

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARTHA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gaywood, Kings Lynn

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121139

Headteacher: Mr Aidan McGovern

Lead inspector: Colin Henderson

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 257796

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:	183
School address:	Field Lane Gaywood Kings Lynn Norfolk
Postcode:	PE30 4AY
Telephone number:	01553 774829
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Michael Fillenham
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Martha's Catholic Primary is a smaller than average primary school. Pupils come from a wide area and from a broad range of social and economic backgrounds. They are mainly of white, United Kingdom ethnic background. Eleven per cent have English as an additional language. Many of these are Philippino who have recently started at the school as their parents are employed at the nearby hospital. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Ten per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below the national average. These include a broad range of learning, sensory, emotional and communication difficulties. Attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year. It is broadly average overall, although the attainment on entry of the current reception class is just below average. The school has experienced a high level of staff change and long-term sickness. Fifty per cent of the teaching staff have had one year or less in the school. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2003 after the lengthy absence of the previous headteacher was covered by four temporary headteachers. The school continues to cover the long-term sickness of an infant teacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23742	Colin Henderson	Lead inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; physical education; geography; English as an additional language
14061	Len Shipman	Lay inspector	
30573	Sonia Bosworth	Team inspector	English; history; music; citizenship
22058	Christine Richardson	Team inspector	Science; art and design; design and technology; Foundation Stage; special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of St Martha's Catholic Primary School is **good**.

It is a friendly and harmonious school that has a strong, caring Catholic ethos. It encourages pupils to behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work. The school provides a good quality of education, with good teaching and good leadership and management. A good staff team and a supportive governing body work well together to ensure that all pupils are included fully. Most pupils make good progress in their learning. The new headteacher provides good leadership after a period of considerable staff change. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Year 6 pupils achieve very well, particularly in English and science.
- Relationships are excellent throughout the school.
- Consistently good teaching in Years 3 to 6 and in the Foundation Stage.
- Information about pupils' progress is not used consistently to meet their learning needs and to target improvement.
- Very good links with the local community and good links with parents.
- A small number of pupils do not attend school enough.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, although aspects have been limited by the frequent use of temporary headteachers to cover long-term absence. The school has established a programme of professional development that has improved teaching quality and teachers' subject knowledge. It has improved provision for information and communication technology (ICT), although some computer resources have proved unreliable and limited pupils' achievements. All statutory requirements are met. Assessment procedures have improved, although the information is not used consistently to guide teaching plans. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are developing, but are not fully established.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

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

Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Year 6 pupils attain above average standards overall. They attain well above average standards in English and science. Standards in ICT meet expected levels. Those in music and physical education are above expected standards. Year 2 pupils attain average standards. They are above average in reading, writing and science. They attain standards in ICT that are below expected levels. Children enter the school with average attainment. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, promoted by good teaching. They achieve the nationally expected levels by the end of the reception year. Many exceed these levels, especially in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. Teachers do not always match work to pupils' abilities. Consistently good teaching helps pupils in Years 3 to 6 to make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support and make good progress

towards their learning targets. Good use is made of a limited amount of specialist support teaching for pupils with English as an additional language, which, together with good use of learning assistants, helps them make good progress.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good and promote very good attitudes and behaviour. Attendance is unsatisfactory, due mainly to a small number of pupils not attending often enough.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good, especially in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6. Teachers have consistently high expectations in these years and this helps pupils to make good progress in their learning. The curriculum is good and enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school provides very good personal care, guidance and support for pupils which reflect its caring Catholic ethos. Good links with parents and very good links with the local community contribute well to pupils' learning

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher works in an effective partnership with his deputy to give a good lead to the work of the school. He has managed a high level of staff change successfully to develop a strong team approach and establish a caring, supportive ethos. The management of other key staff is satisfactory. Subject co-ordinators, many of whom are new to their role, are beginning to improve their knowledge of teaching and learning throughout the school. Their roles are not developed sufficiently to enable them to target improvement rigorously. Governance is good. Governors are effectively involved in working with the headteacher and his staff to review the school's effectiveness and target improvement. They fulfil their statutory requirements fully and make a good contribution to shaping the direction of the school's work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school. Parents in over 93 per cent of the questionnaires responded positively to almost every question. All parents agreed that teaching is good and that staff expected their children to work hard. Inspectors agreed with the parents' positive views.

Pupils have similar positive views of the school. These were clearly reflected in the pupils' questionnaires and in discussions with inspectors. Almost all indicated that they enjoyed school; they have to work hard; teachers show them how to improve their work and they know an adult to go to if they are worried. Some were concerned about the behaviour of other pupils. Inspectors agree with the pupils' positive views of a friendly and caring school. There was little evidence of inappropriate behaviour by pupils, and the school has effective behaviour management procedures.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the use of assessment information to:
 - help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work;
 - check on their progress consistently throughout the school;
 - help teachers to plan work that meets pupils' learning needs;
- extend the role of subject co-ordinators so as to improve their knowledge and understanding of standards of attainment and target improvement consistently;
- improve attendance levels.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Year 6 pupils attain **above average** standards overall. They attain well above average levels in English and science, above average in mathematics and average in information and communication technology (ICT). Year 2 pupils attain average standards overall. They attain above average levels in English and science. Their attainment in ICT is below average. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in their learning, promoted by consistently good teaching.
- Children in the reception class make good progress and most are likely to achieve their learning goals in all six areas of learning.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily overall, although teachers do not extend pupils' learning enough.
- Good specialist teaching helps pupils in Years 3 to 6 to attain above expected standards in music and physical education.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress towards their learning targets.

Commentary

1. The results of the national tests for pupils in Year 6 over the last four years show that standards are above average. They are often well above average in English. Standards are above the average of similar schools. Inspection evidence reflects these results and confirms that Year 6 pupils attain above average standards and that their achievement is good. Standards have been maintained at the above average level reported previously. They have improved in English and science, as pupils attain well above average standards. The school achieved its target in 2003 of 84 per cent of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 in English and mathematics. Inspectors found that the school is likely to improve its results in 2004 and achieve its challenging target of 91 per cent. The proportion of pupils attaining at above the expected level is also likely to be higher than the national average. The current Year 6 has fewer pupils with special educational needs and a higher proportion of more able pupils than last year. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 have consistently high expectations of pupils' work. They maintain a good, often very good, standard of teaching. Pupils respond very positively, are keen to succeed and achieve well. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
2. Most children enter the reception class with average attainment, although it varies considerably from one year to the next. Most settle quickly and happily. They achieve well, promoted by good teaching by an enthusiastic team of adults. Most are likely to achieve their nationally expected goals in all six areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Many will exceed these goals, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. They attain average standards overall, similar to those recorded in the last inspection. Standards in reading remain above average. Standards in writing have improved, mainly because of the school's recent focus on improving pupils' writing skills. Standards in mathematics are similar to those at the time of the last inspection and to the results of national tests over the last three years. Although most pupils will attain the nationally expected Level 2, the proportion attaining above that level is average. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not consistently match work to the range of pupils' learning needs. This does not ensure that pupils, especially the more able, achieve as well as they could.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (16.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.2 (13.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.8 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 25 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	27.0 (28.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.0 (28.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.7 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

