

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St. Joseph's R C V A Lower School**

Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109629

Headteacher: Miss M. O'Sullivan

Lead inspector: Mrs Barbara Taylor-Harris

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> –13<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 257757

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First School  
School category: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 3-9  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 293

School address: Chester Road  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire

Postcode: MK40 4HN

Telephone number: 01234 352062  
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr W Hamilton

Date of previous inspection: June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Joseph's R.C. V.A. Lower is a catholic school situated on the western outskirts of Bedford in a socially disadvantaged, multicultural area. Most pupils come from the local area, which has changed significantly since the last inspection, and other similar areas of the town. The school is larger than many primary schools and 38 per cent of pupils are from other Christian denominations or non Christian faiths. Currently, 286 pupils (111 boys and 145 girls) attend the school full time. A further 60 children (26 boys and 34 girls) attend the nursery part-time. Pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and 46 pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The school has identified 17.8 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs which is broadly in line with the national average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need. When children enter the school, their attainment is below that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times of first admission is similar to that found nationally. The school has a majority of long serving staff and has difficulty recruiting experienced Foundation Stage staff.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22518	Barbara Taylor-Harris	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
10965	Patricia Edwards	Lay inspector	
32218	Andrew Mumford	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage English Geography History
23262	Philip Martin	Team inspector	Personal, social and health education Special educational needs English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND YEARS 3 AND 4</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>26</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St. Joseph's R.C. Lower School provides a **satisfactory** quality of education overall but provides **well** for the pastoral and community side of education. The headteacher leads the school **well**. Pupils achieve **well** over time and reach **expected** standards for their age. The quality of teaching is **satisfactory** teaching. The school is **fairly effective** and provides **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good leadership by the headteacher who is ably supported by committed governors.
- Very good relationships which promote racial harmony and a good ethos for learning.
- Effective management of pupils ensures good behaviour and good attitudes.
- Good nursery provision but unsatisfactory provision for children in the reception class.
- Good care of pupils, good enrichment of the curriculum and good links with the community.
- Weaknesses in teachers' use of assessment information and marking of pupils' work.
- Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' achievement.
- Key staff and co-coordinators' leadership roles have insufficient impact on improvement.
- Very good financial management.
- Good links with parents who are positive about the school.

The school has made **satisfactory** improvement since the last inspection successfully improving the management of pupils' behaviour, assessment and record keeping procedures. Issues remain regarding the curriculum in the reception class.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils achieve **well over time** and well in personal, social emotional and physical development. Children start nursery with skills and experience below expectations for their age except in mathematics. They enter Year 1 with literacy skills below those expected for their age. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve **satisfactorily** but many Year 2 pupils have literacy skills **below** those expected for their age. In mathematics, science and information and communication technology pupils achieve **satisfactorily** and attain standards **in line** with national expectations.

#### Year 2 results

The school's test results fluctuate because the range of pupils' abilities varies significantly year on year. The 2003 Year 2 were an able group and attained test results above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and well above those of similar schools.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2,	compared with: all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	C	D	B	A
writing	C	D	B	A
mathematics	B	D	B	A

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

In Years 3 and 4 standards are **in line** with national expectations in speaking and listening and reading but are **slightly below** in writing. In mathematics, science and information and communication technology pupils achieve **satisfactorily** and attain standards **in line** with expectations for their age. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in other subjects.

Good support for less able pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language ensures they achieve well. However, there is insufficient challenge for more able pupils. There are satisfactory opportunities to use mathematical skills in other subjects but too few opportunities for the use of pupils' language and literacy, and computer skills.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **good** and their cultural awareness is **satisfactory**. Their attitudes and behaviour are **good** and their relationships with one another are **very good**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided is **satisfactory**. An effective focus on the pastoral side of education provides good care for pupils and promotes a racially harmonious and safe environment. The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory overall**. There are good features in teaching in most year groups and subjects. The quality of teaching in the nursery is good but unsatisfactory in reception. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory** but their use to help teachers plan different work for more able pupils is **unsatisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory** but the reception class curriculum is unsatisfactory as it does not meet the needs of the children. Enrichment activities are **good** with a varied programme of activities outside normal school hours. **Good**, spacious accommodation provides a specialist art room and a computer suite. Resources are **satisfactory**. The quality of care and support for pupils' personal development is **good** but pupils are not always aware of what they need to do to improve their work because teachers' marking is unsatisfactory. The school has **good** links with parents and provides them with good information. The links with the local community are **good** and those with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides **good** leadership, and her vision and aspirations are primarily responsible for the improvements made in the school. The leadership and management of personal, social and health education, provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. However, the leadership of other key staff and subject co-ordinators is **unsatisfactory**. They fulfil their management tasks but do not have sufficient impact on ensuring policies and decisions are consistently followed through and improvement secured. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. Governors are dedicated and hardworking and know the school's strengths well. They support school improvement but do not fully evaluate the impact of their decisions.

