

INSPECTION REPORT

**St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary
School**

Blackhall Colliery, Hartlepool

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114280

Headteacher: Mr A. Conroy

Lead inspector: Mr G. T. Storer

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th May 2004

Inspection number: 257763

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	86
School address:	Coast Road Blackhall Colliery Hartlepool
Postcode:	TS27 4HE
Telephone number:	0191 5864308
Fax number:	0191 5864467
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Fr. M. Cairns
Date of previous inspection:	5 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is situated in the village of Blackhall Colliery on the coast road between Hartlepool and Peterlee. Most pupils come from the Catholic community in the immediate vicinity of the school, although some pupils come from further afield. With 86 pupils on the school roll, this school is smaller than the average primary school. During the last school year, the proportion of pupils (just over 13 per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals was broadly in line with the national average, but this figure does not accurately reflect levels of hardship within the community. The school's social and educational circumstances have become increasingly challenging and children's attainment on entry to the school is below average for their age. There are 14 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and two who need support from trained assistants. The overall number of pupils who have special educational needs is average for a school of this size. The school benefits from a stable and supportive school community. The annual turnover of pupils is very low. During the last school year, no pupils entered or left the school at times other than at the beginning of the Foundation Stage or the end of Year 6. In recent years, the school's Year 6 pupils have achieved high standards and, as a result, the school received Achievement Awards in 2002 and 2003. It has also gained the Activemark gold standard and was designated as regional Sports School of the Year in 2003. However, regular and prolonged staff absences have presented considerable barriers to the raising of standards in Years 1 and 2.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19830	Mr G. T. Storer	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Physical education Personal, social and health education, including citizenship
9884	Mrs M. Roscoe	Lay inspector	
20646	Mrs M. A. Palmer	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology Geography History Music

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Ltd.
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils make very good progress and reach high standards in all core¹ subjects by the time they leave the school. Teaching is satisfactory overall but much of it is good. The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve high standards in core subjects and many exceed the nationally expected standard in information and communication technology (ICT).
- In Years 1 and 2, too few pupils attain above average standards.
- Pupils are a delight to be with. They are very keen to come to school, have very good attitudes and behave very well.
- In Years 1 and 2, teachers do not use assessment information systematically enough in planning pupils' learning and, as a result, the more able do not achieve as well as they might.
- The approach to the teaching of writing is neither systematic nor consistent enough.
- The headteacher and other key staff lead the school well.
- Pupils' experience is rich and varied. Involvement in sport is excellent and the very good range of educational visits, visitors and special events brings learning to life.
- The school has very good links with the community and with other schools. However, communications with parents do not always promote positive partnerships between home and school.

The rate of improvement since its last inspection has been good. The standards that 11-year-olds achieve are much higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection, although staff absence has prevented similar improvements in Years 1 and 2. Teaching remains satisfactory overall but there are far more good and very good lessons. Participation in sport, along with an impressive range of other activities, has improved the curriculum enormously and elicited a very good response from the pupils. The school has successfully addressed most of the issues arising from its last inspection, although there is still work to be done on teachers' use of assessment.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

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

Overall, pupils achieve very well. Almost all children make satisfactory overall progress in the reception class and, for many, progress in personal, social and emotional development and creative development is good. However, despite sound levels of achievement, standards remain below average. In the 2003 national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds, between a quarter and a third of all pupils fell below the expected standard for their age in reading and in writing. The proportion was lower in mathematics, but still higher than in schools nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that almost all pupils in the current Year 2 class are on course to attain the nationally expected standard in these subjects and in science by the end of the school year. Despite this apparent improvement, overall standards in core subjects remain below average. Few, if any, are set to attain the above average level, because work has not been challenging enough for the more able pupils. Most pupils achieve satisfactory standards although the more able have not done as well as they should. Standards in the current Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Indeed,

¹ The core subjects are English (reading and writing), mathematics and science.

the proportion of pupils achieving above average levels is set to rise in all three subjects. In relation to their results at the age of seven, pupils in Year 6 have achieved very well. Standards have not improved as quickly in Years 1 and 2 as in Years 3 to 6 because teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 have been adversely affected by prolonged staff absence. By the time that they leave the school, pupils' performance is also set to exceed national expectations in ICT and in the aspects of physical education seen during the inspection. Standards in all other subjects that were sampled were broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well in relation to the individual targets that have been identified for them and boys and girls perform equally well.

Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy learning and are very well motivated. They are confident in their ability to succeed and rise to the challenge to do their best. Pupils respect one another and act on their understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' appreciation of their responsibilities as members of a community is very good. Their attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in Years 3 to 6. There are examples of good teaching in all classes and in Years 5 and 6, teaching is frequently very good. Teachers plan work that engages pupils' interest and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response. However, teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not use assessment information systematically enough to plan for pupils with different capabilities and throughout the school teachers' approach to the teaching of writing is inconsistent. The basic curriculum is good and the school provides a wealth of sporting, cultural, educational and fun activities that bring the very best out of the pupils and add considerably to the quality of their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides good leadership. He inspires a strong sense of commitment and purpose amongst staff. Staff with management responsibilities also contribute effectively. They are good role models and are very committed to inclusion, the needs of individuals and to raising standards. The comprehensive programme of on-going training ensures that staff at all levels learn new skills and keep abreast of current developments. This thorough approach improves the rate of school development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Many parents are satisfied with the school. They are particularly pleased that the school encourages their children to become mature and responsible. They are also pleased with the quality of teaching because they feel that staff expect pupils to work hard and that their children are making good progress. However, a considerable proportion of parents feel uncomfortable about approaching the school and have concerns about the information that they receive and about other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors endorse parents' positive views but also find evidence to support their concerns. Pupils' annual progress reports are of good quality, but the tone and content of some of the school's other communications cause some parents to feel excluded from full participation in the life and work of the school. **Pupils are very satisfied.** They are most happy that, although they have to work hard, they learn new things in lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise the standards attained by seven-year-olds in reading, writing, mathematics and science;
- introduce a more structured approach to the teaching of writing and ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils throughout the school to write as part of their work in other subjects;
- ensure that teachers in Years 1 and 2 use assessment information more systematically to plan for pupils with different capabilities and to identify how to adapt teaching for pupils with the potential for higher levels of achievement;
- improve the quality and content of communications with parents so that they draw all parents into a more constructive partnership with the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The attainments of children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are **below national expectations**. Nevertheless, their achievements are **satisfactory** in relation to their attainment on entry to the school and to Year 1. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve **very well**. Standards in all core subjects are **well above average** by the time that pupils leave the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in their creative development.
- In Years 1 and 2, almost all pupils are on course to attain the nationally expected standard in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Few, if any, pupils are set to exceed national expectations by the end of Year 2 and for this reason overall standards are below average.
- All pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain the nationally expected standards in all core subjects and many are set to achieve above average standards.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in ICT exceed national expectations.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores² in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.0 (12.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (28.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.4 (30.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.2 (31.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Children's attainment on entry has declined considerably over the last five years. When children in the current reception class entered the school, many were at a level that was below average for their age. They had very limited social and communication skills and little understanding of the world beyond the home. Nevertheless, most children are making satisfactory progress. In aspects of personal, creative and physical development, they will attain the early learning goals³. In relation to their attainment on entry, children also achieve satisfactory standards in their reading, writing and mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding

² Average point scores are a statistical method for comparing a school's performance in a single core subject or in all core subjects with the performance of all schools or of similar schools. The school's scores are derived from the levels that pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve in the annual National Curriculum tests.

³ Early learning goals – These are the standards that children are expected to reach by the end of their reception year.

of the world. However, standards in these important aspects of their learning are below those normally expected of children at the end of the Foundation Stage⁴.

2. In the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, the school's results in reading and mathematics were in line with the national average and the average for similar schools, whilst standards in writing were well below average. In a school with very small year groups, this form of statistical analysis does not give an accurate picture because the school's results can be distorted by the performance of just one or two pupils. What was apparent in 2003 was that too many pupils fell below the nationally expected standard for their age⁵. Inspection evidence indicates that, in this respect, standards are set to improve. All pupils, other than those with special educational needs, are on course to achieve the nationally expected standard in reading, writing, mathematics and science, although some are likely to be at the lower end of the expected level. However, despite this improvement in the achievement of lower attaining pupils, standards at the end of Year 2 are below average overall. This is because work set for the more able pupils has not been challenging enough to take them to the above average level. The majority of pupils are achieving satisfactory standards in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1, but those with the potential for higher attainment are currently underachieving and this is unsatisfactory.
3. By the time that pupils leave the school, standards are considerably higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection. In the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 the school's results in English were above the national average and the average for similar schools and standards in mathematics and science were well above average. In the current Year 6 all pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected standard for 11-year-olds. Indeed, the proportion of pupils achieving above average levels is set to rise in all three subjects. Therefore, overall standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science and, in relation to their results at the age of seven, pupils in Year 6 have achieved very well.
4. Standards have not improved as quickly in Years 1 and 2 as in Years 3 to 6 because teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 have been adversely affected by prolonged staff absence. However, by the time that they leave the school, pupils' performance also exceeds national expectations in ICT and in the aspects of physical education seen during the inspection. Standards in all other subjects that were sampled were broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the individual targets that have been identified for them and boys and girls perform equally well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Most pupils have **very good attitudes** to school and **behave very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception class settle to school routines and grow in confidence.
- Pupils have very good attitudes.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good.
- Relationships are very good.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Attendance is well above the national average.

⁴ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage, 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 and social development, but also include knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.

⁵ The nationally expected standard for pupils at the end of Year 2 is National Curriculum Level 2. Pupils who achieve Level 3 in Year 2 are exceeding national expectations. However, Level 2 is made up of Levels 2A, 2B and 2C and the proportions of pupils achieving each sub-level affect the schools average points score. The nationally expected standard for pupils at the end of Year 6 is National Curriculum Level 4. Pupils who achieve Level 5 in Year 6 are exceeding national expectations.

Commentary

5. The school has sound arrangements for introducing children to school life. Visits to the school made by children and their parents ensure that children and their parents know what to expect and are familiar with the adults who will be working with them. Staff create a welcoming atmosphere and do a particularly good job in establishing routines and expectations and supporting those children who have little experience outside the home. Consequently, children feel secure in the reception class. They settle and soon begin to adopt helpful patterns of behaviour. Most are happy, respond well to adults and work and play co-operatively.
6. The pupils' questionnaire indicated that most pupils like their school because, even though they have to work hard, teachers and classroom assistants help them when they are stuck. They also think that lessons are interesting and fun. Inspection evidence supports these views. A very important contributory factor to pupils' very positive attitudes is the very good range of sporting, cultural and other activities and events that the school provides in order to bring pupils' learning to life. For example, because of their outstanding success at sport, pupils really believe that with commitment and effort they can achieve. This self-belief has clearly transferred to the classroom, where pupils enjoy learning and are very well motivated. They are confident in their ability to succeed and rise to the challenge to do their best. These very positive attitudes improve pupils' learning and progress.
7. Pupils behave very well because teachers and supervisory staff insist on high standards of behaviour. They use rewards and sanctions consistently and take the time to explain why a particular action is unkind or wrong. Consequently, most pupils understand the consequences of their actions. Only one pupil has been excluded from school for fixed periods during the last school year.

Exclusions

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	86	1	0

8. The playground is a lively, yet harmonious place. Pupils play happily in groups that are mixed in terms of age and gender. Older pupils look after and play with younger pupils. Pupils confirm that they do not suffer abuse or harassment at school. Pupils respect the school site. There is very little litter and no evidence of damage caused by pupils.
9. Relationships are very good. Conversations are characterised by mutual respect. Staff seldom shout or speak aggressively to pupils and most pupils follow their good example. Pupils get along well with one another and so collaborate easily in joint activities. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were keen to help each other by sharing tips that enabled friends to overcome ICT problems. This level of co-operation and mutual support improves pupils' learning considerably.
10. The school promotes pupils' personal development very successfully. Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Arrangements that foster pupils' spiritual and moral development are effective. Pupils have lessons in personal, social, health education and citizenship every week and other subjects such as geography, history, science and religious education make a good contribution to this area of the school's work. Pupils are reflective and sensitive to each other's feelings and to things of beauty. They respect one another and act on their understanding of what is right and wrong. Current teaching also prepares pupils very well to be useful members of the community. Pupils are very involved in local environmental projects, in caring for elderly members of the community and in the life of the church. This is a very strong aspect of the school's work.