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

3. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 attain above expected standards in music and physical education. The school makes very good use of the specialist subject knowledge of some teachers by enabling them to teach other classes, as well as their own, in these subjects. Pupils benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular sporting and musical activities. These promote good standards.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the steps noted on their individual education plans and gain in self-esteem and confidence. Targets set on pupils' plans are manageable and achievable. The school makes good use of assessment information and observations to identify pupils' needs at an early stage in their learning. Tasks are usually matched well to pupils' abilities and they have additional support in most lessons. Pupils speaking English as an additional language make good progress, especially in the reception class and in the older junior classes. The school makes effective use of its limited amount of specialist teaching support to target pupils in these years. Teaching and support staff work well together to ensure that these pupils know what they are expected to do and are involved fully in the activities. Occasionally, teachers do not ensure that the work they plan meets the English language needs of these pupils and this limits their achievement in some class activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. The level of attendance, compared with national averages, is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The relationships between pupils and adults are excellent.
- Pupils behave very well both in class and around the school. They have a clear understanding what is expected of them.
- Pupils are confident, polite and courteous and take on responsibility very well.
- When compared with the national average, attendance is unsatisfactory. However, it compares favourably with similar schools in Norfolk.

Commentary

5. Pupils come into school punctually, although some who have to travel long distances are affected by traffic congestion. They enter school with a sense of purpose that they are here to learn. In class, they eagerly answer questions and collaborate effectively in small groups.

Pupils are inquisitive, yet never intrusive towards adults. This helps them to improve their speaking and listening skills.

6. Behaviour in and around school is consistently very good. This reflects the views of 98 per cent of parents in their responses to the questionnaire. Due to classroom management that is consistently very good, lessons flow without disruption. This has a positive effect on learning. Pupils with behavioural needs are well supported and make good progress. The school has very good procedures for dealing with any incidents of bullying or racism. They would be reported quickly and effectively dealt with. No pupil has been excluded.
7. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The school is very effective in promoting mutual respect and consideration for others, especially those in Third World countries. For example, in assembly, Year 5 pupils demonstrated how we can help eliminate famine, poverty and ill health in those regions. A large number of parents were present to enjoy this assembly. The school's ethos reflects the strong link with the local Catholic church. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and respect each other's way of life. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Pupils care for each other; for example, each class has 'buddies' and in playtime there is a 'buddy bench'. The younger ones seek help from the older pupils, which is happily given.

Attendance

8. Compared with the national average, attendance is unsatisfactory. However, attendance compares favourably with similar schools in Norfolk and the school follows the local education authority's 'Step by Step' guidelines. The main cause is the high level of unauthorised absence by a very small number of pupils. The school is working very closely with the support agencies to tackle this issue and, in consequence, there are now clear signs that levels of attendance are improving. There is, however, no routine monitoring of attendance by the education welfare officer.
9. Registration procedures have improved since the last inspection. The registers are taken swiftly and the time is used effectively to support learning. This creates a positive start to the day, which encourages pupils' attitudes to learning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7
National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll
White – British	127
White – Irish	11
White – any other White background	6
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1
Mixed – White and Black African	1
Mixed – White and Asian	1
Mixed – any other mixed background	1

Asian or Asian British – Indian	2
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	13
Black or Black British – African	2
Chinese	1
Any other ethnic group	1
No ethnic group recorded	0

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is good. The school provides a good curriculum, enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school provides very good care, guidance and support for its pupils. Links with parents are good and those with the local community and other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is often very good in Years 3 to 6 and is a significant factor in helping pupils to achieve well. It is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage. The satisfactory procedures to assess pupils' work are not used consistently by teachers to inform their teaching and help pupils understand how they can improve their standards of attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is often very good and enables pupils to make good progress in their learning.
- Good teaching in the Foundation Stage helps children to settle quickly into school and achieve well.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently to plan work that challenges all pupils and targets areas for improvement.
- Teachers work well with classroom assistants so that all pupils are fully included and get good support in their learning.
- Pupils try hard to meet teachers' very high expectations of their behaviour and attitudes.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	10 (31%)	16 (50%)	4 (13%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

10. The quality of teaching has improved well since the last inspection. The high level of staff change has contributed much to improving teaching to a good standard. The school has managed well to limit the disruption caused by continuing long-term absence of teaching staff. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 was very good or excellent in almost one out of every two lessons observed. The good quality reflected the views of parents and pupils. Parents in all the questionnaires valued the quality of teaching. The consistently good teaching in the reception class enables children to make a good start to their schooling. A good team approach helps children to make good progress towards the learning goals they are expected to achieve by the end of the reception year. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. It is occasionally good,

although teachers do not match work consistently to pupils' different learning needs. This does not help them to achieve as well as they could.

11. The good teaching in Years 3 to 6 helps pupils to attain above average and often well above average standards. Teachers have very good expectations of what pupils can achieve. Many use very good, challenging activities that require pupils to extend their skills and knowledge. They encourage and motivate pupils very successfully so that they want to succeed and achieve well. Teachers use extension activities very effectively in mathematics and challenge more able pupils to plan and carry out their own scientific investigations, as, for example, when Year 3 pupils tested opaque and transparent materials. Teachers work closely with classroom assistants to ensure that all pupils are included fully in the activities. For example, good individual support by class teachers and their assistants in science and ICT lessons helped pupils speaking English as an additional language to understand specific words and phrases. This helped them to know what they were trying to achieve and helped them in recording their work. Teachers and learning support assistants plan carefully for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The additional support and programmes they are given promote their learning effectively. Pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment in literacy and numeracy and they have individual or group support in the classroom and in other areas of the school. This helps them to make good progress towards their individual learning targets and often links closely with the work of the rest of the class.
12. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 use their specialist knowledge very well to support pupils' achievement. Some class teachers plan timetables that allow them to use their expertise with other classes, for example, in physical education and music. This helps a larger number of pupils to benefit from teachers' expertise and raises standards of attainment to above expected levels in those subjects. For example, specialist teaching in music lessons observed in Years 3 and 6 enabled pupils to attain above expected levels in composing and playing short musical pieces.
13. All teachers manage their classes well. They expect pupils to behave well and to sustain their interest and concentration. Almost all pupils work hard to meet this expectation and this promotes their learning very well. Many teachers plan interesting activities. Some, particularly in Years 1 and 2, do not use assessment information to ensure that the work matches the full range of pupils' learning needs. Too often pupils are given the same worksheet, even when working in ability groups. This results in more able pupils not being extended enough, or lower attaining pupils only achieving a limited amount of work. For example, in a mathematics lesson on putting numbers in the correct order of size, the teacher did not use a broad enough range of numbers to ensure that all pupils' learning was reinforced then extended effectively. This did not help pupils to achieve well enough in the lesson. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. They make good use of pupils' self-evaluation, supported by marks stamped in their books, to show where pupils have achieved the learning objective fully, partly or not at all. A few teachers use constructive comments to inform pupils what they need to improve in order to achieve the objective, but this good practice is not consistent. Discussions with pupils show that, although many know where they have weaknesses in their work, few know what they have to improve to raise their standard.
14. Teachers use homework consistently well to promote pupils' learning. This confirmed the views of over 90 per cent of parents and pupils. Teachers do not use ICT enough to support pupils' learning. This hinders the development of their ICT skills and the extension of pupils' knowledge and understanding in a broad range of subjects.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** range of learning opportunities and there is a **satisfactory** range in the Foundation Stage. There are **very good** opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences through extra-curricular activities. Accommodation is **satisfactory**. Resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Stimulating and challenging extra-curricular activities are matched well to pupils' needs and increase their skills and confidence.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Good curriculum organisation enables effective use of specialist teachers in physical education and music.
- The school is developing effective links between subjects.
- Restricted space in the reception's outside play area limits the range of imaginative and investigative activities needed to extend children's learning.
- ICT resources are limited and unreliable, although replacements have been ordered.