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

Responses from the parents' meeting and the questionnaires were positive and more positive than at the last inspection. Parents praised the school's good atmosphere and inclusive approach. Some parents raised concern about bullying but no incidents were seen during the inspection. Parents and pupils feel homework arrangements could be improved. The home school agreement is not sufficiently clear on the school's expectations for homework. Pupils' responded positively on their questionnaires and like physical education and art lessons most.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and provision in the reception class.
- Ensure assessment information is used to help teachers set targets for pupils, plan and provide different activities to challenge the knowledge and abilities of more able pupils.
- Ensure all teachers' marking identifies what has been achieved and gives clear guidance to pupils on how to improve further.
- Ensure co-ordinators lead development and improvement in their subjects.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve **well over time** and well in personal, social emotional and physical development. During the inspection standards and achievement across the school were **satisfactory**. Good and intensive support ensures less able pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and abilities. However, there is an insufficient focus on the needs of more able pupils.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children receive a good start to education in the nursery.
- Good provision for less able pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language helps them achieve well.

#### Commentary

1. Children start nursery with skills and experience below those expected for their age but achieve satisfactorily in most areas of learning. Over time standards within the school have risen at a faster rate than nationally over the last five years. Year on year pupils' standards of achievement vary due to differences in the overall ability of the groups but over time pupils achieve well. The school's test results compared favourably with those of similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are effectively supported by teaching assistants. Good support ensures pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make good progress. As they grow older they use English confidently and work with the rest of the class with less support, making similar progress to their classmates. More able pupils are not sufficiently well challenged to ensure they work at a higher level.
2. **Foundation Stage**<sup>1</sup>. Overall Foundation Stage children achieve satisfactorily. They achieve well in personal social and emotional and physical development and reach the expected Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> by the end of reception. They achieve satisfactorily in the other areas but they do not achieve the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding and creative development by the end of reception. Children get a good start to their education in nursery with well trained staff. Annually a reception class is established in January for the oldest reception pupils. Difficulties recruiting teachers experienced with teaching this age group have led to weaknesses in the provision and teaching which lessens children's achievement.
3. **Years 1 and 2.** – Results of national tests vary from year to year. This is because the proportion of more able and less able pupils and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language can be very different as can the numbers of boys and girls. Last year's Year 2 were an able group and their test results were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and well above average compared with similar schools. In

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<sup>1</sup> **FOUNDATION STAGE** –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.

<sup>2</sup> **EARLY LEARNING GOALS** - 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 communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and 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 pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

science they were above the national average based on the teachers' assessments. Few pupils reached the higher Level 3 in writing and the school has recently put strategies in place to try and remedy this. It is too soon to judge their impact.

## Key Stage 1

### Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003<sup>3</sup>

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (15.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.4 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.0 (16.9)	16.3 (16.5))

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The current Year 2 group is recognised by the school as having fewer able pupils. Inspection evidence shows that standards are in line with national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science and pupils achieve satisfactorily in lessons. Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to help them plan specific and more challenging work to enable more able pupils to work consistently at a higher level. For example, more able pupils complete the same work as the rest of the class and reach average standards in their recorded work.
- Year 3 and 4.** The school uses voluntary national curriculum tests for Year 4 pupils at the end of each year. Analysis of these and data collected by the local education authority show that last year's Year 4 achieved well and compared very favourably with other schools. The current Year 4 is not expected to do as well due to a different balance of more able and less able pupils. Inspection evidence shows that Year 4 pupils are reaching levels in line with expectations for their age and achieving satisfactorily in lessons. Few pupils are reaching the higher levels across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In relation to their test results in Year 2 they are achieving well.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily in information and communication technology and attain standards in line with expectations for their ages. It was not possible to make judgements on standards in other subjects.

### Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**; their relationships with one another are **very good**. The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is **good**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in the activities provided.
- Their behaviour in lessons and as they move around the school and playground is good.
- Pupils learn to respect others and develop values of honesty and fairness.
- Relationships between pupils are very good.

<sup>3</sup> **AVERAGE POINTS SCORE** - The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by all of their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The National Curriculum level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 1 = 9 points, a Level 2 = 15 points, Level 3 = 21 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the Level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. This means that a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Year 2 national tests is greater than 15.0 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age.

- Opportunities for pupils to study other cultures are limited.

### Commentary

7. Pupils have good attitudes to school and learning which is as it was during the previous inspection. They are proud of their school and enjoy being part of the school community. They know they need to work hard in lessons in order to do well. Pupils get on very well with each other and think they are treated fairly by the staff. Their behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtimes is good. Pupils know what standard of behaviour is expected of them and understand that bullying and racism will not be tolerated. No incidents were seen during the inspection. Any reported incidents of bullying or harassment are dealt with promptly by staff. All adults working in the school use the agreed behaviour policy consistently. This leads to a positive working atmosphere and good relationships which aids pupils' learning.
8. Pupils' spiritual development is good and pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Teachers value pupils' ideas and provide suitable occasions for pupils to develop their imagination and self awareness, for example, when writing and studying poetry. Pupils' moral and social development is good. Staff provide opportunities in circle times<sup>4</sup> to discuss moral issues such as car parking around the school and behaviour expected on the playground at lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities and this promotes their understanding of living in a community and social responsibility. For example, they help play leaders at lunchtime and act as classroom helpers. They acquire a good knowledge of European culture through visits to places of interest and visitors to the school but opportunities to study other cultures across the curriculum are limited.

### Exclusions

In the previous year there was one fixed period exclusion.

#### Ethnic background of pupils

#### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	84		
White – Irish	11		
White – any other White background	51		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	17	1	
Mixed – White and Asian	4		
Mixed – any other mixed background	3		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	7		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	7		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	8		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	17		
Black or Black British – African	14		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1		

<sup>4</sup> **CIRCLE TIME** - These are sessions where 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.

