

progress noted at the last inspection has improved and standards are now in line with national expectations.

6. Inspectors found that, while pupils in Years 1 and 2 do well overall, they could do better in writing. Pupils make good progress in developing skills in literacy but are not given sufficient opportunities to develop these skills in longer pieces of writing. Across the school pupils do not make sufficient use of the skills they develop in literacy, numeracy and ICT to consolidate their learning in these subjects or to support their learning in other subjects. The school correctly recognises this as an area for development and is actively seeking ways to develop its curriculum. In other subjects sampled during the inspection, including geography, history and physical education, the standard of pupils' work seen was in the main in line with national expectations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is **very good**. They have **good** attitudes to school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils are punctual and their attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils like their school and participate well in the activities provided.
- Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of good behaviour.
- Very good relationships contribute to the overall happy ambience in school.
- The pupils benefit from the care taken to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- A considerable number of parents take their children out of school for holidays in term time.

Commentary

7. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and the activities the school provides for them. In lessons, pupils listen attentively to the teachers and apply themselves well to the tasks set. At lunchtime a wide range of games and activities ensures pupils' interest and involvement are sustained. They are keen to volunteer and eager to be involved in the life of the school.
8. The emphasis the school places on pupils' good behaviour and their right to be happy at school ensures that behaviour in and around the school is very good. The mutual respect shown by pupils and teachers for each other is evident in the consideration shown in classes and in the corridors, and when doors are held open. 'Thank you' are well-used words. Pupils appreciate the reward system employed throughout the school and enjoy receiving certificates for good work or good behaviour. In response to the children's questionnaires and in discussions, a few pupils have concerns about bullying in school. However, it does not seem to be a noticeable problem and most pupils are confident that adults quickly and effectively deal with any instances that occur. The school has a good number of effective lunchtime supervisors who fulfil the school's expectations out of the classroom: involvement in games is high and older pupils help with providing ideas for play for the younger ones. There have been no exclusions in the previous or current academic years.
9. Relationships throughout the school are very good, which helps pupils to feel confident and builds their self-esteem. The school gives pupils the opportunity to take part in residential activities and the focus the school gives to building friendships and

enlightening pupils on how to deal with difficult situations that can develop, creates very good interaction and understanding between them. All pupils are valued throughout the school and the school endeavours to include them in every aspect of school life.

10. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its commitment to the values it promotes. Pupils learn to respect people as individuals and celebrate the achievement of others. Even the youngest children in the nursery were seen clapping spontaneously when their peers demonstrated a task for them. In an assembly, led very ably by Year 6, pupils listened to and watched carefully the demonstration on the work of United Nations Children's Fund. This helped their understanding of the needs of children in other countries. Visits to museums and art galleries and visitors to school provide interest in and a good understanding of different cultures through the provision of drama, art and music.
11. In the majority of cases, pupils achieve regular attendance and are punctual to school. Attendance levels have declined in the last few years and are now broadly in line with the national median. The school is beginning to develop effective systems to monitor attendance as an updated computer program now provides more detailed information on attendance. However, a number of parents do not support the school in the importance of regular attendance and a considerable number of pupils take holidays in term time. An average of 78 days per annum per class has been lost due to holidays this year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/03 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School	5.5	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are **good** and the school's curriculum provides a **satisfactory** range of activities. The school takes **good care** of its pupils and there are **good links** with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall and so pupils make good progress in their learning. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage. The use of assessment is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory overall.
- Teaching in the nursery and reception ensures children make a very good start to their education.
- In Years 1 to 6, teaching in English, mathematics and science is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and so make good progress.
- Assessment in English and mathematics is good, but is unsatisfactory in other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	11 (28%)	13 (33%)	14 (36%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

12. Through closer monitoring of teaching, the school has improved the overall quality of teaching noted at the last inspection. This has significantly reduced the amount of unsatisfactory teaching and raised the overall quality from satisfactory to good. Teaching is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage and in Year 5. Overall, teaching is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, so pupils do well in these subjects. In other subjects seen during the inspection, teaching is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. There is scope to improve teaching and learning in some of these subjects through more effective use of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
13. The quality of teaching is very good across the Foundation Stage. Its very good features include challenge, encouragement, assessment and teamwork. This ensures that children make very good progress in their learning and social development. They respond very well to the interesting, varied and stimulating activities. All adults keep careful notes of individual achievement and use these to plan children's work. The teachers, nursery nurse and learning support assistants work very well together. This very effective partnership ensures that each child is supported according to its identified needs. There are very good arrangements for children entering the nursery and reception classes. The arrangements for their transfer to Year 1 are smooth. These steps enable children to settle quickly into school routines.
14. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is good overall. Staff value the contributions of pupils and manage the pupils very well. They provide a caring environment, high levels of encouragement and regular opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. Consequently, positive relationships flourish and pupils behave very well and are keen to do well. Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and so give clear explanations and question pupils effectively. This helps pupils gain good levels of knowledge and understanding, particularly in the core subjects. In the best lessons there is a good pace to activities and a clear focus and constant reinforcement of what pupils are to learn. In lessons that are satisfactory, lesson objectives are sometimes too broad. As a result the teaching is not sufficiently well focussed to ensure better than satisfactory learning.
15. The good quality and sensitive support for pupils with special educational needs increases their self-esteem and enables them to learn effectively. There are carefully planned withdrawal sessions that follow the classroom lessons. These ensure that the pupils with special educational needs join in class discussions and follow the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Learning support assistants work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers. This, and the regular systematic reviews of pupils' achievement, ensures that work meets the pupils' specific needs. All staff are aware of the specified targets for pupils with special educational needs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