Commentary

15. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities to enhance pupils' learning. These are supported very well by staff, parents and members of the community. The extensive range of sporting clubs is very well attended and encourages pupils to develop a very good team spirit because of the very effective initiatives of the sporting co-ordinators. Musical activities are popular and provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to perform in school and in public. Many pupils indicated that they enjoy these activities and that these help them to improve their skills. Pupils visit local places of interest, to extend their learning in, for example, history. Year 6 pupils benefit greatly from the challenging activities in residential visits.
16. The school uses national subject guidance effectively to provide a good range of curriculum activities. Teachers plan good links between subjects, for example between literacy, numeracy, design and technology and science in Year 1. The very good personal, social and health education programme has very clear links with every subject and activity in the school. Writing is used consistently to support other subjects. There is some use of ICT to extend pupils' skills, for example in Year 3 science, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their skills. Whole school projects are carefully planned which encourage learning. For example, the recent multi-cultural project encouraged all pupils to participate and use skills learnt in other subjects as a focus for their work. The aim of the project was to raise pupils' awareness of people and events around the world and the colourful displays and interesting written work indicate that much learning took place. In their planning, teachers recognise the different levels of attainment within their classes but do not always provide work to match pupils' needs.
17. The provision for special educational needs is good and planned thoughtfully. Pupils are included well in lessons and school activities and have good adult support in lessons. Learning support assistants work well with small groups of pupils on additional support programmes. These are carried out effectively and ensure that pupils have good experience of all subjects of the curriculum. Individual education plans have clear targets and are reviewed regularly. The school supports pupils with English as an additional language effectively, to help them be included fully in curriculum activities. However, occasionally, teachers do not plan activities that match their English language needs and this hinders their achievement.
18. Children in the Foundation Stage have a challenging and interesting curriculum ensuring that all the areas of learning receive a suitable emphasis so children achieve well. However, the small outdoor play area is not large enough for many activities to take place, nor to develop the full range of exciting investigative activities needed to extend children's learning and curiosity.

Care, guidance and support

This is clearly a school with a strong, caring Catholic ethos. Its provision for the pupils' welfare, including child protection, first aid and health and safety, is **very good**. The school provides **good** support, advice and guidance. The involvement of pupils in contributing their views to shape the school's future is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have excellent and trusting relationships with teachers and other adults.
- Pupils' views are assiduously sought, listened to and acted upon. They significantly help the school to improve.
- Pupils are not consistently involved in fully understanding what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

19. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved in the overall quality of care shown towards the pupils. It is now very good and is appreciated by the parents. Ninety-four per cent of parents valued how the school supported their children and helped them to mature and become independent.
20. The trained, designated member of staff for child protection is currently on long-term absence. The headteacher deputises and is due for further training this term. Locally agreed procedures are in place and the Diocese is well placed in a supporting role. Health and safety procedures are good. All support staff have been trained in first aid and the accident book is properly recorded. Building and maintenance inspections are reviewed annually. Health and safety are carefully observed in lessons; for example, jewellery is removed before physical education. Support staff ensure that pupils work and play safely. Pupils' views are that they feel safe and are confident about approaching an adult if they have a concern.
21. The views of the pupils are gathered in a number of ways. The school council provides an effective 'voice' and gives members a sense of responsibility. There are 'happy' and 'sad' boxes for comments. There is a 'buddy tree' in the hall that is used very well to recognise pupils whose help and personal qualities have been commented upon by others. The older junior pupils were fully involved in developing the adventure playground.
22. The excellent quality of relationships between all members of the school community and the promotion of strong Catholic values support pupils very well in their personal development. Pupils' well-being is a priority of all members of staff and teachers have a very good understanding of pupils' development. Pupils are given very good advice and guidance through assemblies, personal, social and health education and citizenship, as well as in everyday school activities. Staff are confident that they know and understand each pupil very well and quickly identify any concern.
23. The school tests pupils regularly for achievement in English and mathematics. This information is used satisfactorily to track pupils' attainment year on year, as well as to identify if extra support is necessary for pupils to attain the expected level for their age. In all other subjects, teachers assess pupils' attainment well at the end of each unit of work and, once a term, they reassess pupils' writing skills. This information is used well to group pupils for literacy and numeracy. It is used inconsistently by a small minority of teachers to set relevant learning activities for the full range of abilities or to ensure that each pupil achieves at least satisfactorily during the year. Junior pupils have good opportunities to assess how well they think they have achieved the purpose of a lesson and to raise their own improvement targets for literacy and numeracy. Although the practice is good in some classes, targets are often broad and reviews vary from class to class. Not all pupils fully understand yet what they do well and what they need to do next to improve. Pupils speaking English as an additional language, who enter school during a school year, are assessed soon after entry. They are given good support in

lessons. Where needed, satisfactory additional help is available from a specialist support teacher for those pupils with significant English language requirements.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with other schools and the community are **very good**. The links with parents are **good** and are developing strongly.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- The very good links with other colleges and schools enrich the curriculum.
- Good links with parents and carers contribute well to pupils' learning.

Commentary

24. The school has built upon the many positive features recorded in the last inspection. Many parents expressed positive views about the school in the meeting with the lead inspector. Due to previous staffing issues, a few parents felt the quality of information about their child's progress could be improved. However, since the appointment of the new headteacher, parents now feel much more confident as to the school's future.
25. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator visits pre-school groups, including Catholic families who live in outlying areas. In recent years, there has been an influx of overseas families with a strong Catholic upbringing, many speaking English as an additional language. With some help from the parish, pupils and their families are made welcome in school. This ensures that all new pupils start mainstream education with confidence and also re-assures the parents.
26. Parents are fully included in their children's education. The school has good, existing links with outside specialist agencies such as those for pupils speaking English as an additional language, including the translation service. The school is aware that there is a lack of books that celebrate Philippine culture, so parents are arranging for some to be sent from that country. Parents whose children have special educational needs are kept well informed. They are thoroughly involved in discussions of their children's needs and of their involvement in any support programmes. Parents and older junior pupils contribute their own views to annual reviews.
27. The views of parents are gathered in a number of ways. The headteacher is available to parents before and after school, to give them an opportunity to discuss any concerns informally. Parents are happy with the quality and quantity of routine information; in 93 per cent of the questionnaires they agreed that they are kept well informed. The annual pupils' report provides parents with a clear profile of their child's academic and social progress. The majority of parents feel that the balance of homework is about right and that it is used effectively to support teaching and learning.
28. Parents help in school in a number of ways to improve the quality of education. Some assist with reading to support literacy. More parents and governors now volunteer to support the school in extending its range of activities, such as tennis. The active and enthusiastic parent teacher association holds a number of fund-raising events. Profits from these provide resources to support the curriculum or improve the building.
29. The links with local schools and colleges are very good and enrich the curriculum. As a result of recent additional funding, opportunities for sport, drama and music have improved. Good use is made of specialist teachers from local high schools and colleges. The close links with local high schools help pupils to move on to Year 7 with confidence. This transfer system fully includes parents in the process. There are very good links with the parish and clergy that contribute very successfully to promoting pupils' personal and spiritual development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher and the governance of the school are good. The leadership and management of key staff are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher works in an effective partnership with his deputy to provide a clear and strong direction to the work of the school.
- The roles and contributions of subject leaders are not developed sufficiently.
- Governors work well with the headteacher and staff to check on how well the school is doing and shape the direction of its work.
- A strong team approach has established a supportive and caring ethos in which every pupil is valued and included fully in all aspects of the school's programme