Chinese	1		
Any other ethnic group	4		

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

## Attendance

9. Last year's attendance rates were well below the national average due to poor attendance of some pupils. The school has worked closely with the Education Welfare Service to work with these pupils families which has resulted in very good improvement. Attendance rates are now broadly in line with the national average and staff monitor attendance carefully and effectively. All absences are rigorously followed up on the first day ensuring attendance is monitored well and accurate records are kept. The school ensures parents are made aware of the school rules regarding absence and the home school agreement supports the school's attendance policy.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.3	School data :	0.7
National data:	1.9	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 **satisfactory quality of education** for its pupils. An effective focus on the pastoral side of education ensures good care for pupils and good relationships which create a racially harmonious and safe environment for all pupils.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory** but their use is **unsatisfactory overall**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examples of good teaching were seen in nearly all year groups with one example of very good teaching in Year 2.
- The quality of teaching in the nursery and specialist teaching of music is good.
- The quality of teachers' marking and teaching in reception is unsatisfactory overall.
- Teachers do not make enough use of the assessment information they collect when planning work for more able pupils.

### Commentary

10. Although there were several good lessons seen, when balanced with other factors from looking at pupils' work, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall which is similar to that seen at the time of the last inspection. At that time there were issues related to slow pace in lessons, insufficiently clear explanations to pupils and inconsistency of behaviour management by teachers. These issues have been satisfactorily addressed. Behaviour management is good overall and results in no interruption in the pupils' learning. The unsatisfactory lessons observed during this inspection were related to insecure teacher knowledge of the reception curriculum, insufficient guidance and advice to pupils and only in one lesson unsatisfactory management of pupils.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0(0%)	1(3%)	18(46%)	17(43%)	3(8%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons

11. Examples of good quality teaching were seen in most of the subjects observed and in most year groups. In nursery the quality of teaching and planning is good and children experience a wide range of activities which takes account of their individual needs. This aids their learning and ensures they achieve well. The quality of teaching in reception is unsatisfactory overall as there is an overdependence on worksheets and class activities which do not meet the needs of children of this age. In one lesson difficulties with managing children's behaviour led to a slow pace and insufficient learning.
12. Teachers have good relationships with pupils which ensures pupils listen well and therefore understand the tasks they are given. Good behaviour and positive attitudes come from good class management and this aids pupils' concentration and their learning. Teachers use good questioning techniques to challenge pupils' thinking and thus improve their skills and knowledge. In one lesson pupils did not learn sufficiently well as insufficient guidance and support was given to extend and challenge their understanding. Learning support assistants are particularly effective and make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. They provide good support in lessons for less able pupils, pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language. This good quality support effectively enables pupils to participate fully and with confidence in all learning tasks. Very good class management in a Year 2 physical education lesson meant pupils were ready and keen to start as soon as they entered the hall. They listened well and followed instructions without a sound which ensured a fast pace to the lesson enabling pupils to undertake a wide range of physical activities. The lesson challenged their fitness levels and improved their skills. Teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects in nursery, the reading initiative and music motivates all pupils to try hard and learn well.
13. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory and improved since the last inspection. Inspection evidence supports the school's self-evaluation as it identifies a need to make better use of assessment information. Good use of assessment information guides the support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language enabling them to learn well. However, the information is not used sufficiently well to help teachers plan specific work to meet the needs of more able pupils. There are missed opportunities in lessons for teachers to challenge their understanding and take the learning to the next level. The quality of teachers' marking is unsatisfactory overall. There is insufficient information to enable pupils to know how well they are doing or how to improve further. As a result there is no system for making pupils aware of what they could and should be achieving, no targets and too few opportunities for pupils to assess their work and that of others.

### The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Enrichment activities are **good**. Accommodation is **good** and resources are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for reception children is unsatisfactory.

- The school provides an interesting and varied programme of activities outside normal school hours.
- Support staff make a significant contribution to the success of the curriculum.
- The accommodation is clean, attractively displayed and spacious.