16. Pupils' work is regularly marked but the quality is variable. It ranges from useful comments that help pupils to improve to just ticks. Individual pupil targets are set in English and mathematics but the long time between them being set and reviewed reduces their impact. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress in the Foundation Stage are very good and this has a very positive impact on children's progress in all areas of learning. The school has made a satisfactory start to tracking pupils' progress in the core subjects as they move through the school. In English and mathematics assessment procedures are good and the resulting early identification of pupils' difficulties and the programmes of support ensure weaknesses in learning are quickly rectified. In other subjects there is no consistent whole-school approach to assessing and recording the progress of groups of pupils in order to help teachers plan more effectively and assist in the reporting of achievement to parents.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. There are **good** opportunities for enriching pupils' learning opportunities. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good planned opportunities to enhance learning through visits and visitors.
- Opportunities for pupils to extend their learning outside the school day are good.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Planning does not enable pupils to make full use of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- There has been good improvement to the accommodation since the last inspection.

Commentary

17. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets statutory requirements. The school puts a high priority on the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and this results in good development of these skills. Adequate time is given to the other subjects and so development in them is satisfactory. The curriculum gives pupils an interesting range of visits and visitors, which enriches the curriculum well and enhances their learning in many subjects, including personal, social and health education. The good opportunities for pupils to take part in a 'multi-skills' programme that is intended to develop co-ordination extends their physical skills effectively. Teachers make good use of the local places of interest such as a rural life museum and a local quarry to increase pupils' understanding of the historical and environmental features of the area in which they live. Residential visits for Years 5 and 6 are well planned and provide new challenges. They contribute well to pupils' learning in history as well as broadening their personal experiences.
18. Pupils can pursue their interests at a wide variety of after-school clubs, which include music and drama, gardening and many opportunities to take part in sporting activities. These clubs are popular and well attended. They make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development as well as extend the skills they acquire in lessons. The school takes part in sporting activities with other schools and they do particularly well in football and tennis.
19. The above average standards achieved in English, mathematics and science demonstrate the school's commitment to the provision of challenge within the curriculum. Although all subjects are planned satisfactorily, there is scope to develop the curriculum. The headteacher has correctly identified the need to bring together the development of different learning skills and progression across the subjects. Currently, teachers do not sufficiently make links between subjects and consequently pupils do not make enough use of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to promote progress in other areas of the curriculum. For example, some undemanding tasks and worksheets in history and geography result in lack of challenge and restrict the development of pupils' writing skills. However, in some classes, there are some examples of very effective links, particularly the use of writing skills in science. This results in good quality work but is not consistent across the school.
20. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It ensures they have full access to the National Curriculum and all out-of-school activities. Good quality individual education plans provide suitable short-term targets and these are regularly reviewed. As a result, these pupils' needs are met well, allowing them to make good progress towards their targets.
21. The school's accommodation is good. Since the last inspection there have been considerable changes to the school buildings, improving and increasing the teaching areas, enabling more effective teaching of groups. Careful planning and preparation ensures that space is efficiently used. However, some classrooms are rather small and limit the range of practical activities undertaken. The spacious ICT suite is very well equipped and has made an important improvement to provision for the subject enabling pupils to have good access to computers. The school and spacious grounds are very clean and well cared for, contributing to the quality of the learning environment. The attractive displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievements and efforts, motivating them to work hard. Resources to support pupils' learning are good overall.

Care, guidance and support

Overall, the school has **good** procedures in place for ensuring pupils' care and welfare. Support, advice and guidance are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships have a positive affect on the caring nature of the school.
- Very good care is taken of the nursery children.
- Presently the school has no mechanisms to seek pupils' views.
- Marking of pupils' work does not sufficiently inform them of the way to improve.