11. The rate of pupils' attendance is very good. Parents and carers ensure that their children attend regularly and arrive punctually at school. The school has effective monitoring systems in place and, as a result, attendance has remained well above the national average since the last inspection. In many classes pupils achieve the weekly target of 100 per cent attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.3	School data:	0.1
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. Teaching is satisfactory overall but good in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum is good and there is very rich provision of extra-curricular activities. The school provides good levels of care. Links with parents are satisfactory but links with the wider community are very good.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Teachers' assessments and their use of assessment information in their planning are **satisfactory overall** but need to be improved in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are examples of good teaching in all phases of the school and teaching of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is often very good.
- Teachers manage pupils effectively and insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Teachers use support assistants well to help pupils learn.
- In Years 3 to 6, teachers set work that is challenging and improves pupils' progress.
- In Years 1 and 2 the use of assessment information in planning the next steps in pupils' learning is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4	7	11	1	0	0

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

12. Teaching and learning have improved. There are more good and very good lessons than there were at the time of the school's last inspection. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and there were examples of good teaching in both of these classes. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. Teaching is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6 and is a key factor in the high standards that pupils achieve by the time that they leave the school. Half of the lessons inspected in the Years 5 and 6 class were very good.
13. Throughout the school, teachers plan and structure their lessons carefully. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn in the course of the session and share this with pupils, so

that lessons are purposeful and they use time effectively. Teachers have good subject knowledge and therefore their teaching is confident and accurate. They manage pupils effectively, insist that pupils behave well and establish classroom routines that promote effective learning. Teachers carefully plan the role of the teaching assistants who support the work of teachers well and contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Support staff work effectively to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive the help that they need to overcome their difficulties, take an active part in lessons and make good progress towards their individual targets.

14. The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory overall but is good, and at times very good, in Years 3 to 6. Teachers present work in a lively and enthusiastic way, often using ICT resources imaginatively, so that pupils are attentive and keen to learn. They have high expectations of pupils and consistently encourage and praise their efforts. This very successfully boosts pupils' self-esteem so that they participate confidently and apply themselves to their tasks with interest. Pupils persevere with their work when they are not directly supervised and co-operate sensibly when they are working in small groups. The very good response that the teacher elicits from pupils in Years 5 and 6 is another important contributory factor in the very good progress that these pupils make.
15. Teachers consistently check pupils' understanding by questioning them in the course of lessons and regularly marking their work. In Years 3 to 6, marking is particularly effective because it not only celebrates pupils' efforts but also shows them how they can improve. Throughout the school pupils have personal targets that successfully promote their understanding of their own learning and progress. The school's assessment procedures are sound and teachers use the information satisfactorily to monitor pupils' progress and to target additional support to meet the needs of specific groups of pupils. In Years 3 to 6, teachers also use assessment information effectively to modify activities to meet the needs of pupils with different capabilities. They set challenging tasks that really make pupils think and so improve the rate at which they progress. In Years 1 and 2, teachers have been determined to raise standards by ensuring that almost all pupils attain nationally expected levels. However, assessment information is not used well enough to build carefully on all pupils' prior learning. This is unsatisfactory because it results in tasks that are not demanding enough for higher attaining pupils and prevents them from attaining the above average standards of which they are capable.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum, which is **enriched** by a very wide range of additional activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a very stimulating programme of visits, activities and special events.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very successful.
- The school ensures that the curriculum is inclusive.
- Curriculum evaluation and development is good.

Commentary

16. The school provides a very stimulating curriculum for its pupils. It teaches all the subjects that it should and allows enough time for teachers to cover all areas thoroughly. The school also offers a very good range of visits, activities and special events, which successfully motivate pupils and result in pupils' tremendous enthusiasm for learning. Residential visits add considerably to pupils' personal development. Special events such as the Roman day add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Visitors to the school, such as artists, musicians, drama groups and members of the local emergency services, bring pupils' learning to life and contribute effectively to pupils' cultural development. They also improve pupils' understanding of the wider community, as does pupils' involvement in local environmental projects, such as litter picking

and bulb planting. The school has an extremely good range of after-school clubs, which support pupils' learning in physical education and are central to promoting pupils' high self-esteem and very positive approach to learning across the curriculum. The local Education Action Zone has been influential in sponsoring many of these activities but this has been more than matched by the school's very enthusiastic take-up and promotion of such activities in school. The school was designated Regional Sports School of the Year in 2003,

17. The school successfully promotes pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). In addition to the above initiatives, PSHE lessons and Circle Time⁶ give pupils regular, planned opportunities to develop greater awareness of issues that they face in everyday life. Health related issues also form a regular part of science and physical education lessons. The school has achieved the Activemark (Gold standard) and is working towards the Healthy Schools Award, which has helped to raise pupils' awareness of their own health and well-being.
18. The school is sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and works hard to ensure that all pupils are included in every aspect of school life. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have full access to the school's curriculum. Staff value the contributions of all pupils and use their knowledge of individual pupils well to make sure that all pupils get a chance to contribute to activities or discussions. Where this is most successful, staff go beyond this to make special provision for pupils who may not naturally contribute. For example, the *'Talking Partners'* programme identifies reticent pupils and engages them in a programme designed to boost their confidence and enable them to participate more fully. Similarly, all pupils take part in the school productions. The expressive and performing arts also feature quite strongly in the school's curriculum because the school sees this and sport as areas where 'every pupil has the chance to shine'.
19. The staffing difficulties that the school has faced in recent years mean that the responsibility for improving the curriculum has fallen to a very small number of experienced teachers. These members of staff have worked hard to keep abreast of developments in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Since the last inspection, they have also brought about significant improvements to the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and to whole school provision for ICT, physical education and PSHE and citizenship.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for the care of pupils and for involving them in aspects of school development are **good**. Provision for pupils' support and guidance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most policies and practices associated with pupils' care and support are effective.
- Pupils do not always receive sound guidance on how to improve their work.
- Pupils are involved through the school council in the decision-making process.

Commentary

20. Effective arrangements ensure a good standard of care for pupils. A major outcome is the ease with which they are able to seek adult help if worried or concerned. Most parents are satisfied with this aspect of the school's work.
21. The school's policy and practices for dealing with child protection issues are satisfactory. Staff have received up-to-date training and therefore know how they should respond. Similarly, satisfactory procedures ensure that the school meets most statutory health and safety requirements. Staff are alert to safety considerations that relate to teaching because of the risk

⁶ Circle Time – when younger pupils sit together and share thoughts and feelings or talk about things that are important to or concern them.

assessments they complete. When minor incidents occur, suitably trained staff readily provide good levels of care, comfort and, if necessary, first aid.