## Commentary

14. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is a new intake to nursery each term and so each year a reception class for the older Foundation Stage children has to be established. The school found it difficult to recruit experienced Foundation Stage teachers for January. Temporary teachers in the reception class lack specific knowledge and experience required for teaching children of this age. This has led to an imbalance in quality between the curriculum provided for most children in nursery and this class. The nursery curriculum is well planned so children benefit from a well-structured, broad and balanced curriculum that reflects their needs. In the reception class there is too much teacher directed class work, an over reliance on unsuitable worksheets and insufficient opportunities for children to select activities. This results in a curriculum which does not fully meet the needs of children of this age in this class.
15. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4 is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education covers a wide range of aspects so that pupils become increasingly aware of how to keep fit, healthy and safe. All pupils, whatever their background or ability, are able to benefit from the curriculum. Provision for children with special educational needs is good because they receive good support from learning support assistants. This means that these pupils benefit from what is taught and make good progress towards the specific targets set for them. The curriculum to support pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is good and they receive good support. This helps them to achieve well at this stage of their learning.
16. The school provides a good range of activities outside normal lesson times. Pupils of all ages benefit from taking part in these activities which include a range of sporting, artistic and cultural activities. The school also sends some more able pupils to the summer 'Children's University' at a nearby university so that these children have an opportunity to work at a higher level. Visiting music teachers teach violin, cello and piano lessons which enhances the education of those pupils who take part. Specialist music teaching provides well for all pupils.
17. There are sufficient teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum except in reception. The school has difficulty recruiting suitably trained staff which leads to inconsistency in the quality of provision and children's learning. Accommodation is good and used well. The school benefits from spare teaching areas because there are fewer pupils now than when the infant and junior schools were amalgamated some years ago. As a result there is an art activities classroom and an information and communication technology suite which are well used. The library does not have enough books, nor is it laid out in a way that makes it useful as a resource for research or for learning library skills. However, the school uses the local library loans service to supplement books about the particular topics pupils are studying which helps to mitigate the impact of the limited range within their own library. There are good-sized playgrounds, enlivened by adventure playground equipment. The school makes regular use of an outdoor swimming pool in the latter half of the summer term, enhancing physical educational opportunities for all pupils. The nursery area is attractive, well resourced and secure enabling staff to provide good opportunities for children to develop independence and confidence.
18. The school is satisfactorily resourced for teaching in most subjects. The computer suite is an asset and the school's recent acquisition of an interactive whiteboard has helped to improve the quality of information and communication technology teaching. However seating, which can not be adjusted to different heights, means that some younger pupils are not able to work in a comfortable enough posture.

## Care, guidance and support

The quality of care and support for pupils' personal development is **good**. Health and safety and welfare procedures are **good** and the school gives pupils **satisfactory** support and guidance overall. The involvement of pupils in school development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their pupils well and monitor their personal development effectively.
- Parents are happy with the school's induction programme.
- Child protection procedures are fully in place.
- Pupils are not always aware of what they need to do to improve.

### Commentary

19. The school has maintained the strengths identified by the previous inspection and continued to improve. The school provides a caring Christian environment where teachers know their pupils well and value their contributions in lessons. Staff monitor pupils' personal development well through class discussions and the progress of pupils is recorded annually. However, pupils are not always clear on what they need to do to improve their work because teachers do not provide sufficient written comment. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well thought out and their individual education plans effectively identify the steps that need to be taken to help them to succeed. Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language receive good support which aids their learning and they achieve well. Across the school there is satisfactory support for pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils' views are sought through the school council which meets several times each term and recently discussed and agreed playground rules. This helps them gain an awareness of social responsibility and citizenship. Child protection procedures are well understood by staff and training on child protection issues is up to date.
20. The school has effective health and safety procedures and regular risk assessments are carried out. All necessary safety checks are up to date. First aid procedures and the methods of informing parents of any accidents and the treatment given are effective. The majority of parents say they are happy with the school's induction arrangements. These allow children to settle quickly and feel secure in their new surroundings. Good care and support ensures pupils have very good and trusting relationships with all adults working in the school.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed **good** links with parents and provides them with good information. The links with the local community are **good** and those with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are happy with the information they receive in newsletters and termly curriculum letters.
- The Parent Teacher Association is supportive of the school and raises considerable funds to help with resources.
- The school has good links with the local community.

## Commentary

21. The school continues to provide good information for parents in regular newsletters and curriculum letters as found at the time of the previous inspection. The majority of parents are pleased with what the school provides and feel comfortable about talking to staff regarding any worries or concerns. Parents and pupils feel homework is not always provided consistently and are unsure of the school's homework policy. The home school agreement is not sufficiently clear on the school's expectations for homework. The school encourages parents to help and volunteers assist in class and school clubs. Staff appreciate this regular, reliable help. The Parent Teacher Association organises fund raising and social events that are well supported by parents and the community as a whole. Pupils' annual progress reports are clear regarding what pupils can do but areas for development are sometimes too broad and provide little information on how they need to improve and ways in which their parents can help them. There are good partnerships with parents whose children have special educational needs. Parents are invited to review meetings so that they can make their contribution to the discussion that takes place and any decisions made regarding their children. The prospectus is a detailed practical guide to the school. The school provides helpful workshops for parents on a range of topics including parenting issues and drug awareness. Parents have been consulted on their expectations of the school and feel fully involved.
22. The school has developed good links with the local church and community. A range of visitors, including the parish priest, the community police and local elderly residents, have enhanced pupils learning. Parents are invited to celebrate at pupils' first communions and other special events. Harvest gifts are distributed locally and pupils support local homeless charities and the local children's hospice. There are productive links with local universities and colleges for students on initial teacher training and for nursery nurse training. However, links with the other schools within a recently re-organised local school's cluster are in the early stages of development. Transition procedures are good. The school welcomes and supports students from local high schools on work experience.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides **good** leadership, but the leadership of other key staff is **unsatisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school.
- Key staff and subject co-ordinators provide satisfactory management but do not lead.
- The lack of a designated co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage leads to unsatisfactory leadership for this part of the school.
- Pupils' progress is monitored and assessment data analysed, but this is not yet used sufficiently well to raise standards.
- Financial management procedures are very good.
- Governors support the school well and are aware of its strengths and some of its weaknesses, but evaluation of initiatives is not yet embedded.