Commentary

22. The school has a strong commitment to providing a happy, positive experience for its pupils. The promotion of this ethos is evident in the response by staff and pupils to the building of friendships between pupils, which creates very good relationships from the Foundation Stage upwards. Routine health and safety procedures such as child protection and risk assessments are securely in place. Promoting healthy lifestyles through personal, social and health education takes place throughout the school and is effective. Visitors to school such as the school nurse and the police service complement the school's work to improve pupils' safety. Early intervention ensures that good support for pupils with special educational needs is in place. The school is resolute in ensuring pupils with a disability have access to all areas of the school. The headteacher and governors secured improvements that have enhanced the accessibility of the accommodation.
23. The procedures for the induction of younger children to the nursery are very good. Home visits before the children start ensure that a familiar face, with good knowledge of the children, is waiting to welcome them. Visits to the nursery by parents and children, prior to starting, enable them to become familiar with the surroundings and reassure them of the procedures.
24. Nearly all the pupils who completed the inspection questionnaire are happy at school. A few pupils felt that other children did not behave well. During the inspection in discussions with pupils, they confirmed that they could approach adults if concerned and that staff deal quickly with any problems regarding behaviour.
25. Although pupils feel that teachers listen to their ideas and that their opinions are valued, there is no formal method of using the pupils as a sounding board to gain their views on how to improve the school. In the recent past, a school council was in place but this has lapsed. The school has plans to restore the council as a way to seek pupils' views. Overall, guidance through assessment is satisfactory. In English and mathematics it is good and pupils with special educational needs receive good advice. The marking of pupils' work to help them understand what they need to learn is variable throughout the school and does not sufficiently inform pupils how they need to improve.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with its parents. An **effective** partnership with the community contributes to the progress of the pupils. Links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good links with parents of children in the nursery.
- There are good links with the local secondary school.
- The school has close links with the church and neighbouring nursing home.
- Parents are happy with the education their children receive.
- Reports to parents do not contain enough information on pupils' achievement.
- Parents do not always value the education provided by ensuring their children attend school regularly.
- Parents' views are not always sought.

Commentary

26. Parents are very appreciative of the way that they are welcomed into the school. They feel that the headteacher and staff are always available and are very approachable. Parents are supportive of the school and help in a variety of ways, for example, with science, reading and the gardening club in school; assisting their children with homework and accompanying the pupils on school trips. Partnership with parents in the nursery is very strong and contributes to the well-being of the children. Parents are able to borrow learning resources to continue learning at home. Parents are not always supportive of the school in ensuring their children attend regularly, as a significant number of pupils have holidays in term time.
27. Overall information to parents is of a satisfactory quality. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress on three formal occasions. Pupils' annual progress reports give full information in English, maths, science and religious education but they do not give sufficient information on pupils' achievement. The information on other subjects is variable between classes and is not specific enough to be of benefit to parents. In the nursery, a welcome pack provides useful information to help parents to settle their children successfully. The nursery also provides a small library of information booklets covering areas that might be of a concern to parents of young children. The prospectus is of a reasonable quality and meets the statutory requirements. The governors' annual report to parents is a basic document that follows the statutory guidelines, but the information gives little indication of the decisions made by the governors.
28. Informal opportunities, at the start and finish to the day and at parent evenings, provide the school with some information on parents' views. However, presently the school does not regularly seek the views of parents on major decisions but has plans to do so in the near future. An active Friends of St. Joseph's Association offers social and fund-raising events which are well attended by parents and are often a highlight of the community. The funds raised contribute to enriching the curriculum provision for pupils, for example through the purchase of digital cameras.
29. The school has good links with the community and is an integral part of the locality. Close links with the church help to contribute to pupils' spiritual education and a shared facility with the nearby nursing home enriches not only the pupils' lives but also the residents', when they visit the garden to watch and enjoy the lessons. The school has created successful partnerships with businesses such as a local garden centre and has close links with environmental agencies, which enhance their work on the environment. The school supports a considerable number of fund-raising events. This, as well as helping others, has created good links with local charities. The majority of pupils go on to attend the local secondary school and a valuable partnership is in place. Shared resources, facilities and links with subject departments add positively to the provision.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is **very good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The school provides **good** value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good vision and direction and so the school has made good improvements since the last inspection.
- The senior management team has created a strong teaching team and they monitor school performance well.
- The school improvement plan is satisfactory but does not have a clear overview of the school's priorities.
- The governors have clear systems for checking the school's spending, but their understanding of curriculum areas in need of improvement is less well developed.
- The good teamwork and support for all who work at the school ensures everyone gives of their best.

Commentary

30. The very good leadership provided by the perceptive and clear sighted headteacher has successfully given the school the necessary vision to move forward since its last inspection. Regular, well structured and systematic monitoring of teaching quality has led to improved teaching throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. With support from a very effective deputy headteacher and a clear-thinking senior management team, evaluation of performance information is used consistently to identify areas for improvement. It is embedded in English and mathematics and is poised to extend to science. This has resulted in significant improvements in reading, science and ICT since the last inspection. The school has already identified the need to improve writing and its use in subjects other than English. Good quality training for all members of staff has helped create a strong teaching team throughout the school. This, and the regular observations of teaching, is a positive contributory factor to the effective teaching and pupils' high levels of interest and motivation.
31. Management structures within the school are good. The school has maintained the quality of subject co-ordinators' involvement in the identification and evaluation of priorities in their areas. The school improvement plan features up-to-date action plans and delegated teams to monitor progress towards targets in all subjects. However, there is no clear overview of priorities for the whole school to address. This does not give staff and governors a clear picture of what is needed to bring about improvement in all subjects. The good strategies used to improve skills of pupils who have difficulties with reading show how well the school tackles new challenges. Subject managers are very committed to professional development to further improve the many good features of the school. Good quality teamwork ensures managers share their expertise to influence other colleagues' practices. All staff are very receptive to ideas that they consider will improve their performance.
32. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and provide a good level of challenge and support over financial matters. There is a clear agenda to ensure statutory responsibilities are met well. The good improvements in ICT are testimony to the successful strategies in addressing the

key issues from the last inspection. All governors are well aware of the performances of pupils in local and national contexts. The work done to review performance data is helping them to become better critical friends of the school. They all have a subject responsibility and take this work seriously. However, not all are aware of curriculum areas that are in need of improvement. They read and approve the school improvement plan but the lack of a priority overview does not enable them to have an effective input or provide a focus for their monitoring of progress.

33. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Good quality leadership and management reflect the findings of the previous inspection. The co-ordinator knows this area very well, provides a good example to colleagues and has developed a strong team of support assistants. This is having a positive effect on the quality of provision throughout the school. There are careful systems to ensure prudent spending of the specific allocation for special educational needs. The co-ordinator reviews and evaluates the effect of provision, staff and other resources, to make sure that they give good value for the money spent.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	563,814	Balance from previous year	78,311
Total expenditure	542,869	Balance carried forward to the next	99,256
Expenditure per pupil	2,049		

34. The senior management team and the governing body have a very clear understanding of how financial management is used to help the school achieve educational priorities. Decisions on the deployment of learning support assistants have had a very positive impact on how well pupils with special educational needs learn. Financial management is very effective in supporting the major ICT developments and in the major improvements in the school building since the last inspection. There is a high carry forward figure but significant proportions are set aside to meet the school's costs for the recent building improvements and to meet the local education authority's requirements. Another sum, in the region of £10,000, has also been set aside to provide funding for the school's application for the Arts Mark accreditation. The governors are also well aware of the possible need to provide dedicated accommodation and specialist arts staff to support the school's accreditation. The school provides good value for money when the educational provision and pupils' achievements are set against the financial circumstances in which it operates.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the nursery and reception is **very good**, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

35. The quality of teaching is very good across the Foundation Stage and in all areas of learning. Children achieve very well because of the very strong teamwork, very positive relationships and very effective systems that check their progress. The consistently high quality support from adults gives an immediate sense of security in which children flourish. The co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage gives very good leadership and has created a strong working partnership between the nursery and reception classes. The sensitive and supportive teaching and emphasis on personal, social and emotional development ensures children quickly relate very well to each other and adults. High expectations of behaviour result in children developing very positive attitudes to learning and an eagerness to do well. The good level of support throughout the Foundation Stage helps children who have special educational needs to join in with their classmates. Staff work closely with parents/carers to increase their understanding of their children's needs. The reception staff build very effectively on the very good start children have made in the nursery. Careful planning ensures good progression in reception children's learning with provision to move on to work within the National Curriculum when children are ready.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because the sensitive and very skilful teaching develops very good independence and social skills.
- The majority of children exceed the requirements of the early learning goals by the end of reception.

Commentary

36. Very good teaching ensures the children have a very firm foundation for their development in this area of learning. Staff work hard to increase children's self-awareness, independence and patience in taking turns to answer questions. Thorough and very careful planning ensures that all children are able to join in the full range of activities, including a good balance between adult-led activities and child initiated ones. Children gain confidence and self-esteem and increase their ability to work well with each other and adults. Children tackle their work with much enthusiasm in the nursery and are keen to have a go at new experiences. For instance, they responded very well to looking at and handling snails. Skilful teaching ensured children knew how to handle snails carefully and to wash their hands after picking them up. Children continue with these very positive attitudes in the reception classes because staff give them much encouragement. Careful organisation of group work throughout the Foundation Stage ensures that children learn to work and co-operate with a range of adults. This makes a positive contribution to children's attitudes and relationships in the nursery and reception classes. All children leave their parents/carers happily and settle quickly to the established routines.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that children exceed the requirements of the early learning goals in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- All adults give children many and varied opportunities to increase their understanding and use of language.

Commentary

37. Adults in the nursery and reception classes work very closely together. This ensures children learn to listen carefully to adults and each other. Most children achieve well in developing their speaking skills and talk happily with each other and adults. They quickly learn to speak clearly and develop the use of sentences when they answer questions. All adults share stories with children throughout the day. This interests them in books and helps them understand that print has meaning. Children enjoy listening to stories and, by the end of their time in the nursery, many choose to look at books independently. In reception, children successfully use their knowledge of letter sounds to read common words and simple sentences. Staff ensure that children in the reception classes increase their early writing skills. This is effective because all children know that writing conveys meaning and can write their own names and simple captions. The more able children are already beginning to write simple sentences. This is a result of the careful teaching and children's high levels of interest and enthusiasm. Most children in the reception classes already exceed the expectations of the early learning goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching stimulates children to learn and gives them many opportunities to explore number and shape.
- Very clear assessment procedures are used very well to build on and increase children's previous knowledge.

Commentary

38. Staff provide an exciting and stimulating range of mathematical opportunities in the nursery and reception classes. This ensures children become interested and motivates them to increase their skills in recognising and using numbers. By the time they leave the nursery most children already write well formed numerals. The very effective support for all children ensures they increase their skills so that, by the time they leave the reception classes, most exceed the early learning goals. Throughout the Foundation Stage children enjoy counting sessions and join in eagerly. Reception staff work hard to increase children's ability to use suitable mathematical language. For example, children used everyday objects to reinforce their understanding of addition. The children were very enthusiastic about this activity and quickly learned to add on and subtract. All children support their learning effectively by using computers. This increases their mathematical understanding as well as their computer skills as they identify and move shapes on the screen. Adults use assessment very effectively to give children work that meets their

identified needs. This ensures that children consolidate their understanding and knowledge before moving on to new learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The consistently high quality teaching gives children confidence to ask questions and to explore different situations.
- The Foundation Stage staff ensure all children have many opportunities to increase their awareness of the world around them.

