

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY OF THE ANGELS CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Aldridge

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104240

Headteacher: Mrs B Helm

Lead inspector: Mr P Belfield

Dates of inspection: 14 – 17 June 2004

Inspection number: 257814

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	225
School address:	Weston Crescent Aldridge Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS9 0HA
Telephone number:	01922 743411
Fax number:	01922 475935
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Michael Leadbeater
Date of previous inspection:	21 – 23 May 2002

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Mary of the Angels is a primary school of average size, with 225 boys and girls on roll, situated in Aldridge, in the West Midlands. Twenty-three children attend on a part-time basis in the nursery. Almost all of the pupils are of white British heritage and none are at an early stage of learning English. Attainment on entry is above average. Four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. Two have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The number of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the normal time is broadly in line with the national average.

The school has experienced staffing difficulties, particularly in maintaining continuity in the teaching in Key Stage 1. Recent appointments have overcome this. At the time of the inspection there was a temporary teacher covering the absence of the deputy headteacher in Year 5 and an advanced skills teacher working alongside the reception class teacher supporting her professional development.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21661	Peter Belfield	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, Science, Information and communication technology (ICT), Geography,
9510	Christine Murray-Watson	Lay inspector	
8867	Rebecca Russell	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English, Art and design, Design and technology, Music
32646	Yolande Hugo	Team inspector	Mathematics, History, Physical education

The inspection contractor was :

Inspire Educational Ltd

The Coach House  
132 Whitaker Road  
Derby

DE23 6AP

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

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES ONE AND TWO</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>29</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

**St Mary of the Angels is an effective school** that provides good value for money. Leadership and management and the quality of teaching are good. The pupils achieve well and standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the time the pupils leave the school.

### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership
- The standards in Year 6 are very good. The pupils achieve well overall, but standards in Year 2 could be higher
- The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection
- The pupils have very good attitudes to school, they behave very well and the provision for their spiritual, moral and social development is very good
- The children's learning is not planned progressively across the Foundation Stage and the more able pupils in the reception class could achieve higher standards
- Procedures for assessing and tracking the progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science are very good
- There is a lack of consistency in the marking of the pupils' work

There has been good improvement since the school was last inspected in 2002. Leadership and management have improved. Robust systems now check the quality of teaching and learning and evaluate standards and provision. The governors are kept well informed about school priorities and they make good use of the funds available to the school. The school has the capacity to continue to build on these improvements.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Taken overall, the pupils' **achievement is good**. However, many staff changes have resulted in unsatisfactory progress in the infant classes. Children are given a good start to their education in the nursery. Most children are likely to achieve the goals expected of them in the six areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1, but the achievement of the more able pupils in the reception class, in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills, could be better. The results of the 2003 national tests for Year 2 pupils were well above average in all subjects, but the standard of work seen during the inspection was average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. This dip in standards has been largely attributed to the many changes of staff in the infant classes. The staffing situation has now stabilised in Years 1 and 2; achievement levels are higher and standards are beginning to rise.

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

Inspection evidence confirms that the standards in the current Year 6 are similar to those in last year's national tests. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 5 and particularly well in Year 6. The pupils

achieve good standards in information and communication technology and in art and design, with the provision in both subjects having improved significantly since the last inspection.

The pupils' attitudes towards school are very good. They work hard in their lessons and take full advantage of the opportunities given to them. They are polite and their behaviour is consistently good. The pupils' **spiritual, moral, social development is very good and their cultural development is good**. The school's efforts to improve the levels of attendance have been successful and the pupils' attendance is now above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**Overall, the quality of education, including the quality of teaching, is good.** The teaching in the nursery class is good, but in the reception class the teacher's expectations of the more able children are not high enough. Consequently, these children do not learn as much as they should. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is good. The newly appointed teachers make the lessons interesting and the pupils achieve well. However, the inspection of the pupils' past work in Year 2 reveals that they have made slow progress in their learning, particularly in English and mathematics. The teaching in Years 3 to 5 is good and the pupils achieve well. In Year 6 the teaching is very good. The lessons are well planned and the teacher has very high expectations of the pupils. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. The teaching of those pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The teachers' marking of the pupils' work varies from class to class. In many classes it does not provide sufficient guidance on how the pupils can improve.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. The school takes careful account of the pupils' views and the overall provision for the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The pupils have very good relationships with their teachers, who monitor their progress carefully. The school has worked hard and established good links with the parents. Links with other schools are very good and they are satisfactory with the local community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher has been very successful in her drive to improve the school. Her vision has strong support from the staff and governors who work with a common purpose and a clear commitment to further improvement. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive and fulfils its statutory obligations. Financial control and routine administration are good.