## Commentary

23. The headteacher leads the school well and has successfully managed the changing nature of the school over time. Her vision and aspirations are primarily responsible for the improvements made in the school. She also manages provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language well, keeps detailed records of their progress and ensures that they receive the support required to achieve well. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with

special educational needs are good. The knowledgeable and committed special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that all procedures are followed and pupils' needs are carefully considered when devising their individual education plans. However, whilst other key staff fulfil the management tasks required of them, they do not effectively demonstrate leadership and this has slowed down the progress made in ensuring policies are implemented and consistency of approach established. Their job descriptions are clearly defined in terms of the aspects of the school that they manage, but there is an insecure understanding of the leadership role. The structures in place to lead and manage the school do not embrace all areas of the school. As a result, weaknesses in teaching in parts of the Foundation Stage have not been fully addressed because no-one has clear responsibility for it. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory overall, but management of personal, social and health education and special educational needs are good. The role of subject co-ordinators has developed since the last inspection, and they now have opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' work within their areas of responsibility and an allocation of non-contact time to facilitate this. New initiatives, such as the Early Reading Research programme<sup>5</sup>, have been introduced to tackle identified weaknesses. Assessment information is analysed in some depth, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but insufficient use is made of it yet to effect change in the curriculum to improve pupils' attainment.

24. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for staff to access continuing professional development. However, arrangements for teachers to share ideas following attendance at courses are too informal to have sufficient impact on improving teaching and learning. Systems for performance management for teachers and support staff are in place, and help to focus all members of the school community on the priorities identified for development. The school development plan outlines these priorities and identifies clear actions to be carried out. However, the way progress against the issues and the impact they have are too vague. Governors are involved in shaping the school's direction and in the creation of the school development plan. They are committed to the priorities contained within it. However, they do not yet fully evaluate the effectiveness of the decisions made. For example, teaching assistants are employed in every class to support learning, and it is felt that this has been beneficial, but no evidence has been sought to confirm this. The governors know the school's strengths and are justly proud of them. They are aware of the weaknesses, but do not ensure that the school's monitoring procedures and systems are sufficiently rigorous and effective. These do not have a sufficiently clear focus on the progress being made to improve.
25. Financial management systems are very good. The bursar ensures that all spending is within the limits set by the governors in the budget, or has identified alternative funding. The budget is set, taking account of existing commitments, to support the educational priorities within the school development plan. In recent years, the budget has moved from a significant deficit to being in balance with a contingency which is about right.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	720,168	Balance from previous year	18,937
Total expenditure	715,780	Balance carried forward to the next	23,325
Expenditure per pupil	2,503		

<sup>5</sup> **Early Reading Research** is a detailed classroom based research into reading, writing and spelling. It began in 1995 and has identified some of the most effective ways of raising literacy standards, researched their impact and aims to ensure that all children experience success in learning to read

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

26. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. However, whilst the nursery gives children a good start to school, provision in the reception class is unsatisfactory due to difficulties recruiting teachers experienced in this stage of education mid year. This affects about a third of the oldest reception children for part of the year as they move into the reception class in the term after their fifth birthday. The youngest reception children move straight from the nursery to Year 1. Induction procedures for children starting in the nursery are good, and this helps to develop their confidence and build good relationships with parents. Children enter school with a range of attainment, but it is mainly below expectations, especially in their language skills. Although they achieve satisfactorily, they are still below expectations when they move into Year 1. Children who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well.
27. The nursery staff, including both teachers and nursery nurses, work together as an effective team. In effect, these teachers manage the Foundation Stage. However, there is no designated co-ordinator, and as a result there is a lack of clear leadership. Efforts have been made to support the temporary teachers in the reception classes, but this has not been fully effective. Teaching here is unsatisfactory, except when supported by a nursery teacher, due to an insufficient understanding of how young children learn and some ineffective management of children's behaviour. There is an imbalance between whole class activities and opportunities for children's choice, with too much direction from the teacher. The reception class does not fully reflect the Foundation Stage curriculum. The nursery has good planning and sound assessment systems, so children benefit from a well-structured, broad and balanced curriculum that reflects their needs. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Good relationships between adults and children create an atmosphere where children develop confidence
- Teachers structure sessions well to develop children's personal and social skills

#### **Commentary**

28. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers plan sessions carefully to develop this area of learning, so children achieve well. As a result, most are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals for personal, social and emotional development by the time they enter Year 1. The good induction procedures ensure children arrive in school feeling it is a secure environment. The arrangements for welcoming children each day reinforce this, and most of them separate from their parents and carers confidently and happily. In the nursery, adults and children enjoy good relationships, and this also helps to develop confidence. As a result, children tackle new activities, persevere with challenging tasks and behave well. The different backgrounds of the children are valued as, for example, greetings in a variety of languages are used within a story. Children's increasing independence is not built on sufficiently well in the reception class, where, for example, adults put their aprons on for them, and there is much less opportunity for them to make choices.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good questioning by nursery teachers develops children's speaking and listening skills well.

### **Commentary**

29. Teachers have identified that there is a significant proportion of children entering nursery with special educational needs relating to speaking and listening. They have put into place a clear structure for each session, including the greeting of every child on arrival, to take opportunities to develop these skills. As a result, children make satisfactory progress in all aspects of communication, language and literacy, but they are still below expected levels of attainment at the time they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good opportunities are provided for children to explore writing in different contexts through play, and they are introduced to books by sharing them with adults and through structured learning of the sounds letters make. As a result, most children know how to hold books and turn pages, and that the print carries meaning. However, few recognise many words, and their writing is frequently restricted to their name and the letters it uses.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good opportunities are provided to develop number skills in the nursery.