Commentary

39. Throughout the Foundation Stage the very good teaching increases children's confidence in investigating natural and manufactured objects. This develops their knowledge of living creatures and of the need to care for them and each other. All adults make sure that children increase their awareness of the world around them. They take them out into the immediate local area and make very effective use of the school grounds. Support from a local garden centre increases children's awareness of the meaning of care and enhances their enjoyment of the outside learning area. For example, children enjoy caring for the rainbow garden and planting different seeds and seedlings. The children are confident enough to ask questions and make suggestions. Adults provide interesting work; this stimulates and motivates children to learn and achieve. They experiment with materials, joining them together to make stuffed bears and moving joints. This increases their ability to make choices and decide which methods work best. Very careful teaching ensures that all children learn the importance of planning their work. For instance, children made and matched fruit salads to their previously drawn plans. They evaluated the results carefully and suggested improvements. All teachers ensure children develop a keen interest in computers. They have secure skills in using the mouse and keyboard effectively to control movement on the screen. These skills are further developed as children use the dedicated computer room to increase their techniques. Most children already exceed the early learning goals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that children achieve very well in developing their awareness and use of space.
- The very effective use of indoor and outdoor provision increases children's ability to use and control their bodies and limbs.

Commentary

40. Staff work very hard to increase children's skills in using and controlling their bodies. This results in skilful sequences of movement and a well-developed ability to use pencils, scissors and other tools. All children in the Foundation Stage have access to the school hall and to well equipped outside learning areas. The current weekly lesson with a visiting instructor from a locally funded initiative is having a positive effect on children's enjoyment, skills and interest. Adults use these areas very effectively to develop independent learning and the ability to work safely with large equipment. The very effective co-ordinator has ensured each class has immediate access to outdoor learning. This gives all the children

opportunities to work outside on a variety of surfaces. Throughout the Foundation Stage children have plenty of chances to increase their skills in using tools such as pencils, scissors and brushes and in shaping and joining materials. Most children's skills already exceed the expectations of the early learning goals in the reception classes.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All adults give children many interesting opportunities to develop their imagination.
- Children achieve very well in recognising and copying rhythms.

Commentary

41. Consistently very good quality teaching ensures that children begin to develop their imagination effectively from entry to the nursery. The very good provision of imaginative areas that interest and involve boys and girls increases thinking, speaking and co-operative skills. For example, children enjoy using the campsite and planning what they are going to do. All children learn to mix and use paint to create pictures and patterns and use materials to make collages. Adults in the reception classes build very well on these early experiences. This helps children develop their skills of using media and materials very well. They use their imagination very effectively when, for example, they go on a bear hunt and increase their knowledge of directions. All children practise their singing skills in a range of nursery rhymes and jingles in lessons and have specific music sessions. Children in the reception classes achieve very well in identifying, copying and playing rhythmic accompaniments to songs. All staff promote children's creative skills very well and most are likely to exceed the requirements of the early learning goals by the end of their reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to good achievement and above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Assessment procedures are good, but use of information to set individual pupil targets needs further development.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have enough opportunities to apply their writing skills in different ways or to write at length.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to make wider use of their writing skills to support work in other subjects.

Commentary

42. Recent results in national tests and an analysis of pupils' work show that pupils of all abilities achieve well in their reading and writing. Overall standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average and are higher than at the time of the last inspection. Over a third of pupils reach the higher standard (Level 3) in reading by the end of Year 2, and a similar proportion reach Level 5 in English by the end of Year 6. Standards in speaking and listening are average. The strong focus on, and changes to, the teaching of reading in Years 1 and 2 have resulted in good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Year

2 read confidently and expressively, using punctuation to create the mood of the story. The teaching of reading is good. Group reading sessions are well organised with books carefully chosen to match the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers ask probing questions that challenge pupils' thinking and extend their understanding of the text. As a result of the strong focus on the development of pupils' word-building skills, they make confident and effective attempts at reading unfamiliar words. The school works hard to promote the enjoyment of books and involves pupils in choosing books for the school library. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and pupils in Year 6 agree that the library contains an interesting range of books.