Commentary

30. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2003. During the previous two years, due mainly to the long-term sickness of the permanent headteacher, the school had four temporary headteachers. Most continued to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness soundly, although there was some variation in their approaches that did not ensure a consistently rigorous focus on improvement. The school also had a high level of staff change and illness that limited the development in subject leadership and management. The new headteacher has developed an effective and influential partnership with his deputy that is providing a strong and more consistent leadership to the work of the school. He is improving the school's self-evaluation procedures and is beginning to establish more effective procedures for tracking pupils' attainment and evaluating teaching and learning. The good leadership of the headteacher is valued by parents, as reflected in 97 per cent of the questionnaires. The headteacher has used the high level of staff changes to re-organise subject responsibilities and, with help from the local education authority, has focused strongly on literacy and numeracy. These strategies are beginning to provide enthusiastic and influential leadership in these areas, although they have yet to raise standards significantly. Subject leaders are gaining an improved understanding of attainment in their subjects, although they are not yet secure in their knowledge of standards of teaching and learning throughout the school. Subject leadership and management are well set up to improve further the school's provision and standards. Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection, when the school had also undergone a period of uncertainty, with seven different headteachers in the previous six years.
31. The management of special educational needs is good. The efficient and knowledgeable co-ordinator works well with learning support assistants. They have been very effective in developing additional support programmes, particularly the 'Catch up' programme in literacy. The school uses funding carefully to ensure that there are sufficient resources to meet pupils' needs as well as providing training for teachers and learning support assistants. The management of the provision for pupils speaking English as an additional language is satisfactory. The school makes efficient use of the limited time available from a support teacher to provide individual and small group support. This improves these pupils' English language skills, although other teachers do not consistently plan work so as to build successfully on this improvement. Good use is made of learning assistants to support pupils and include them successfully in the different activities. The level of teaching and learning support has not increased significantly to meet the needs of the recent, larger numbers of pupils speaking English as an additional language. The school focuses specialist teaching support on those pupils who have arrived recently with English language weaknesses, especially in Years 5 and 6. This helps them settle and make rapid progress, particularly in preparation for national tests.
32. Staff and pupils know and share the school's mission statement. This is reflected clearly in all aspects of the school's work. The headteacher has very successfully managed a period of staff change and long-term illness and has established a strong team approach. The school has

very detailed procedures for new staff that help them to know quickly what the school is trying to achieve, how it is organised and what the expectations are. This support encourages all staff to work together well to promote the school's Catholic ethos and create a caring and harmonious school community. They offer all pupils a good range of learning activities and promote pupil inclusion well. All staff and pupils feel valued and over 90 per cent of the parents' and pupils' questionnaires confirm that staff care for pupils and treat them fairly.

33. Governors continue to be supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory duties well. They maintained an effective involvement in managing the school, especially the chairman of governors, during the period of uncertainty at headteacher level. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work successfully with the new headteacher to evaluate the school's provision and target improvement. They have produced a detailed, comprehensive school improvement plan that outlines the main priorities and links them to funds. The plan does not, however, always show how they are intended to improve pupils' attainment. This does not help them to evaluate progress and maintain a consistent focus on raising standards. Most governors visit the school regularly to observe lessons. Governors are kept well informed about standards by the headteacher. For example, they jointly analyse information that tracks pupils' achievements throughout the school. This information is used well to agree attainment targets for the school in the national tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6. It is not yet used consistently to set and review predicted targets in other years.
34. Governors have established good financial procedures and manage the school's funds efficiently. They receive good support from the finance officer from the local education authority and the school's financial assistant. This enables them to receive up-to-date financial information and to compare their spending levels and standards of attainment with those of similar schools in the local education authority. This information helps governors to use the principles of best value consistently to evaluate the school's effectiveness. The school has had some budget constraints in recent years, although staff changes have enabled governors to build up a budget surplus that they have dedicated to maintaining current staffing levels.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	527,839
Total expenditure	507,805
Expenditure per pupil	2,854

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,445
Balance carried forward to the next	24,524

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

35. There are currently 22 children in reception. Attainment on entry varies from year to year. The current group spans the full range of ability but attainment is below average overall. Children achieve well in most areas of learning because of the good teaching by an enthusiastic team of adults who provide a varied and stimulating curriculum. The range of opportunities within some areas of learning is restricted by the limited space available for activities outside of the classroom.
36. Relationships are excellent and as a result children's personal skills improve quickly, which helps children achieve well in their work. The headteacher works well with the newly qualified teacher to ensure that everything runs smoothly. He has been very supportive in the development of good procedures for planning and assessment. Children's achievements are recorded consistently and used well to plan work at the correct level for all children. Provision is similar to that at the time of the previous inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships between children and adults create a good atmosphere for effective learning.
- Planning is good, giving a clear focus to the promotion of children's personal development.

Commentary

37. This area of learning is given a strong emphasis, when children start school. Most make rapid progress and by the time they start in Year 1 their attainment is above that expected at the end of reception year. This is due to good teaching, excellent relationships and a well planned and ordered environment in which children settle quickly and feel secure. Although some are still dependent upon adults, others work independently on their tasks. Children quickly settle into routines and take on responsibility for clearing away or giving out equipment. Behaviour is very good. Staff plan a good range of activities that encourage sustained interest and concentration from the children. This helps them to learn effectively.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's communication skills develop well, because adults encourage children to speak and listen effectively.
- Children want to learn, because the skills of reading and writing are taught in an enjoyable way.

Commentary

38. All children achieve well and most are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. Some children will achieve above the expected level because of the good teaching and planning. Children are taught to listen to one another as soon as they start school and this is reinforced in many carefully planned activities. Most speak confidently in front of

others and use a wide range of vocabulary to describe their toys. All children improve their formation of letters and most copy a sentence accurately. More able children work unaided to write their own sentences. They spell four letter words correctly by sounding out each letter before writing it down. The sharing of books, listening to stories, games, singing rhymes and the active learning of sounds and letters are planned thoughtfully to make children's learning fun and effective. Children learn to read in lively lessons. Some are reading simple stories and proudly take home books to read with their parents.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, with a strong emphasis on learning through practical activities.
- Mathematical skills are used across many areas of learning and this helps children to learn well.