### **Commentary**

30. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment in this area that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make satisfactory progress, and most are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year. Good opportunities are provided by teachers, especially in the nursery, for children to count, and most are secure in their ability to go to 20 or above. They have a satisfactory knowledge of shapes because they use them in their play, such as when they make models with recycled materials. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good questioning by the nursery teachers, particularly working with reception-aged children, develops their mathematical vocabulary. In the reception class, work is frequently recorded on worksheets. These do not reflect the needs of individual children or extend their mathematical understanding.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop good computer skills because of the good opportunities provided.
- Skills related to the use of tools are systematically taught.

## Commentary

31. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in this area are satisfactory. They enter with attainment below expectations, and many are not likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they move to Year 1. Teachers plan a good range of activities in the nursery, and give children good opportunities to explore the world around them. For instance, children use large magnets to see what will stick to them. They have good opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills, and they use a mouse confidently, pointing, dragging and clicking to paint pictures on the computer. The systematic teaching of skills, such as using scissors or cutting up apples with a plastic knife, develops children's ability to use tools effectively. In the reception class children took advantage of the opportunity to make models of a scarecrow, using their previous knowledge to help solve problems.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are planned for outdoor physical activities in the nursery.
- Ineffective behaviour management strategies result in missed opportunities in the reception class lesson in the hall.

## Commentary

32. By the time children enter Year 1 they achieve the Early Learning Goals. Since they start school below expectations their achievement is good. This is as a result of good teaching, particularly by the teachers in the nursery. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their play outdoors as they use the good secure play area provided. They use the climbing frame with confidence, and develop co-ordination skills using the tricycles and a range of balls. They develop dexterity as they play in damp and dry sand, putting the sand into a variety of containers. In the reception class, activities are well planned when supported by the nursery teacher, such as the making and cutting up of sandwiches. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall as the strength seen in provision in nursery is not developed further in the reception class. There are missed opportunities in a reception class physical education session in the hall for developing children's skills further because of the teacher's unsatisfactory management of the class.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are planned for children to listen and respond to music in the nursery.

## Commentary

33. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for children to develop their creativity. Role-play, painting and work in three-dimensions features consistently in teachers' planning. There are good opportunities for role-play, with a good range of clothes for dressing up and prompts to encourage creative play. Music is used well in the nursery. Children listen to music and are encouraged to respond to it, and to sing simple songs. Skills are taught in the reception class, but there is insufficient opportunity for children to apply them creatively. Achievement is satisfactory in this area, as they enter below

expectations. Although they make steady progress, they are still below expectations when they enter Year 1.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1 and KEY STAGE 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Teaching assistants effectively support less able pupils and help them achieve well.
- Teachers do not use assessment information sufficiently well to plan challenging activities for more able pupils.
- Marking does not give guidance to pupils so they know how to improve their work.
- The frequent use of worksheets in Years 1 and 2 does not give pupils the opportunity to consolidate and extend their literacy skills.
- The library is too small to give adequate opportunities for children to fully develop research skills.

#### **Commentary**

34. Most pupils enter Year 1 with literacy skills that are below average. They make satisfactory progress, although many are still below average by the end of Year 2 in speaking and listening, reading and writing. By the end of Year 4 standards are broadly in line with national expectations, because less able pupils have achieved well. They make faster progress than other groups because they receive good support from teaching assistants in parts of the lesson where pupils are working in groups. Other groups do not benefit from direct teaching at this time, and their work for more able pupils is rarely matched to their needs, so their progress is more limited. Standards in speaking and listening and reading are in line with national expectations by Year 4, but writing is slightly below. Pupils in Year 4 are achieving well against their Year 2 national test results in reading. The school has identified writing as being the weaker part of literacy. Speaking and listening sessions and the Early Reading Research project have been implemented to give pupils the tools to develop their writing. As these are new initiatives, it is too soon to make a judgement about their impact on pupils' attainment.
35. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In most lessons, the enthusiasm of teachers helps to motivate pupils well and they behave well. This was particularly evident in the Early Reading Research project sessions. Good questioning helps develop pupils' vocabulary and ideas. Teachers give clear explanations so pupils know what they are expected to do. Whilst teaching assistants are used well in group work, opportunities are often missed to use them in whole class sessions for support of the less able or to help assess learning.
36. Pupils are given a variety of opportunities to develop their reading. Well taught guided reading sessions provide the pupils with suitable books and structure to help them progress. There are many books in school, and those in the library are relatively up to date and relevant. However, the library is very small and cannot accommodate a class. Research skills are taught in the classroom. Small groups of pupils in Years 3 and 4 go to the library to practise these skills, where a volunteer supervises and assists them. However, they often have too short a time for this to be productive.
37. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards have risen, and use is made of assessment information to identify areas of particular weakness. However, as yet this is not used sufficiently well to alter the curriculum to meet the needs of more able pupils. Marking does not indicate to pupils how they might improve their work, and the use of targets for pupils is not consistently found.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

38. Use of language and literacy in other subjects is unsatisfactory. There are some good examples, such as a Year 3 project where pupils write and make their own books, which links well with computer skills such as word processing and with music as they put them on tape. Teachers are aware of the need to develop speaking and listening skills in other subjects. However, few opportunities are taken to encourage extended writing in subjects such as history and geography.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising steadily and the school's Year 2 test results compare favourably with those of similar schools.
- Good support to lower-attaining pupils and those who are at an early stage of learning English enables them to achieve well.
- Teachers do not consistently provide challenging work for more able pupils.
- Teachers' marking is unsatisfactory and ineffective in raising achievement.