43. The teaching of key skills of spelling and sentence construction is good and pupils' writing in Year 2 shows a good grasp of grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, use of their writing skills is only satisfactory, because pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills in different ways or to write at length. This limits progress, particularly for more able pupils. By Year 6, pupils achieve well in writing, because teaching effectively extends pupils' skills and provides them with a greater range of opportunities for writing in English lessons. They put across their ideas clearly and are encouraged to use interesting vocabulary, which brings their writing to life. For example, in a very good Year 5 lesson, the teacher's lively and imaginative approach generated much enthusiasm and interest resulting in some very effective choices of words and phrases. Some examples of pupils' use of ICT to record their written work were seen but these were limited.
44. Regular checks on how well pupils are doing give teachers a clear idea of their progress. They make good use of the information to identify different ability groups and pupils who need extra help and guidance. Effective support systems are in place to rectify any weaknesses and ensure that pupils progress well in developing the skills they need. Learning support assistants are well trained and ably support pupils with special educational needs by checking that they understand the tasks and giving effective guidance as needed. However, teachers do not always explain at the beginning of lessons what is to be learned, or evaluate pupils' learning at the end, so that pupils know how well they are doing. The current system for identifying pupils' individual targets is slow and unmanageable and therefore not as effective as it could be.
45. The co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable and has a clear view of the strengths of the subject. She identifies areas for development through classroom observation and examination of pupils' work and helps to bring about improvement by planning and implementing the necessary action. Although standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory, she has identified this as an area in which standards could be raised. Throughout the school there is an increased focus on providing pupils with planned opportunities for speaking. Her good leadership and management and her desire to raise standards further are reflected in the overall good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. There is not enough focus on developing key literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. As a result there is inconsistency throughout the school. In science, pupils have some good opportunities to use their writing skills. In Year 2, work on the environment reinforced their letter writing skills. By contrast, too little use is made of pupils' writing skills in history and geography and opportunities to develop literacy skills and harness pupils' enthusiasm are missed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 2 have improved since the last inspection, and standards by Year 6 have been maintained.
- Pupils do well in mathematics.
- The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school and so pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Assessment procedures are used well to identify pupils who need additional support.
- In some lessons, the initial mental arithmetic sessions are not as effective as they could be.

Commentary

47. Results in national tests at Year 2 have improved since the last inspection and in 2003 were well above average. In the current Year 2, standards are above average as there are more pupils with special educational needs within the year group. In national tests at Year 6, standards have varied slightly from year to year because of differences in attainment in the year groups. In 2003, the school's performance was well above average. Standards are broadly similar in the current Year 6 but, with a slightly smaller proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard, overall standards are above average. An analysis of pupils' work shows that throughout the school they make good progress in numeracy and use a suitable range of strategies to do calculations in number. Pupils gain a good understanding of other aspects of mathematics, including shape, measurement and problem solving. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress and reach a higher standard because of good levels of challenge within lessons. This represents good achievement for all pupils and is an improvement since the last inspection.
48. Overall teaching is good throughout the school and so pupils achieve well. Teachers provide pupils, including those with special educational needs, with good levels of encouragement. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and behaviour in lessons is very good. Teachers make sound use of the National Numeracy Strategy when planning lessons and provide a good balance between number work and other aspects of mathematics, including problem solving. Clear explanations help pupils to develop a good understanding of number, shape and measurements.
49. In the lessons seen, which ranged from satisfactory to good, the mental arithmetic start to the lesson did not have a clear enough focus on a useful mental strategy for pupils to develop. The pace was often slow and questioning did not always ensure all pupils were fully involved. In some lessons the starter activity took too long, so reducing the time available for the main activity.
50. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and teachers make effective use of this data to identify pupils for additional support. This intervention programme and the support given in lessons by learning support staff ensures all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. While pupils were seen to use measurements in science during the inspection, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills across the

curriculum. Teachers do not plan sufficiently for pupils to use number, data handling and measurements in other subjects, such as design and technology and geography. Computers are occasionally used to reinforce work in numeracy but opportunities within lessons to support pupils' learning are often missed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The current focus on scientific enquiry and investigation is having a positive effect on standards and achievement.
- Pupils achieve well because of the consistency of teaching and strong leadership and management.
- Pupils do not always use their writing skills to good effect in science.
- The varied and stimulating curriculum interests and motivates pupils to learn.
- The current assessment systems show what pupils can do, but do not give a clear indication of what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

52. There has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Test results and inspection evidence show that standards are above average, progress is good from Years 1 to 6 and teaching is consistently good. All pupils achieve well in investigative and experimental science, which was a weak area at the last inspection.
53. The school's performance in national tests at the end of Year 2 is not likely to be as high as that in 2003. This is because there are more lower-attaining pupils in the current Year 2. An analysis of written work shows that by Year 2 pupils achieve standards above those expected from this age group because of the good number of pupils reaching the higher standard, Level 3. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below those expected. The focus on scientific investigation and enquiry ensures that pupils in Year 1 achieve above average standards in their work. Teachers build effectively on this as pupils move through Year 2 and ensure that the work develops from pupils' previous learning. Teachers make the work interesting and stimulating and, as a result, pupils want to learn. Their work on environmental issues is of a particularly good standard.
54. By Year 6, standards are above those expected nationally. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. This is because of the increased focus on investigative work and teachers ensuring pupils understand the meaning of technical language. By Year 6 pupils have a clear understanding of scientific processes and use these to good effect in their work on setting up fair tests to decide which substances will dissolve. They have secure knowledge of the properties of solids, liquids and gases. Most pupils use the correct technical formulae for gases such as carbon dioxide and oxygen. The majority of pupils understand the principle of refraction and use this in their work on how light travels. All pupils respond well to the interesting teaching and work with a will to learn new facts.
55. The strong and well-informed leadership ensures that guidance for teachers is clear and that pupils build on their earlier learning. Consequently, teaching and learning are good. The effective subject co-ordinator ensures that all teachers place much emphasis on the investigative element of science. This makes a significant contribution to pupils'