Commentary

39. Teaching and learning are good and help to ensure that all children achieve well. Most achieve the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. Children use mathematical language confidently and solve problems through play with construction materials or in physical development lessons. They play thoughtfully with sand and water, working out which vessels are full and which are empty. Adults use every opportunity to introduce a mathematical question into an activity. They question children skilfully whilst they play games. This helps children to develop an interest in shapes, numbers, counting and comparison of groups. They enjoy estimating how many sounds they hear and smile with pride when their guess is correct. By the end of reception year, most children record simple addition and subtraction sums to ten and form numbers correctly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skilful questioning encourages children to extend their thinking and answers.
- The restricted space outside the classroom limits the range of investigative practical activities needed to extend children's knowledge of the world around them.

Commentary

40. Teaching and learning are good. Thoughtful planning helps children to achieve their early learning goals by the end of reception year. They all achieve at least satisfactorily. Good interventions by adults enable children to enjoy imaginative play, for example, as they very carefully create farms with toy animals. Skilled questioning by adults encourages children to delight in making trays of coloured sand, shaving foam, soap flakes and cereals more 'goosey' or 'lumpy' by adding different amounts of water. They marvel at the way fleece changes when they cover it with washing up liquid. The limited space of the play area results in the children having too few investigative activities beyond the classroom to find out more for themselves. Children are developing a satisfactory awareness of the passage of time. They show good respect in assemblies and religious education. They develop skills in using the mouse or changing simple programs on the computer, often with adult support.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are challenging and enjoyable.

- The small outside play area limits creative play outside.

Commentary

41. Achievement in physical development is satisfactory, because of the limited opportunities for outside play with large apparatus and equipment. Lessons are planned carefully to develop specific skills. Children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning. They learn to use the space in the hall sensibly and safely and show good co-ordination and control when balancing beanbags on their head or arm. Children know the need to warm up before physical activities and improve their skills in hopping, jumping and running. Children's skills in handling pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools are at the expected levels, because of the focus on developing these skills well.

Creative development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a stimulating range of activities that enrich their learning.
- There are good activities enabling children to learn through play and to learn skills from direct teaching.

Commentary

42. Children achieve well, because of the good teaching and levels of support. Most achieve the early learning goals by the end of reception year. Skills in drawing and colouring improve, because staff encourage and teach children skills very sensitively. Children paint with firm brush strokes, select colours deliberately when printing and complete attractive collages with a range of materials. Children move their hands and bodies expressively in music and dance. In well-planned music lessons, they sing enthusiastically, learning new songs quickly, and enjoy making sounds with instruments and toys. There are good opportunities each day for imaginative play, for example, in the 'role play area'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are well above the national average.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning, which help them to achieve well.
- Intervention programmes help to accelerate the progress of pupils who have not attained the expected levels in tests.
- Pupils are not sufficiently aware of how they can improve their work.
- The school does not track the individual progress of pupils rigorously enough.

Commentary

43. Year 6 pupils attain standards that are well above the national average in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Year 2 pupils attain standards that are above the national average in these areas of learning. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection for speaking, listening and reading for Year 2. They have improved well in writing as this has been a focus for improvement. Standards are better in all areas than those previously reported for Year 6. Standards are higher than those attained in the 2003 tests for Year 6 pupils. This is because

there are fewer pupils with special educational needs and more pupils of higher ability in the present cohort than in 2003. Handwriting was identified in the last inspection as a weakness. It is now improved and most pupils write with a joined, legible script that is presented neatly.

44. Teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good teaching observed in junior classes. Teaching is satisfactory in infant classes. Good teaching assistant support and successful catch-up programmes for identified pupils help to increase achievement, which is good across the whole school. All pupils generally are very committed and conscientious in their work and these very good attributes contribute to their good achievement. Pupils' writing over the last two terms shows that teachers implement the National Literacy Strategy well. Teachers plan and use activities that develop pupils' speaking and listening well. For example, most teachers use good questioning techniques so that all pupils contribute to class discussion. Pupils contribute well to class and whole-school assemblies and all junior classes have benefited from taking part in drama classes with a specialist teacher from Springwood High School. Pupils respond well to these opportunities and become confident and competent speakers, who mostly give clear and thoughtful responses to questions. In all classes, pupils respect the person speaking and listen carefully. Where teachers match tasks well to pupils' ability levels, pupils make very good progress in lessons. For instance in the analysis of poetry in Year 6, the teacher carefully chose three poems of different levels of difficulty, which challenged the reading and interpretive skills of all pupils in the class. However, not all teachers match tasks consistently well to the full ability range and this limits achievement in a small minority of lessons. Homework complements and extends classwork well.
45. Pupils have a good understanding of the intention of each lesson. Teachers make this clear to them at the start of the lesson and pupils evaluate how well they perceive they have done at the end. However, although pupils identify their own improvement targets, they are not consistently involved in appraising how well they have done and deciding what they need to do to improve.
46. The school has an increasing number of pupils whose home language is not English. Teaching assistants support these pupils well in class and satisfactory additional teaching support is given by the local education authority. The time is quite short and has not been increased for the last two years. However, these pupils generally achieve well in developing their language skills. A small proportion of pupils have special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator, class teacher and teaching assistants all help these pupils to achieve their own learning targets well.
47. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Although the co-ordinator is well respected by other staff and keen to put developments into action, she has only been the subject leader for two terms. She has had little personal experience of teaching in the lower school and has not yet had the time to establish a full range of monitoring procedures. Nevertheless, she has audited resources and knows that further reading books are needed for more able pupils. She has worked well with the literacy consultant from the local education authority to raise relevant priorities for improvement in the subject. She has scrutinised pupils' work, so that she now knows the range of pupils' attainment in school. From the February half-term, recent good initiatives have emphasised the application of literacy skills within other subjects and improving guided reading sessions in classrooms. The class and library book resources are more extensive than at the time of last inspection, although there are plans for these to be extended further and for the library to be computerised in the near future. Sound systems of tracking test scores are in place but the school does not yet rigorously evaluate the progress made by individual pupils, particularly for those of middle or higher ability.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Under the leadership of the co-ordinator and headteacher, pupils are now more consistently and successfully practising their literacy skills within other subjects, across the whole school. This is already beginning to help pupils to improve their skills in writing, of which good and very good examples were seen. For example, pupils write good reports of investigations in science, good evaluations of design projects and of music they have listened to. Year 5 pupils produced

very clear accounts of their Victorian Day for history and Year 4 wrote imaginatively as though they were Ancient Egyptians at school. Pupils practise reading skills in many subjects, researching from books and from the computer. For example, Year 3 gained relevant information for good projects on The Romans. Junior pupils use computers for word-processing their work satisfactorily. The school sets very good tasks, involving speaking and listening to each other, for example in personal, social, health and citizenship education and in co-operative work in all subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is never less than good and is often very good.
- Support staff are used well to improve pupils' mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not match work consistently to pupils' learning needs.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic in their approach to mathematics and are keen to improve.
- Pupils do not apply their numeracy skills and knowledge enough in other subjects.