22. Induction arrangements are satisfactory. Pre-school children enjoy their afternoon visit and parents reported that their children were too engrossed in the well-organised activities to leave the class. Parents felt that this positive experience enabled children to achieve a confident start to their reception year. Teachers and pupils get along really well together and pastoral care is good. A carefully devised programme helps pupils to decide about secondary education and smoothes the transition process.
23. Pupils receive satisfactory advice and guidance as they move through the school. A consistently applied discipline policy, that pupils understand and staff apply sensitively, works well. This structure provides opportunities for acknowledging pupils' application and effort in the classroom and for monitoring pupils' personal development. In the academic domain, staff track pupils' progress in core subjects and recently introduced personal targets show pupils how to improve their performance in English and mathematics. However, pupils do not receive sufficient regular guidance on how to improve their work across the curriculum as a whole.
24. The school regularly seeks pupils' views and the majority of pupils know teachers listen to and value their ideas. Their voice is heard during personal, social and health education and Circle Time, through the established school council and when pupils with special educational needs contribute to reviews of their progress.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the community and with other schools are good, but with parents are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many parents are happy with the school and most support it in meaningful ways.
- Systems for communicating with parents are not supporting involvement in their children's education.
- Provision of information to parents about the school in general and the curriculum in particular is unsatisfactory.
- Parents are not formally consulted prior to decision-making.
- Educational links with other schools are effective.
- Regular visits and visitors from the community enliven the curriculum.

Commentary

25. The questionnaire and meetings with parents before and during the inspection revealed that the many are pleased with the quality of education provided for their children. They give the school constructive support, for example by responding to invitations to help with educational visits or by making story sacks. However, almost half of the parents who expressed an opinion would like improved lines of communication between school and home. Some parents expressed concerns about the way the school works with them in solving alleged bullying issues. Inspectors looked into these concerns and judged that the school places insufficient importance on gaining parents' views or responding to their concerns in a spirit of partnership.
26. Parents do not receive enough essential information about school provision and this acts as a barrier between the school and a number of parents. There are omissions in the statutory information required in the governors' annual report. The most notable of these is the absence of progress reports on the issues raised in the previous inspection. Newsletters are friendly in tone but miss opportunities to draw all parents more fully into the work of the school by informing them about what is to be taught to each year group. Parents that can attend the weekly awards assembly feel this is the most reliable information channel. However, despite these occasions, many parents are unsure about aspects of school policy or practice and this leads to some misunderstandings.

27. Parents are least happy with the amount of information that they receive about their children's progress. Annual reports meet most requirements but do not give any indications about how well each child is getting on compared with children in schools nationally. The school meets its obligations to parents of children with special educational needs. They are invited to meetings to discuss the achievements of their children and they contribute to individual education plans. However, the timing of progress meetings causes problems for some parents as they are considered either too early in the autumn term or too late in the summer to be of practical use.
28. The system used to involve parents in the life of the school by seeking, valuing and acting on their views is unsatisfactory. For example, parental opinion was not sought before finalising the new discipline policy. The school takes positive steps to eliminate all forms of harassment and upsetting behaviour, but some parents believe that the arrangements for following up alleged bullying incidents are ineffective. The processes for consulting parents and incorporating their wishes in development plans are therefore unsatisfactory.
29. Pupils gain much from the good links that the school has developed with other schools and with the wider community. Links with local secondary schools ensure that Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Work with other schools also supports pupils' learning in physical education, dance and ICT. Representatives of the police, road safety officers, parish and various artists extend pupils' personal development well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **good** leadership and is very effectively supported by the senior teacher. The management and governance of the school are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high aspirations and a clear vision for the school.
- The senior teacher sets a very good example to staff and contributes very effectively to school improvement.
- The school provides very effective professional development for staff.
- The headteacher and governing body monitor the school's finances carefully.
- The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily but is not fully effective in holding the school to account for what it achieves.

Commentary

30. The overall leadership and management of the school have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher leads the school purposefully. He has clear priorities and has established a programme for improvement that has led to higher standards and an improved quality of education since the last inspection. With very effective support from the senior teacher he successfully inspires a sense of shared purpose among staff and governors, despite the difficulties created by long-term staff absence in Years 1 and 2. All current staff work effectively together to make the school successful.
31. The headteacher has established satisfactory systems for monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Staff analyse performances in the national tests in order to identify and overcome weaknesses in the curriculum. Subject leaders play a satisfactory part in monitoring aspects of the school's work and in planning and implementing improvements. The outcomes of monitoring very effectively inform the on-going training of teachers and support staff, which has improved the overall quality of teaching and contributed significantly to the raising of standards. The headteacher has initiated sound procedures for on-going school self-review and most aspects of school management are satisfactory.
32. The governing body is keen to support the school. Governors take an active interest in the life and work of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They

gain first-hand information through visits and from reports of governors with particular interest in subjects of the curriculum and special educational needs. The good knowledge they have of the school and their constructive relationships with the staff place them in a strong position to give support and to acknowledge school improvements and areas for development. Governors regularly undertake training and are taking steps to extend their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. However, although the governors keep a close watch on how the school is progressing, they do not play a full part in holding the school to account for what it achieves. The governing body carries out most of its statutory duties satisfactorily, although there are omissions in the annual Governors' Report to Parents.

33. School improvement planning is satisfactory. There is a manageable agenda for raising standards in key aspects of the school's work and current arrangements effectively determine the best use of the funds available to support the school's development priorities. Financial management is good and funds are administered efficiently. Careful and regular monitoring of spending patterns helps to ensure that the budget is used to benefit pupils. Spending decisions are taken carefully and due thought is given to the impact they will have on pupils' education. The cost of educating each pupil is high because of increased expenditure arising from the need to employ temporary teachers to cover prolonged staff absence. However, pupils achieve very well, the quality of education is good and financial control is efficient and effective. Therefore, in the context of current achievements, the school gives good value for money. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	316,552	Balance from previous year	2,825
Total expenditure	313,552	Balance carried forward to the next	3,000
Expenditure per pupil	3,604		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory overall** and aspects are **good**.