### Commentary

39. National test results in 2003 show that, by the time they are seven years of age, pupils reach above average standards when compared with all schools nationally, and well above when compared with similar schools. The current Year 2 pupils reach average standards, as they did at the time of the last inspection. The difference is because the current Year 2 is not as able as last year's and not as many pupils reach higher or average levels. In 2003, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was similar to the national average, but more than the average number reached the expected levels. This is because lower-attaining pupils and those who are at an early stage of learning English are effectively supported by learning support assistants. Pupils start Year 1 with average levels of mathematical knowledge so achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieve satisfactorily. By the time pupils are nine, standards match those expected from pupils of that age. In Year 4 this represents good achievement against their Year's national test results.
40. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, leading to satisfactory achievement. This is similar to the picture reported at the last inspection. Planning has improved because teachers use a published scheme which maps out when different mathematical topics will be taught. This helps to ensure that pupils cover a satisfactory range of mathematical topics. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' mental recall of mental facts is good and they use this knowledge satisfactorily when calculating answers to sums. However, pupils have too few chances to work on problems drawn from their own experience or to record their own work in a variety of ways. This means they are less confident in using and applying mathematics. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. This encourages pupils to listen well in class sessions and they are keen to join in which enhances their learning. Most teachers use resources well and sometimes use good methods to teach topics. In Year 4, the teacher used a good range of methods to involve pupils and they made good progress in learning about points of the compass and linking this to angle and turn. Teachers make satisfactory use of the time available so that pupils do not spend too long listening to the teacher, but have enough opportunities to practise and consolidate skills.
41. Learning support assistants provide good support to less able pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English. This intensive support helps these pupils to achieve well in lessons. However, teachers do not always offer this level of support to other groups during group work, so average, above-average and pupils

who are more confident using English achieve satisfactorily. In an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 3, less-able pupils made sound progress working with the learning support assistant, but the teacher did not offer enough advice or guidance to others, or detect and correct pupils' misunderstandings which limited their learning.

42. There are satisfactory procedures for finding out what pupils know and understand. However, teachers do not use this information to plan work which offers enough challenge for more able pupils. Consequently, these pupils do not consistently make good progress. Teachers' marking is unsatisfactory and ineffective in raising achievement. Marking is up-to-date, but apart from a few isolated instances, it does not offer any guidance to pupils about how to improve their work, or any information to pupils or anyone else, for example, parents or teachers, who might look at this work.
43. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are sound procedures for checking teaching and learning and the co-ordinator identifies what is done well and what needs to be improved, including offering more challenging work for more-able pupils. However, there are few systems in place to secure these improvements. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Teachers now make better use of time and planning has improved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

44. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities to reinforce mathematical skills in other subjects, but these opportunities are not firmly embedded in planning. Pupils draw carefully measured plans in design and technology. There are satisfactory links with information and communication technology, for example, when pupils use graphing programs to produce pictograms of where different members of the class go on holiday.

## **SCIENCE**

The provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are regular opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment.
- Some good teaching was observed in Years 2 and 3.
- Teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment information to extend activities to stretch more able pupils.
- The quality of teachers' marking is unsatisfactory.
- Management of the subject is satisfactory but the quality of leadership is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

45. Standards in science by the end of Year 2 and by Year 4 are in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. All pupils including those with English as an additional language and those with special needs achieve satisfactorily. This judgement is similar to the findings of the school's last inspection. The school has made good improvement in developing investigative and practical approaches to science and most pupils respond enthusiastically. In 2003 Year 2 pupils results in national tests compared favourably with similar schools.
46. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good in Years 2 and 3 pupils are encouraged to look carefully, use information to make suggestions and justify their reasons, for example, identifying healthy foods in Year 4 using the nutritional information on labels. Teachers prepare their resources carefully and ask searching questions which ensure pupils make and test predictions. Good questioning by the teacher ensured pupils applied their previous knowledge to a new investigation. They used correct vocabulary with

increased confidence when describing how foods such as chocolate changed from a solid to a liquid when heated.

47. There are satisfactory procedures to collect assessment information and monitor how well pupils achieve. However, teachers do not make sufficient use of this information when planning work to specifically challenge more able pupils and ensure their experiences and thinking is taken to a higher level. Standard class work sheets do not provide sufficient challenge to these pupils. There are some good examples of pupils using their literacy skills but little evidence of the use of information and communication technology. Teachers' marking is unsatisfactory as some books are not always marked and in most there is simply a tick and sometimes a comment. The comments do not focus on explaining to the pupils where they have successes and what they need to do to improve. As a result pupils' knowledge of their own learning is diminished.
48. Leadership of science is satisfactory and the subject co-ordinator has ensured the curriculum is well planned and that each topic covered includes the experimental and investigative aspects of the subject. She has streamlined resources to ensure teachers are well supported. Management has not been satisfactory and insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning means that the co-ordinator has not managed to significantly influence the way the subject is taught.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils learn well.
- Teaching assistants and students support pupils well.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development.
- Teachers do not consistently use information and communication technology in teaching other subjects.
- Seating in the computer suite is not suitable for all pupils.