Commentary

49. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in all aspects of mathematics. Good and often very good teaching in these years promotes above average standards. An analysis of pupils' work confirms that the school is on target to maintain the above average results achieved in the national tests for Year 6 pupils over the last four years. The proportion of pupils who attain the nationally expected Level 4 is well above average. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels is just above the national average. Standards in Year 6 are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Teachers use a good range of challenging work, especially in number aspects, to consolidate then extend pupils' skills and knowledge. They make very good use of extension activities, requiring pupils to apply their knowledge and skills to solve challenging number problems. For example, many Year 5 pupils have a good grasp of fractions and decimals and use their knowledge well to work out answers quickly, for example fractions of large quantities. This is extended very successfully in Year 6, when pupils apply their skills and knowledge to solve challenging money problems.
50. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. It is occasionally good, particularly when teachers ensure that work requires pupils to build effectively on their prior mathematical knowledge. Year 2 pupils attain average standards. These are similar to those reported previously. Almost all pupils attain the nationally expected Level 2, which is above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining higher than this level meets the national average. Teachers do not consistently match work to pupils' ability. Too often, they use the same work for pupils of different abilities, for example when all pupils in one infant class completed the same activity putting numbers to 100 in the correct order. This does not ensure that more able pupils achieve as well as they should or that lower attaining pupils fully grasp specific mathematical skills or concept. This limits their achievement both in lessons and over the term.
51. Teachers make good use of support staff in all classes to improve pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding. This is particularly effective for pupils whose home language is not English. Teaching and support focus strongly on key words so as to ensure that the pupils understand what they are trying to achieve. For example, a learning support assistant saw to it that a Year 2 Philippino pupil understood the different words such as 'less than' and 'minus' used to describe subtraction. This helped the pupil to understand what she was trying to do and so, with continued support where needed, she achieved well. Classroom assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs in mathematics. For example, they help them to contribute well to whole class mental mathematical activities. They are used very successfully to help pupils whose competence in a particular mathematical skill is uncertain.

For example, when Year 6 pupils completed their self-evaluation of how well they had grasped a particular division strategy, the assistant spent some time with those who indicated that they had not fully understood. She clearly explained the strategy again as the class teacher required the rest of the class to apply this strategy in their work. Pupils became more confident in their understanding of the strategy and quickly returned to their class work. This helped them to achieve well in the lesson.

52. Teaching is good. It is a significant factor in helping pupils attain above average standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6, where it is often very good. Most teachers maintain a brisk pace in lessons and provide interesting, challenging work. This helps pupils to enjoy mathematics. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to respond to teachers' questions and challenges. They want to succeed and to achieve well. Their positive approach helps them to sustain their interest and make good progress in their learning. Where teaching is very good, teachers have high expectations of pupils. They use a very good range of activities that consolidate then extend pupils' skills and knowledge. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson, the teacher challenged different groups of pupils to count on or back in tens, with each group starting from a larger two-digit or three-digit number. She then extended the more able by changing to multiplying by 10, starting with a five-digit number. All achieved well, and were delighted with their success. Many teachers use extension activities very successfully to help pupils attain even higher standards. Teaching is less effective when teachers do not plan a range of work that meets different learning needs. They use similar worksheets for all pupils, particularly in infant classes, and this does not help pupils to make consistently good progress in their learning. Teachers make good use of homework to promote achievement in mathematics. They do not mark pupils' work consistently to show what pupils need to do to raise their standard. There was very limited evidence of teachers using ICT to support pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge.
53. The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory overall. The new subject co-ordinator only took on the role at the start of this school year. She is enthusiastic and is beginning to give a good lead to developing the subject further, for example, by establishing a calculations policy throughout the school. She is gaining a clearer understanding of standards of attainment in Years 3 to 6, although her knowledge of the standards being attained in the infant years is not yet fully secure. This does not ensure a consistent focus on raising standards in each year group.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. There was some evidence of pupils using their mathematical skills to measure plant growth in science, to record results of their scientific investigations and to use different scales when developing their mapping skills in geography. Teachers do not identify links with other subjects in their planning for numeracy. This does not ensure that pupils are required to apply their mathematical skills and understanding, or that these contribute to improved standards.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well because teaching is good.
- Pupils frequently investigate for themselves, which contributes to their enjoyment of the subject.
- Pupils record and illustrate their work well, because teachers give them clear guidelines.

Commentary

55. The emphasis that the school places on practical and investigative activities is a key factor leading to standards that are higher than recorded in the previous inspection. Teacher assessment indicates that pupils achieve above average standards by the end of Year 2. They achieve well because of their enthusiasm for the wide range of practical activities they

complete. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well above average standards because of the good teaching and high expectations of teachers. All pupils achieve well because teachers plan investigations that are interesting and enjoyable.

56. Good teaching, with an emphasis on learning through first-hand experiences, was evident in samples of work and in lessons seen during the inspection. In a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils investigated as many materials they could find around the room, to see which were opaque, translucent or transparent. They organised their work very well, maintaining a clear focus upon their task as they collected information. Pupils with special educational needs received good support from the teaching assistant, which enabled them to complete the same task. Higher attaining pupils worked on a different task, testing materials and recording their findings on the computer. Skilled questioning by the teacher ensured that pupils understood their task and that the higher attaining pupils were carrying out a fair test. Year 5 pupils enjoyed their task of dissecting a lily flower, to examine closely what they had seen during the teacher's demonstration. At the end of the lesson they were confident that they knew the names of the parts of the flower, because the practical activity had made it relevant for them.
57. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should present their written work. They show them how to record experiments, using scientific terms in an orderly, organised way. As a result, pupils' written work has the necessary headings. They use their knowledge well to explain what they have learnt as a result of the investigation. Diagrams of flowers, circuits and parts of the body are labelled well and most graphs are drawn neatly, with labels. Pupils clearly take pride in their work. They enhance their understanding of processes by working out the order of events to produce a coherent account.
58. Teachers plan thoughtfully to practise aspects of literacy and numeracy in science. For example, when introducing labels, instructions or bullet points in literacy, teachers ensure that these aspects are integrated into pupils' written work in science. In this way, they learn to use them purposefully. Planned links between subjects are developing well, as in Year 1, where pupils reinforced their learning about forces by making a pop-up figure in design and technology. They successfully worked out what happened when they pulled the centre strip and what happened when they pushed it down again. ICT is well used for a range of graphs and for making presentations that pupils enjoy.
59. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable. She leads a team of enthusiastic teachers well and wants to develop the subject further. Current methods of assessment give useful information and ensure that tasks are usually matched well to pupils' needs. She is aware, however, that a more detailed form of assessment would make it easier to track children's progress through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in Years 3 to 6 use their own good subject knowledge and national guidance well to develop pupils' skills effectively.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Unreliable resources limit the development of pupils' skills.
- The school has recently improved the quantity and quality of resources.

Commentary

60. Year 6 pupils attain standards that meet nationally expected levels. They have improved since the last inspection. Year 2 pupils attain standards that are below those expected nationally. They are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily overall. Teachers in these years have good subject knowledge and use it well to

teach basic skills effectively. Analysis of teaching plans showed that teachers use national subject guidance well, supported by new textbooks, to teach all required aspects. The school made very good use of a residential trip, to help Year 6 pupils improve their skills and knowledge in control and modelling. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory since they have too few opportunities to apply and extend their skills and knowledge.