34. Children enter school with below average skills. In aspects of their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world, some children's skills are well below average. Teaching is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress overall. However, by the time they leave the reception class most children's standards are below those expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and aspects of physical development. The school gives priority to promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and children achieve well. Children also make good progress in their creative development. Teaching is good in these areas of learning and the children are actively involved in a good range of stimulating activities that successfully promotes their involvement and learning. The teacher carefully assesses what individuals know, understand and can do. She uses this information satisfactorily to identify and plan the next steps in children's learning and development. She successfully involves parent helpers so that they support children's learning purposefully. Although the classroom is small, the teacher makes imaginative use of all available space, both indoors and out. Her planning incorporates all recommended areas of learning, takes account of the early learning goals and gives children a secure start to their education. This is an improvement on the provision reported at the time of the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher values each child's efforts and boosts their self-esteem.
- Children become confident, well-motivated learners.
- Almost all children co-operate well with the staff and with each other.

Commentary

35. The teacher successfully ensures that each child feels welcome and included so that they settle securely into the reception class. Parents visit school and children spend time in the reception classroom before they start. These arrangements promote a smooth transition into school. The teacher ensures that the classroom systems are firmly established. She sensitively meets the needs of those children with special educational needs and carefully implements their individual education plans. As a result, all boys and girls are achieving the early learning goals for their age and are growing in assurance in their approach to activities and daily routines.
36. The teacher gives lots of individual praise and encouragement, as when she shares and celebrates children's completed work at the end of a session. As a result, the children are motivated to do their best and show pride in what they have achieved. The teacher plans topics such as *All about Us* that extend the children's self-knowledge and awareness of others. Many activities involve working or playing co-operatively with others, as when they collaborate on large paintings or use 'two man' wheeled vehicles outdoors. These activities successfully build children's confidence in learning and in their relationships with others. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher ensures that all children have opportunities to be involved in a good range of carefully planned and prepared activities. The children are keen to participate because they see learning as fun. They settle quickly to tasks and concentrate hard for short periods when working independently.

37. The teacher has high expectations of the children's behaviour. She consistently reinforces the classroom standards. The children make good progress in learning what is expected of them so that they accept the boundaries that are set in school. They handle books and equipment carefully. Most respond promptly to instructions and behave sensibly in their classrooms, in the outdoor area and when they move around school.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children engage in carefully planned activities that successfully promote their speaking and listening skills.
- The children make satisfactory progress in learning letter sounds and developing early reading skills.
- There are not enough structured opportunities for children to extend their early writing skills.

Commentary

38. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall and the promotion of children's speaking and listening skills is good. The teacher plans regular opportunities for children to talk purposefully to adults and each other, such as during Circle Time activities. In addition, a specialist teacher visits school regularly to work with individual children and alongside the teacher with larger groups. These arrangements successfully promote children's communication skills. Children gain confidence in speaking in small and larger groups and almost all attain the standards expected for their age.
39. The children make satisfactory progress in developing early reading skills because the teacher reads to them regularly and encourages them to identify familiar words and join in with repeated phrases. She uses imaginatively prepared support materials that successfully capture children's interest in storybooks. The children are keen to practise their letter sounds and make good progress in associating letters and sounds. From their earliest days in school, they regularly take home a range of books and activities to share at home. In addition, they visit the nearby library each week. These arrangements effectively boost their confidence and interest in reading. However, few children attain the standards expected for their age because most still cannot read an unfamiliar text or write independently.
40. The teacher encourages children to talk about their class topics, activities and drawings and often writes down what the children say. In addition, activities are prepared around the classroom so that children have opportunities to choose to make marks and 'write' for themselves. These arrangements successfully promote children's awareness of writing as a means of recording and communicating. Most children write their own name and a number of simple words and phrases independently. However, there is too little focus on progressively extending children's writing skills. Children have few opportunities to practise writing patterns alongside the teacher so that most children's letter formation skills are below average. Only a small number of children are likely to reach the early learning goals in writing by the end of the reception year.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make satisfactory progress in counting and recognising numbers.
- The teacher plans interesting activities that successfully promote children's mathematical development alongside other areas of learning.

Commentary

41. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teacher is clear about what she wants the children to learn and sessions are purposeful so that children's achievement is satisfactory. They develop a satisfactory sense of number, order and sequence through regular counting routines. The teacher plans a good balance of games and practical activities to encourage children to practise these skills. They regularly join in lively number rhymes and songs, which successfully reinforce their learning. The class teacher and parent helpers consistently check and build on individual children's mathematical language. Consequently, children make good progress in learning the names of colours and shapes. The children engage in activities, such as painting and cutting out long and short snakes, which successfully promote their mathematical development, whilst practising their physical skills. However, standards remain below average by the end of the reception class because few children perform even the most simple calculations.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children satisfactorily extend their knowledge and understanding of the world through practical activities and topics.

Commentary

42. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Although children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning they do not reach average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children discover the properties of sand, water and dough by handling and working with them. They learn about living things through activities such as planting and caring for seeds. However, planning does not consistently highlight what children are to learn in the course of activities, such as 'floating and sinking' a range of objects in the water trough. Consequently, teaching is not sufficiently purposeful and children's learning is limited. Children have frequent opportunities to use computers and simple computer programs in their classroom. They use the mouse to make selections from a menu and to drag and drop objects on the screen. They also confidently use equipment such as a digital camera and tape recorder in the course of their activities. Visitors to school, such as the school nurse and a mother with her baby, successfully extend children's experience and motivate their interest and visits such as that to the local park add to children's environmental awareness.

Physical development

Provision for children's physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy regular opportunities to be active both indoors and out.
- The children make satisfactory progress in developing manipulative skills.

Commentary

43. Children move safely and confidently in and around the classroom. The teacher consistently encourages children to be independent. They put on and take off their coats for outdoor play, put on activity aprons and change for physical education lessons with a minimum of adult help. The recently completed outside play area provides the children with daily opportunities for vigorous and imaginative play. This marks a significant improvement since the previous

inspection. Children manoeuvre wheeled vehicles skilfully. Most play co-operatively and take turns when required to do so. Children regularly participate in physical education sessions. Almost all display a satisfactory awareness of space as they travel safely around the hall, changing direction when prompted. As they march, skip and run their co-ordination and control is average for children of their age. Almost all follow instructions promptly and behave sensibly.

44. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher plans a satisfactory range of opportunities for children to use construction materials and simple tools, including scissors. Adults sensitively encourage the children and ensure that they work safely. However, these activities often lack a sharp focus and do not progressively reinforce and extend children's skill and control, particularly in the handling of mark-making implements. Whilst levels of physical development are satisfactory overall by the end of the reception class, many children's manipulative skills are below average.

Creative development

The provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are keen to listen to stories and sustain interest in independent imaginative role-play.
- The teacher ensures that the children have opportunities to engage in a stimulating range of creative activities.

Commentary

45. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher successfully plans opportunities for children to engage in creative play. She carefully prepares role-play situations, such as the 'jungle' adjacent to the classroom, which successfully promote children's collaboration and use of imaginative language. The teacher makes effective use of visiting support teachers in activities such as the *Magic Carpet Ride* in the school grounds that successfully engage pupils' interest and promote imaginative play. These arrangements effectively promote children's achievement so that almost all will attain the early learning goals in this area of learning.
46. Children readily join in with action songs and number rhymes, building up a wide repertoire. They enjoy exploring sounds using percussion instruments, some of which were made for them by their 'special friends' in Year 6. Children have frequent opportunities to participate in two- and three-dimensional art and craft projects. They confidently stick paper, card and fabrics to create collages. Children mix paints to create different colours and enjoy creating different effects, as when they rolled marbles through paint. They demonstrate an increasing awareness of pattern and texture, particularly when they use paint mixed with sawdust.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils leave school with higher standards than at the time of the last inspection.
- Teaching is very effective in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- In Years 1 and 2, assessment information is not used rigorously enough to help all pupils make the best possible progress.
- Approaches to the acquisition of early writing skills are unsatisfactory.
- Literacy skills are not systematically promoted through other subjects.

Commentary

47. In the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds, the school's results in reading were in line with both the national average and results for similar schools. Results in writing were well below both the national average and results for similar schools. Inspection findings for the current Year 2 confirm that a greater proportion of pupils is attaining the nationally expected level in both reading and writing. However, standards are below average overall because so few pupils in the current Year 2 are exceeding national expectations in reading and none are on course for above average results in writing. This represents a fall in standards since the last inspection. However, standards at the end Year 6 are continuing to rise year on year and are now considerably higher than at the time of the last inspection. In the 2003 national tests for 11-year-olds, the school's results were above the national average and the average for similar schools. The work of current Year 6 pupils indicates that standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening have improved further and are now well above average. This is because an even greater proportion of pupils is attaining or exceeding the nationally expected standard for their age. This represents very good achievement in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2.
48. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are purposeful because teachers ensure that they share the aims of the lesson with pupils at the start and evaluate the extent to which they have been met at the end. Teachers set targets for pupils that help them overcome identified weaknesses and enable them to understand how well they are learning. Teachers use marking constructively to help pupils to move forward as well as to celebrate their achievements. Teachers sensitively support pupils with special educational needs so that they achieve well and make good progress towards their individual targets.
49. Teaching is particularly successful in Years 5 and 6 because the teacher has very high expectations of pupils' efforts and involvement and pupils respond very positively to the challenging work that she sets for pupils of all abilities. This accounts for the high standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 6. Teaching is less effective in Years 1 and 2 because information from assessment is not used well enough in modifying tasks to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Although the recent emphasis on improving standards of lower attaining pupils has been successful, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might.
50. The school recognises that, in recent years, pupils' progress in writing has not been as good as that in reading. Action to address this issue includes professional development for teachers, support from the Education Action Zone literacy consultant and the introduction of regularly assessed pieces of writing. As a result, standards in writing are rising, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Pupils write for an increasingly wide range of purposes including letters, poems, play scripts and journals. They are familiar with the techniques of drafting and redrafting, which they use effectively to produce very good quality work.

51. However, teachers' approaches to the development of writing skills in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 are still neither consistent nor systematic enough. This includes the development of pupils' handwriting, which is often untidy and contains letters that are not clearly shaped or correctly positioned.
52. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is committed to raising standards in the subject. She is well informed and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She continues to take effective action to take the subject forward. Celebrating Book Week throughout the school, visits by theatre groups, occasional workshops and trips to the theatre successfully boost pupils' interest in the subject and promote learning. However, long-term staff absence has been a barrier to improvement in Years 1 and 2. The co-ordinator is aware that, although the recent period of stability is beginning to improve standards, there is still work to be done

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. There are occasional examples of pupils' work in other subjects promoting their literacy development. For example, as part of their work on ancient Greece in history, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote about Perseus and Medusa in the form of a newspaper report. However, teachers do not systematically plan to reinforce and extend the development of pupils' literacy skills by creating opportunities for pupils to speak, listen, read and write as part of their work in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 1 and 2, too few pupils attain above average standards.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve high standards in mathematics.
- In Years 1 and 2, teachers do not use assessment information systematically enough in planning.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils' attitudes to learning in mathematics are very good.

Commentary

54. In the 2003 tests for seven-year-olds the school's results were in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. However, standards in the current Year 2 class are lower because pupils' learning has been affected by prolonged staff absence. Nevertheless, almost all pupils, other than those with special educational needs, are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected standard for their age. Fewer pupils than in other schools are likely to achieve the above average level. This is because the work set for the more able pupils is not challenging enough to move them to the higher level. Most pupils are achieving satisfactory standards, although the more able are not doing as well as they should.
55. In the 2003 tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, the school's results were well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that high standards are being maintained. In relation to their results at the age of seven, pupils in Year 6 have achieved very well. All pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving or exceeding the nationally expected standard for 11-year-olds and about half are achieving standards that are above average for their age. This is an improvement on standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.
56. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers throughout the school have good levels of knowledge and understanding and prepare carefully for their lessons. Lessons usually start with lively mental agility work and pupils are well motivated by quick-fire question and answer sessions. Teachers make particularly good

use of interactive whiteboards⁷ to engage pupils' interest and to make and reinforce teaching points clearly. Teachers and classroom assistants are very responsive to pupils' individual needs and readily give explanations. This promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem and ensures that all pupils, but particularly those with special educational needs, can join in fully and succeed. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response and successfully establish good working habits. Therefore, all pupils have very good attitudes to their work in mathematics. They are very attentive and are keen to join in. They persevere with tasks and their work rate is high. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very well motivated and rise to the challenge of work that makes them think.