achievement, interest and motivation. Teachers make activities in science interesting and exciting for all pupils. This makes sure that girls are as enthusiastic as boys and achieve equally well. All teachers take care to give pupils work that matches their identified needs. The tasks for pupils with special educational needs are carefully planned to support their individual needs. This, and the sensitive support from adults, ensures they achieve well in science. Support for higher attaining pupils is effective in developing their scientific knowledge and understanding. Throughout the school teachers ensure that pupils produce carefully labelled drawings and accurate diagrams. Their ability to write concise and clear summaries of their findings is restricted by the lack of opportunities to apply their knowledge of writing to scientific investigations.

56. The coverage of the science of living things is thorough and teachers are beginning to make satisfactory use of computers to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 use computers confidently and accurately to record their findings about food. All members of staff make effective use of the school's stimulating grounds and the local area to give pupils a varied and interesting curriculum. The school has a well-structured programme of health education that forms part of pupils' work on living things. This ensures that by Year 6, pupils have a clear understanding of relationships. Their work shows a good level of understanding of issues such as alcohol abuse and drug misuse.
57. The co-ordinator, who monitors teaching, learning and standards regularly, is very clear about what needs to be done to raise standards further. She has put a range of effective strategies in place already. These include an emphasis on the use of investigation and correct scientific language from Year 1 and this is making a positive contribution to pupils' achievement. She has correctly identified the need in the coming academic year to identify targets for improvement. Assessment is satisfactory but there is some inconsistency in its effective use and in marking to improve pupils' work. The subject leader is aware of this and is already putting strategies in place to address the issue.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and provision for the subject have improved since the last inspection.
- The subject is well led.
- There are no whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' progress.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects.

Commentary

58. The school has successfully improved the provision for the subject since the last inspection when teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. Good leadership of the subject has resulted in resources and pupils' access to computers now being good following the development of an ICT suite. The opening of the ICT suite has supported teaching and enhanced pupils' learning well. Teachers' confidence and expectations have improved as a result of appropriate training and the introduction of a satisfactory curriculum based on national guidelines. Consequently, standards have improved and are no longer below expectations. There are clear targets for future development of the subject and the use of ICT in supporting learning outlined in the school improvement plan.

59. Evidence from pupils' previous work, discussions with staff and pupils and observations in lessons show that standards throughout the school are in line with national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils make sound progress through their weekly visits to the ICT suite where they develop their computer skills. Pupils in Year 2 satisfactorily program a toy robot to turn and move forwards and backwards. By Year 6, pupils use a suitable range of skills to produce multimedia slides that combine text and graphics.
60. The progression in pupils' learning through the school indicates that teaching over time is satisfactory. During the inspection teaching and learning in lessons were satisfactory, with one example of good teaching observed. During lessons in the ICT suite, teachers make good use of the resources available. They provide clear explanations by using the digital projector to demonstrate programs and effective individual support as they circulate around the class. In planning lessons teachers make suitable links between the ICT skills being taught and other areas of learning. This was done most effectively in the good lesson observed when pupils' development in the use of a graphics program was carefully combined with their work in art and design.
61. As there is no whole-school system for recording what groups of pupils can do in order to help teachers with their planning, assessment of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Useful ICT logbooks are being introduced, in which pupils record what they have done. This is beginning to give pupils a better understanding of what they can do and how they can improve.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. Teachers provide links with other subjects when planning their ICT lessons. However, insufficient use is made of pupils' improving skills and the new resources, both in the ICT suite and in the classrooms, to support learning across the curriculum. A small number of effective links between ICT and other subjects were noted during the inspection, for example in art and design. There is scope, however, to improve pupils' ICT skills through consolidating and developing their use by using, for example, communication, research and data handling skills in subjects such as science and design and technology. Overall, pupils make insufficient use of their computer skills and opportunities to use ICT are not clearly identified in teachers' planning.

HUMANITIES

63. In humanities, work was sampled in **geography** and **history**. All the pupils' work available was analysed, staff and pupils were interviewed and one geography lesson was seen. It is therefore not possible to form overall judgements about provision in these subjects.
64. The collection of pupils' work in **geography** shows that they use a satisfactory range of first hand experiences as they move through the school. Visits to the local area and further afield increase pupils' understanding of environmental issues. Teachers build on this understanding by involving pupils in a re-cycling project. This reinforces pupils' learning and knowledge and makes them more aware of steps they can take. Some pupils in Year 2 wrote thoughtful poems that demonstrated their understanding of human impact on the Earth. From the evidence gathered it is apparent that standards meet those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. There is little evidence of the use of ICT or mathematics to support pupils' work in geography. Pupils' work shows they do not use their writing skills effectively in geography. This restricts their achievement. The subject leader checks teachers' planning to ensure all areas of the National Curriculum are covered. There are no consistent assessment systems to show how well pupils are doing as they move through the school.
65. In **history**, limited work in pupils' books and displays around the school suggest that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum and pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of their knowledge and skills. In some year groups there was less recorded work than that normally found, but what was available in the books of pupils in Year 6 was broadly typical of that achieved by pupils of a similar age. However, the tasks set are often not sufficiently demanding and pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their literacy skills. This limits their progress. Pupils in Year 2 show a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of events such as The Great Fire of London. By Year 6 pupils have broadened their knowledge about different times in history, such as the Tudor period. Visits to places of historical interest make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are not yet systematic enough to enable pupils to have a clear understanding of what aspects of historical skills they need to improve upon.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