61. Discussions with staff and pupils revealed that teachers are frequently unable to provide activities allowing pupils to extend their skills, due to frequent breakdowns of the resources. During the inspection, half of the computers in Year 6 were not working. The school increased the number of computers after the last inspection and provided more opportunities for pupils to use them in a broader range of subjects. However, these resources were unreliable and, despite good support from the local education authority, teachers were not confident in using them. Staff changes, and a strong lead given by the new co-ordinator, have led to increased teacher confidence and competence in using ICT, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Teachers in these years look for ways around these difficulties, for example, by sending pupils to other classrooms to use any available computers. This increased confidence is less evident in Years 1 and 2, due mainly to long-term staff illness. Teachers cover all aspects of ICT, although discussions with infant pupils show that they get too few opportunities to apply the skills demonstrated by the teacher.
62. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop their word-processing skills soundly in a good range of subjects, for example to present some descriptive writing well by changing the type and colour of the font and including graphics and a border. Year 6 pupils combine their data handling and word processing skills successfully to produce a good range of graphs and charts, with clear explanations of the results. They use their improving ICT skills well to make good multi-media presentations to other Year 6 pupils. Years 1 and 2 pupils show some increasing competence in their knowledge of ICT and in improving their keyboard skills. However, infants do not achieve satisfactorily in developing and applying their ICT skills and knowledge. Discussions with groups of pupils show that they do not have enough opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge to the levels expected for their age.
63. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 so no judgement can be made on teaching. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. It is often good, particularly when teachers use their good subject knowledge and a very good range of questions to extend pupils' skills. Teachers, many with the help of good support staff, give good guidance to individual pupils, particularly those speaking English as an additional language. They check that that pupils understand clearly what they are required to do and work with the support teacher to explain well any specific ICT terms, such as 'cell' and 'field' when using spreadsheets. This ensures that they are included fully in the work. They achieve satisfactorily overall in most lessons, although some limitations in their English language skills hamper the amount achieved in word-processing. Pupils with special educational needs use their ICT skills satisfactorily to extend their knowledge in literacy and numeracy. However, they do not use ICT enough to support their progress towards their learning targets.
64. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily overall. The school made good improvement after the last inspection but resource problems and staff absence hindered developments. The new co-ordinator is giving a clear direction to the subject. She has produced a detailed action plan with specific improvement targets. The school has recently used funds to improve the quality and quantity of computer resources considerably. They are not yet sufficiently established to promote higher standards. With help from the local education authority, for example, by improving access to the Internet and increasing staff training, the school is well set up to improve its provision significantly.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 use their ICT skills and knowledge soundly to support work in some other subjects, for example in the school topic on Passport to the World. They develop their word

processing skills to extend their range of writing opportunities in English, in geography and in history, for example, to support their work on Ancient Egypt. Many use their data handling skills well to present their results of a scientific investigation, for example, when recording the growth rate of a plant. However, few teachers identify in their planning where they use ICT to support pupils' learning. Significant variations between classes in the frequency with which pupils apply their ICT skills result in inconsistency in pupils' achievements throughout the school.

HUMANITIES

66. Only one **geography** lesson was seen during the inspection. Pupils' work and teaching plans were studied and the subject was discussed with the co-ordinator and groups of pupils. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 attain standards that match those expected at their age. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of specific geographical terms, for example, when describing different climates. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards attained by pupils in Years 1 and 2.
67. Pupils have completed good work on their Passport to the World project, together with that done on an Indian village and on other contrasting countries. This shows that many junior pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how their lives differ from people living in different geographical environments. They use their writing skills well to describe the differences, although more able pupils are not challenged enough to use their knowledge to explain the geographical reasons for the different life-styles. This results in pupils not attaining the above average standards of which they are capable. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in developing their mapping skills, including their use of symbols and co-ordinates to locate key features. More able Years 5 and 6 pupils are not extended through using their skills on maps of different sizes and scales, which limits the standards they attain.
68. Only two lessons were seen in **history** in Years 3 and 6, so no overall evaluation can be made of provision. Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' previous work, met the co-ordinator and looked at teachers' planning. Displays around the school, work in lessons and pupils' previous work indicated that standards are broadly similar to those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have been maintained in junior classes since the previous inspection and improved in infant classes. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Because of the school's emphasis on basic skills, the recently appointed co-ordinator has had very little opportunity to monitor and evaluate the subject or develop strategies for improving pupils' attainment and achievement. However, she has introduced a good published scheme of work that guides teachers' planning soundly, although a small minority of teachers are over-reliant upon the worksheets included in the scheme. The school's recent decision to practise and extend pupils' literacy skills in other subjects is now apparent in good research and writing in most pupils' work. The school has increased the number of books for historical research since the last inspection, but still has few historical artefacts. Nevertheless, members of staff bring in artefacts of their own, so that pupils can use a sufficient range of historical sources to meet National Curriculum requirements. The school uses visits well to increase pupils' historical understanding and achievement. For example, Year 5 pupils experienced a very valuable day as 'Victorians' at Gressenhall Museum.
69. Pupils' achievement in the analysis of work was satisfactory, although in the lessons seen pupils made good progress. For example, in Year 6 pupils prepared their research of a 1960's artefact well, as homework. The Year 3 teacher put on a laurel head-dress and led a sparkling session of questions from pupils about Roman gods, education and eating habits. In the final part of the lesson, pupils remembered much of what they had been told in this very interesting way. Teaching was at least good in the lessons seen, but evidence from pupils' work does not indicate that this is consistent in all lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement of provision in **art and design**. There is a colourful and interesting range of art and design work in pupils' sketchbooks and on display. For example, a display of very attractive observational drawings of flowers in Year 1, through to a wide range of observational drawing in the whole school 'Passport to the World' project. The good development of observational drawing skills is seen in science workbooks as well as in displays. Pupils in Year 2 have good examples of extending pictures from a photograph in their 'art gallery' and Year 5 pupils use their artistic skills well to illustrate points about how to make the world a better place. In a good Year 6 art lesson seen, pupils selected furnishing fabrics to make chair coverings. They sketched several materials, concentrating very well on their task, and discussed their choices very sensibly. The teacher skilfully ensured that all pupils could be successful and sustained their interest well. The expectation that each pupil would produce a drawing of good quality meant that the resulting drawings were a good basis for the next stage of the task. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations and similar to those at the last inspection. The co-ordinator is currently absent and the headteacher is monitoring the subject well.
71. Only one lesson in **design and technology** was seen so there was not enough evidence to make a judgement of provision. This was in Year 1 and was a very good example of the way in which design and technology can be used for practical work in science. Pupils each cut and joined their figure with split pins, learning several new skills in the lesson. They had a good understanding of the need to plan and design their owl before making it and evaluated their work well at the end of the lesson. One pupil had enjoyed the work because he thought he had learned 'grown up' skills. Work in sketchbooks, photographs of pupils at work and displays show good evaluations at the end of a task. They indicate that standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils have a good understanding of the designing and making process. This is in accordance with the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 5 benefit from participating in an inter-school activity through the K'nex Challenge. Photographs and comments show that they develop their skills and understanding well, whilst building models. The co-ordinator is currently absent and the headteacher is monitoring the subject.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist teaching in junior classes has improved attainment very well.
- A large number of pupils take part in the very good range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

72. Pupils attain standards in Year 6 that are above nationally expected levels. Standards in Year 6 have risen significantly since the last inspection, because of the specialist knowledge of a member of staff who teaches music to most junior classes. No lessons were seen in infant classes. Evidence from videos and singing in assemblies indicate that standards are broadly similar to those expected at Year 2 and that these pupils achieve satisfactorily. These are similar judgements to those made at the last inspection. Pupils are very motivated, keen and work hard in lessons and other activities and achieve well in junior classes.
73. The subject is led and managed very well. The school has purchased a published scheme of work that provides a good basis for development in all the areas of the National Curriculum. This helps teachers across the school to plan interesting and relevant activities. It provides CDs that develop pupils' cultural understanding well, with music from a variety of cultures and different styles. Teaching and learning are good in junior classes. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenging tasks set by the teacher, which promote good achievement.