57. Teachers regularly assess and record pupils' attainment. In Years 5 and 6 the teacher's use of assessment to inform her planning for pupils with different capabilities is a strength. Work is challenging for pupils of all abilities and so improves the quality of their learning and adds to the progress that they make. However, in Years 1 and 2, teachers do not make enough use of the information they gain to adapt work to the needs of all pupils. Most tasks are pitched at a broadly average level. This is unsatisfactory because it limits pupils' learning and restricts the progress that those with the potential for higher attainment make.
58. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She monitors systematically and keeps detailed records. Consequently, she has a clear view of current standards and of areas of relative strength and weakness. She observes lessons and holds professional discussions with staff in order to determine how teaching and learning can be improved. The co-ordinator undertakes regular training and shares the outcomes with colleagues so that there is a clear agenda for further improvement and mathematics remains a high profile subject throughout the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. There are worthwhile examples of work in art, design and technology, geography, science and ICT that make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' mathematical understanding. These demonstrate teachers' awareness of the value of linking aspects of subjects in order to strengthen pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use bar charts to display the results of their rubbish survey and pupils in Years 1 and 2 reinforce their understanding of turns and directions by programming the floor robot and by following 'treasure maps'.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 1 and 2, too few pupils attain above average standards.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve high standards in science.
- In Years 1 and 2, teachers do not use assessment information systematically enough in planning pupils' learning.

Commentary

60. Teacher assessments in 2003 indicated that all pupils in Year 2 attained the nationally expected standard for their age and that almost half attained above average standards. Overall, standards were well above average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are unlikely to be as high in the current Year 2. All pupils are working at the expected standard for their age but there is no evidence of pupils achieving above average standards. Standards are lower because the learning and progress of pupils currently in Year 2 has been disrupted by staff absence. Furthermore, teachers have pitched most of their work at an average level and have provided little that is demanding enough to take pupils that are more able to the higher level. In relation to their attainment at the beginning of Year 1, most pupils are achieving satisfactory

⁷ Interactive whiteboard – A device that replaces the traditional chalkboard and allows teachers and pupils access to the full range of computer technology as an aid to teaching and learning.

standards, although those with the potential for higher attainment are not doing as well as they should.

61. In the 2003 national tests for 11-year-olds the school's results in science were well above the national average and the average for similar schools. All pupils attained the nationally expected standard and over half of all pupils achieved above average standards. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 6 are equally high. In relation to their results at the age of seven, pupils in Year 6 have achieved very well.
62. The teaching of science is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn and gather the necessary resources to illustrate their teaching well. For example, when the teacher introduced live wood lice into a Years 3 and 4 lesson on habitats, the lesson really 'came to life'. Teachers make good use of classroom assistants to support the learning of less able pupils or those with special educational needs and so these pupils are able to succeed and make progress alongside others in the class. Teachers' planning indicates that they cover all aspects of the science curriculum thoroughly and that pupils receive a satisfactory 'diet' of practical and investigative work to reinforce their understanding of scientific principles. For example, the recent Years 1 and 2 'minibeast' hunt gave pupils a real insight into the range of creatures living in the local environment. Pupils in Year 6 also receive very thorough preparation for the national tests so that all pupils achieve the results of which they are capable. However, in Years 1 and 2, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. They do not use assessment information systematically enough to modify and match tasks to pupils' needs and, as a result, a small number of the more able pupils underachieve.
63. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The headteacher is acting as temporary co-ordinator until a newly qualified member of staff is ready to take over the job. His monitoring of the subject has been sufficient to inform his view of current standards. However, science does not feature in the current school development plan and the only recent staff training has been that to enable the newly qualified teacher to prepare for the subject leadership role.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school has improved its resources and facilities for teaching ICT.
- Teachers have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to teach ICT skills effectively.
- Very effective subject leadership is improving standards and the quality of teaching.

Commentary

64. Pupils reach nationally expected standards in all aspects of ICT by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 standards are above those normally expected of 11 year olds. Pupils of all ages are achieving well. They competently use a much wider range of programs, applications and ICT equipment and the use of ICT is more integrated into the curriculum as a whole. Standards are considerably higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection.
65. Pupils are learning well because the school's resources and facilities for teaching ICT are better than they were at the time of the last inspection and teachers are more skilled in teaching the subject. There are interactive whiteboards in all classrooms except reception. This makes the use of ICT an integral part of almost all lessons and so improves the rate at which pupils acquire and develop their basic skills. In addition, pupils have ready access to computers in their classrooms, which gives them the opportunity to apply their skills and to use computers as an aid to learning other subjects. The school has the necessary programs to teach all aspects of the ICT curriculum thoroughly and pupils have planned opportunities to use a good

range of ICT equipment, including programmable toys, computer microscope, sound recording equipment and a digital camera. Teachers have successfully undertaken a range of training and receive regular input, advice and support from the co-ordinator. As a result, they are competent and self-assured when teaching ICT. This promotes pupils' involvement and motivation to learn.

66. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning, but in the two lessons that were observed, teaching and learning were good. Teachers structured sessions carefully and used computer projection equipment competently to engage pupils' interest and demonstrate new skills and techniques. They successfully established good patterns of behaviour and a sensible approach to work so that pupils were attentive to instructions and shared equipment co-operatively. In the Years 5 and 6 class, higher attaining pupils acted as '*computer tutors*'. Their task was to help the teacher by giving advice to younger or less able pupils. This arrangement worked very well because it built pupils' confidence and self-esteem and allowed the teacher to give her support where it was most needed. Furthermore, explaining to others deepened pupils' understanding of what they had learned. Pupils' keenness to be actively involved and to share their learning with others effectively improves their learning and results in good progress in ICT lessons.
67. Standards are rising rapidly because the co-ordinator for ICT is doing a very good job. She works very hard to lead colleagues in implementing planned improvements in the subject. She has introduced a programme of work that successfully supports staff and has monitored teaching and pupils' learning at first hand. This has enabled her to play an important role in boosting colleagues' skills and confidence.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. Teachers make good use of ICT to reinforce and extend pupils' learning within other subjects. Examples seen or discussed during the inspection include:
- Year 1 and Year 2 pupils using the computer 'robot' to devise simple programs and to reinforce their understanding of directions from mathematics and geography;
 - pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6 using dedicated programs to practise mathematical skills;
 - Year 3 and Year 4 pupils using an interactive whiteboard to demonstrate their understanding of symmetry;
 - Year 5 and Year 6 pupils using spreadsheets and databases to interrogate and display data gathered as part of their *rivers* topic in geography;
 - Year 5 and Year 6 pupils using the Internet as a source of information for history and geography projects;
 - Year 5 and Year 6 pupils making *PowerPoint* presentations.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