### **Commentary**

49. Pupils reach the levels expected by the age of seven and nine, as they did at the time of the last inspection. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop and use information and communication technology skills within specific lessons in the computer suite. Because of this, pupils rapidly become competent and confident. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils learn information and communication technology skills well. For example, Year 1 pupils confidently launch a graphing program and use this to create pictograms of holiday destinations, whilst older pupils have a good degree of mouse control and accurately copy pictures by famous artists such as Munch and write 'story starts' based on 'Funnybones' using text and pictures.
50. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, leading to satisfactory achievement. Most teachers use the interactive whiteboard well when introducing new skills. In a good quality Year 4 lesson, the teacher effectively used the whiteboard to demonstrate how to sort records according to one and two criteria. As a result, pupils confidently carried out their own search. Teachers use additional support from teaching assistants and students well so that all pupils enjoy a good deal of support, aiding their learning. Because of this, pupils enjoy the subject and try out the new skills they learn. Pupils, including those from different ethnic groups, work well together so the subject makes a positive contribution to social development and racial harmony. Teachers do not consistently ask pupils to evaluate their own work or to consider why information and communication technology is useful, although a Year 1 teacher usefully

asked pupils whether it was easier to draw pictograms by hand or by using a computer. Teachers do not ask pupils for examples of how the applications they use might be useful in the world outside school so restricting their understanding of information and communication technology's value.

51. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has analysed what needs to be done to improve provision further, including increasing resources so that the satisfactorily equipped suite is supplemented by more computers in classrooms to aid the use of information and communication technology in teaching other subjects. The co-ordinator provides good examples of how this can be done. Resources are satisfactory, although pupils' chairs do not match the height of the computer benches so most pupils have to crane their necks to see their monitors. Improvement since the past inspection has been satisfactory in that standards, teaching and learning are satisfactory.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

52. Teachers use other subjects when teaching information and communication technology skills. For example, pupils research Aboriginal art or investigate the lives of Ancient Britons. However, opportunities for using information and communication technology to enhance teaching and learning in other subjects are not consistently identified in teachers' planning. This means that pupils do not regularly use information and communication technology as a matter of course in learning about other subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History and Geography**

53. Religious education was inspected separately by inspectors appointed by the diocese (Section 23 inspection).<sup>6</sup> It was not possible to make judgements about the provision in history or geography as no lessons were seen during the inspection. There was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching or standards. However, a review of pupils' work indicates that there is appropriate coverage of the curriculum in both subjects. In both subjects there is an over-reliance on worksheets resulting in few opportunities for learning through first hand experience and too few opportunities for pupils to use and extend their English skills. There is limited marking of pupils' work which does not help them to understand how to improve further.

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

There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the provision in all subjects in this area.

54. Interviews with the subject co-ordinators indicate that they manage the curriculum and resources satisfactorily but provide insufficient leadership. They lack responsibility for ensuring that the planned curriculum is taught well to achieve consistency of approach. For example, in **art and design** only Year 1 and 3 teachers choose to use sketch books. The range of art work on display and the planning documents indicate a secure planned curriculum which promotes the development of pupils' skills through a range of interesting projects. However, in practice some teachers' insecure knowledge of the subject means there is too much variation in the quality of the work produced. As a result some good work developed in earlier years is not extended sufficiently well in Year 4.

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<sup>6</sup> **SECTION 23 INSPECTIONS RE:** -Because the school is a voluntary aided Roman 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.

55. The curriculum for **design and technology** draws upon national guidance and pupils develop their skills through a range of projects. There are good evaluation sheets to help pupils assess what they did well and what was difficult but there is insufficient use of pupils' literacy skills for expanded explanations. The quality of marking is unsatisfactory and does not assist pupils in knowing what they can do to improve further. **Music** is well taught by a specialist teacher. Pupils have well developed aural and singing skills. There are missed opportunities to develop breadth within the curriculum as teachers do not attend these sessions and therefore find it difficult to follow the work up. **Physical education** is pupils' favourite subject. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and all pupils have an opportunity to swim in the school pool. Additional interest is added by outside visitors such as local professional cricketers and a wide range of extra curricular opportunities for pupils. A Year 2 lesson was very well taught and it challenged pupils' fitness levels with a range of fast paced activities to which pupils responded very well.

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

### **Commentary**

56. Insufficient lessons were seen to make an overall judgement about the school's provision in this area. The school provides a good programme for pupils' personal, social and health education. A good range of visitors to the school help to foster an increasing understanding of keeping healthy and safe. Pupils learn about keeping safe, for example, through talks about road and railway safety. They learn about eating healthily in science lessons and about the importance of exercise in physical education. The school organises a good range of activities such as a 'Health Fair' and visits for the 'Life Bus' which help to develop pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of citizenship by emphasising their own responsibilities. Year 4 pupils develop their understanding of citizenship well by taking part in elections for members of the School Council. The class representatives discuss a range of issues raised by pupils and the staff. The school values pupils' opinions and the school council is an effective mechanism for listening and responding to pupils' views.

## 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	3
<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	5
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
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).*