For example, pupils in Year 3 maintained an excited, interested attitude when replicating a phrase from a Jamaican song on glockenspiels. Year 6 pupils worked co-operatively and purposefully to successfully compose atmospheric compositions for a story, following the stimulus of the opening music of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Resources have gradually been increased and sufficient instruments are available to teach whole-class lessons.

74. The subject leader promotes pupils' love of music beyond class-work very well through club activities and other initiatives. There are well-planned beginner and intermediate recorder groups where pupils learn to read music, play alongside each other and develop two-part playing. A very well attended choir session before school creates particularly good development of the voice, with expressive control and attention to the dynamics of the song. Pupils sing two-part songs that demonstrate very well the 'highly commended' grade recently achieved in a local music festival. Singing alongside the choir in the 'music assembly' helps to improve the performance and attainment of other junior pupils. Good peripatetic teachers take pupils for individual double-bass, flute, clarinet and violin lessons. Once pupils are sufficiently proficient, the co-ordinator uses her own expertise well, to guide and improve pupils' instrumental skills in an orchestra club. Other initiatives that extend pupils' understanding and skills well include their taking part in a Norfolk pilot of multi-cultural music. Here, pupils were able to hear and play steel pans, samba and African drums. The school also has good links with Springwood High School and pupils in Year 5 have worked with a specialist to record their improvised music. All pupils have very good opportunities to perform.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality, specialist teaching enables pupils in Years 3 to 6 to attain standards above those expected nationally.
- Pupils' skills are extended effectively by a very good range of well-attended extra-curricular sporting clubs and activities.
- The enthusiasm of the very good subject co-ordinator.
- The school's involvement in the Schools' Sports Co-ordinator Programme.

Commentary

75. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 attain higher standards than those reported in the last inspection. Inspectors observed lessons in games and dance and also a very good range of sporting clubs. Many junior pupils attain standards that are above those expected nationally for their age, particularly in games skills and knowledge. Year 2 pupils attain standards that match those expected nationally. They are similar to those reported previously. Discussions with older pupils revealed them as very enthusiastic in their attitude to physical education. They value the very good range of sporting activities, as well as their often successful involvement in a good range of inter-school sporting competitions, for example, in tag rugby. They enjoy physical activities, work hard in lessons and achieve well.
76. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good games skills. Most benefit from very good, and occasionally excellent teaching by the subject co-ordinator, specialist visiting coaches and teachers from a local high school linked to the Sports Co-ordinator programme. This consistently high quality teaching helps pupils to practise and improve their skills and knowledge. They benefit from expert guidance that allows them to improve performance, for example, in football, gymnastics and dance. The many opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in competitive matches, for example, in football, rugby and netball, also raise their level of performance. Years 1 and 2 pupils attend some extra-curricular clubs, for example football. This helps them to achieve well in those aspects. They achieve satisfactorily overall in lessons, supported by satisfactory teaching.

77. Teaching is very good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The school makes very good use of the specialist skills and knowledge of the subject co-ordinator, organising the timetable so as to enable her to take other classes of junior pupils. This contributes very well to standards of attainment. For example, in an excellent Year 6 lesson, the teacher used her very good knowledge of tennis skills and techniques, together with her very good control of the class, to help pupils to improve their racket techniques and then apply them in a group activity. Her very effective interventions with individual pupils helped them to evaluate their technique, identify what needed improving and then work hard to improve it. This led to excellent achievement throughout the lessons and high standards being attained at the end. Where teachers do not maintain a brisk pace, pupils do not always sustain their enthusiasm. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to evaluate their own performance or that of others. This does not help them to improve their standards. For example, in a dance lesson, the teacher did not provide opportunities for pupils to look at the performance of others so as to identify what they liked or what they thought could be improved. This did not encourage pupils to look at the quality of their dance movements or try to get better.
78. The subject leadership and management are very good. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has very good subject knowledge. She uses her enthusiasm very successfully to encourage pupils' participation and to promote the school's very good programme of extra-curricular sporting activities. In one after-school session during the inspection, nearly 60 pupils from Years 1 to 6, supported by several parents, attended football and basketball clubs. The co-ordinator has drawn up a detailed action plan to target areas for improvement and to achieve Activemark later this year. She has established very good links with a local sports college and a nearby secondary school as part of the School Sports Co-ordinator programme. This has brought significant benefits to the school, for example, in improving resources and using specialist teachers to support staff and teach lessons, for example, in gymnastics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's strong Catholic ethos promotes pupils' personal development very well and enhances their understanding of good citizenship.
- The school has very good guidance enabling teachers to plan whole-school developments and providing very relevant links with other subjects.
- The work of the school council provides pupils with a very good understanding of how they can play a positive part in the school community.

Commentary

79. The promotion of Catholic values in the day-to-day working of the school and the excellent relationships between all members of its community provide a supportive and caring environment in which pupils' personal development is paramount and inclusive. Standards of personal development are, therefore, above those expected in Years 2 and 6, as pupils have a good understanding of the needs of others and the importance of their contribution to a harmonious community. All pupils achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers encourage pupils to take an active part in discussion, extending their ideas through a variety of questions that promote good achievement. For instance in a Year 3 lesson, pupils could deduce that germs might be on various objects but swiftly understood that they are everywhere, even after washing and cleaning.
80. There is very good leadership in the subject and it is managed well. The co-ordinator has put together a very good scheme of work, which provides a three-year whole-school rolling programme for some issues. This provides greater relevance for pupils, as they are discussed in whole school assemblies, as well as in class. The issues for this year are 'friendship and anti-bullying' and 'how our actions can affect others' and plans include a multi-cultural focus

next year. The scheme of work also provides certain topics that are discussed at class level and others that link well with other subjects. For instance, global perspectives linking well with geography, death and new life have good connections with religious education. Health, puberty and drugs are taught sensitively through science topics. The school tries hard to include the personal development of all pupils. It has taken positive steps to plan activities that include the cultures of all pupils in the school.

81. The school council represent pupils' views well, with all infant and junior classes represented. Through the council, all pupils have been involved in the planning and carrying out of work for the development of the school grounds as a learning resource. A 'buddy bench' encourages pupils to understand when others are feeling lonely and to befriend them. The 'buddy tree' in the hall gives pupils good opportunities to recognise the thoughtfulness of others and to celebrate this with the whole school. The school has a good house-point system, which helps pupils to be aware that they have responsibilities within the school community. Good work is celebrated in assemblies each Friday. Pupils in Year 6 improve their social skills on a residential visit. The very good provision supports the school ethos very well.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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

poor (6); very poor (7).