66. The inspection did not focus on these subjects and so it is not possible to make judgements on the quality of provision across the school. A small sample of lessons or parts of lessons was observed, pupils' previous work was examined where it was available and discussions were held with staff and pupils.
67. Throughout the school there are attractive displays celebrating pupils' work in **art and design**. These examples show that pupils' skills of drawing and painting are developing well. Some examples, such as Year 4's shelter drawings, exceed expectations for pupils of this age. Pupils study and learn from the work of well-known artists such as Andy Warhol and Henry Moore. Two lessons were observed in art and design. The quality of teaching and learning was very good in one and good in the other. Teachers planned interesting activities, which built well on previous learning. In both lessons teachers introduced and encouraged pupils to use technical vocabulary to enable them to talk about their work. Pupils enjoy the various activities and are willing to work hard. They pay careful attention to teachers' guidance and these positive attitudes contribute to their

good progress. Opportunities to evaluate and discuss their work help them to recognise good quality work and how they might improve what they have done.

68. An analysis of teachers' planning, pupils' work and photographic evidence in **design and technology** indicates the National Curriculum requirements are met. Teachers follow national guidelines when planning activities and so pupils study how everyday objects work, design and make their own models and evaluate their own results. Examples of pupils' models show satisfactory making skills, as when using recycled cardboard boxes to make wheeled vehicles and a range of materials to make picture frames. Pupils satisfactorily use their knowledge of simple electrical circuits to enhance their model lamps and make question and answer quiz cards. They plan their activities using simple sketches, which vary in quality and in the main include labels and lists of materials needed. Pupils' plans and evaluations do not make sufficient use of measurements, tally charts and graphs to show the results of their work and develop their mathematical and ICT skills. In the one lesson seen, the teacher satisfactorily introduced a new activity based on making a pressure switch for a model burglar alarm and provided suitable resources, but pupils' initial plans lacked sufficient detail of how their alarms would be built.
69. Two lessons were seen in **music**, so reliable judgements on provision, standards and achievements cannot be made. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their skills across the expected range of musical activities and pupils can extend their skills by joining the music club. Pupils regularly take part in musical performances in school and in local community events, including a local festival of the arts. They have some interesting opportunities to see and work with musicians such as a drum group. The lessons seen had a satisfactory focus and sought to develop pupils' skills and understanding through practical musical activities. In one lesson, pupils composed their own verses to fit the melody of a call and response song and made satisfactory progress in performing these. They worked together to develop their performance by adding percussion accompaniments. In the second lesson, pupils did not make as much progress because the teacher did not evaluate the pupils' learning and give them guidance on how to improve their performance.
70. **Physical education** lessons and parts of lessons seen during the inspection were taken by a visiting instructor as part of a locally funded project to develop basic physical skills in younger pupils. Pupils and staff benefited from this specialist input. Teachers felt that by observing the activities it broadened their knowledge of the subject. Pupils enjoyed the instructor's enthusiastic approach and found the activities fun. Consequently, they were very well behaved, attentive and worked hard at improving their performance. Each activity seen had a clear focus on developing pupils' co-ordination, as when moving between markers in the hall, stepping over low hurdles and throwing bean bags and foam javelins on the field. Lessons began with an appropriate warm-up and stretching activities and so pupils had a good understanding of the impact of exercise on their bodies. Learning in the activities seen was at least satisfactory and at times good. The school has an adequate programme of swimming lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and by the end of Year 6 most pupils reach the standard expected by the National Curriculum and many exceed it. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development through the very wide range of after-school sporting activities made available to pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

This curriculum area was sampled and the evidence indicates that the programme for personal, social and health education is **good**.

71. Pupils' personal, social and health education is embedded in all aspects of the school's work and the three sessions seen were good. Pupils do well in developing a secure understanding of their own personal worth and awareness of their place within the school community. They are taught, for example, from an early age to take on responsibilities and participate in school activities. During regular circle time⁴ sessions pupils are encouraged to talk about and share their thoughts and feelings, and explore relationships. Through talking about their own feelings, they learn to handle them in a positive way. Pupils of all ages learn why they need to follow rules in order to live harmoniously with others and because adults show them respect and courtesy, they know that other people care for them. Pupils' very good behaviour reflects their understanding about right and wrong and the absence of bullying shows how they care for and about each other. From their work in science and physical education, they know about a healthy lifestyle and that food and exercise play an important part in growing up healthy and strong. Pupils in Year 6 have a clear understanding of relationships and a good level of understanding of issues such as alcohol abuse and drug misuse because of the well-structured programme of health education that forms part of pupils' work in science.

⁴ 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 of interruption from other children.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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