69. Inspectors saw no geography lessons and only one history lesson in the course of the inspection. It is, therefore, not possible to make overall judgements about provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. However, the small amount of work seen was in line with national expectations. These findings reflect those of the last inspection. In Years 3 to 6, work is particularly neatly presented and carefully illustrated in topic booklets. Links with other subjects reinforce pupils' learning. For example, Year 2 pupils made 'burning houses' in design and technology work linked to the Great Fire of London. Also, older pupils regularly use information technology to research both geography and history topics. Teachers make effective use of educational visits to reinforce and extend pupils' interest and involvement in the subjects, as when Years 3 and 4 visited a Roman fort. In addition, special events, such as the Roman Day for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and the Greek Day for pupils in Years 5 and 6 successfully bring learning to life and motivate pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. Work in **art and design**, **design and technology** and **music** was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide overall judgements on provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning. However, the standard of the little work that was seen in these subjects was in line with national expectations.
71. The school enhances the pupils' experience in the creative and aesthetic subjects by planning visits to school by local artists, craftspeople and musicians. Recent visitors include a glass artist who worked with pupils in Years 5 and 6 and a wind quintet that performed to the whole school. Such opportunities contribute effectively to pupils' cultural development. These experiences improve the overall quality of the curriculum, add to pupils' cultural development and successfully promote pupils' involvement and interest in these subjects.
72. From talking to pupils about their experience of music, it is evident that they regularly sing and listen to a good range of music. However, their opportunities to compose and to play musical instruments are less frequent. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have opportunities for instrumental tuition. Those involved perform at assembly each week and take part in occasional activities, such as playing carols for local elderly residents at Christmas. These arrangements reinforce and extend the skills of those involved. During the year, many pupils participate in performances that incorporate music and singing.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In aspects of physical education seen during the inspection, standards were above average.
- The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular sporting activities and opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive sport.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic and their level of participation in sporting activities is very good.

Commentary

73. There is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about standards in physical education throughout the school or about the quality of teaching and learning. However, in the swimming and games lessons in Years 3 to 6, standards were above those normally expected of pupils of this age. Pupils aged nine swim to the standard normally expected of 11-year-olds. They are confident in the water, perform various strokes accurately and have good survival skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 throw and catch very accurately, respond very well to coaching and, through practice, improve their performance. In the lessons observed, pupils made good progress. Pupils with special educational needs received good support and encouragement. This enabled them to take a full part in lessons, experience success and make good progress alongside others in the class.
74. Teachers' planning and policy documents indicate that all elements of the National Curriculum for physical education receive regular attention. However, the outstanding strength of the curriculum lies in the excellent range of extra-curricular sporting activities and opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive sport that the school provides. Qualified staff visit the school every day to provide coaching in soccer, cricket, netball and trampolining. There are also after-school clubs for dance, rugby, gymnastics, hockey and fitness, some of which are open to pupils from the age of six. The school participates fully in inter-school leagues and arranges additional fixtures with neighbouring schools. Special events such as gymnastics festivals, the girls' soccer festival, the Year 2 outdoor activities day and the school camp add further to the range and quality.

75. The principal benefits of this comprehensive provision are as follows:
- an overall improvement in standards throughout the school;
 - good provision for pupils who are gifted or talented through participation in local 'centres of excellence' and summer schools and through links with sports clubs in the area;
 - frequent opportunities for staff to improve their coaching skills by watching demonstrations or by working alongside visiting specialists;
 - improved levels of pupil confidence and self-esteem, which reflect in their very positive attitudes to other aspects of school life and work;
 - increased involvement with other schools and with sporting organisations in the wider community through successful initiatives sponsored by the local Education Action Zone.
76. In recent years, participation in sport and other physical activities has become 'a way of life' at this school and the pupils really enjoy it. Levels of participation are very good. Virtually all pupils in Year 6 are involved in at least one and often more than one area of activity, as are very many pupils throughout the school. Pupils report that this is one of the main reasons why they like coming to St Joseph's.
77. Curriculum development and innovation have been very effective. Instilling the belief in pupils that commitment and effort result in success has become one of the school's driving principles. To this end, the subject leader has set out to provide every pupil with an activity in which he or she can experience that success. She has been tireless in improving the curriculum, forging links, organising events and in supporting and encouraging other staff. The school has achieved the Activemark (Gold standard) and was designated Regional Sports School of the Year in 2003. As a result, all aspects of this subject have improved since the last inspection and this area of the curriculum is having a very beneficial impact on the overall work of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social, health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education is well planned and opportunities are used to develop links with other subjects.
- Visits, visitors and special events add to the quality of this area of the curriculum.

Commentary

78. The school promotes pupils' personal, social and health education very successfully. Pupils have regular, planned opportunities to develop greater self-awareness and confidence by discussing a range of general issues including those they face as part of everyday life. Teachers plan appropriate activities for the timetabled PSHE lessons or Circle Time. The development of the school council also gives pupils an opportunity to act on behalf of others and to represent pupils' views on aspects of school life. Teachers make effective links with other subjects to ensure that pupils develop a healthy lifestyle and learn how to respect the feelings of others and the differences between people.
79. Visits, visitors and special events add significantly to the quality of this area of the curriculum. Pupils' regular involvement in sport and other physical activities (see **physical education** above) makes a significant contribution to health education and to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils really understand the benefits of exercise and healthy lifestyles because this is their everyday experience. Pupils learn about sportsmanship, the need to follow rules, the thrill of victory and how to cope with defeat. Visits from the school nurse provide teaching on first aid, drugs and medicines, hygiene and aspects of physical and emotional development. The local police provide road safety training and teach pupils about the role of the police within the community. Pupils also learn about citizenship through involvement in their community, for example, by participating in projects such as litter picking, bulb planting and improving the

coastline. They also care for elderly members of the community by giving gifts, celebrating birthdays and singing carols at Christmas time.

80. The personal, social and health education co-ordinator leads the subject effectively. This aspect of the school's work has a high profile because he has improved planning for the subject so that it includes work on diet, health, sex and relationship education, the misuse of drugs, personal safety and citizenship. The Healthy Schools initiative is leading to further worthwhile developments in the subject.

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	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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	5
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	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
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)