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

The majority of parents have positive views of the school. A small minority, mostly those whose children have had to cope with frequent changes of class teacher, still have concerns about the provision for their children and their relationship with the school. While these are understandable, the inspection evidence indicates that most of their concerns have now been addressed. The pupils say they like school and enjoy their lessons

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in writing and mathematics in the infants
- Raise achievement in the reception class and ensure that the children's learning is planned progressively across the Foundation Stage

- Ensure that the marking policy is consistently implemented and provides all pupils with guidance on how they can improve their work

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

The children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in the nursery but they could do better in the reception class. Standards in writing and mathematics are below average by the end of Year 2 and, although standards are rising, they are still not high enough. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science, and the pupils' achievement is good.

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

- The pupils make good progress in Years 4 and 5 and rapid progress in Year 6
- The more able children in the Reception class could achieve higher standards
- The progress made by the pupils in Year 2 has been slow
- Standards in information and communication technology and art and design are above average

#### **Commentary**

1. The pupils' attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is above average and they make a good start to their education and achieve well in the nursery. By the end of the reception year the majority of children are likely to reach the expected goals in all six areas of learning. The expectations of what the more able children can achieve in the reception class are not high enough and, consequently, they underachieve in literacy and numeracy.
2. Staffing difficulties have resulted in a lack of continuity in the pupils' learning in the current Year 2 class. The scrutiny of the pupils' work in this class reveals that they have made slow progress over the year, but this is being addressed by the new, permanent, teacher. Standards are beginning to rise but, given the good attainment of the majority of pupils on entry to the school, average standards in reading and below average standards in writing are not good enough. The rate of progress has been unsatisfactory. The school is well aware of these issues and implementing a range of strategies to boost achievement by providing additional support for the pupils.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.6 (19.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.9 (17.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.6 (19.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were [number] pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. In the juniors, the pupils' rate of progress improves steadily and accelerates rapidly in Year 6. The progress of the pupils in Year 3 has been slower due to staffing difficulties but these have now been resolved and rate of progress has improved. The quality of teaching and learning through Year 3 to Year 6 is good and the pupils achieve well. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils and plan challenging work for them. The work in the pupils' books is of a good standard in these classes. The good progress of pupils is reflected in the results of the national tests and confirmed by the inspection evidence. Standards have risen since the last inspection. In English, standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening are well above

average. The emphasis on problem solving in mathematics and on investigational work in science, contribute to the very good standards in the subjects.

***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in [year]***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4(29.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.5 (29.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.5 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were [number] pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- The provision for information and communication technology is good. The school has made a considerable investment in computers and staff training since the last inspection. Interactive whiteboards have enhanced the quality of learning. The carefully planned work and effective teaching has resulted in above average standards in Year 6. The pupils’ work in art and design is of good quality throughout the school. They have opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of a wide range of art techniques. Great emphasis is placed on introducing the pupils to the work of famous artists such as Van Gogh, Seurat and other great artists that provides inspiration for painting.
- The pupils with special educational needs receive sound support and make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together and ensure that the pupils are given every help in their efforts to achieve their targets.

**Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

The pupils have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. The school makes very good provision for the pupils’ personal development, including spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is good. Attendance is good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn
- Very positive relationships within the school create an atmosphere of harmony and trust.
- The pupils’ achievements are valued and celebrated
- The pupils show a willingness to assume responsibility

**Commentary**

- The school is a very friendly and welcoming community that successfully promotes a strong Catholic ethos. Visitors to the school are made to feel very welcome and are greeted naturally and confidently by the children. Good behaviour and respect for others is an expectation and pupils and adults consistently treat each other with courtesy and consideration. From the time they begin school, the children learn to work in harmony, share equipment, exchange ideas and look after each other. A safe and happy learning environment helps them to grow in confidence and to develop their self-esteem. The pupils respond well to the stimulating and challenging lessons offered to them. This is evident at all levels, but increasingly so as they progress through Key Stage 2. Their enthusiasm and willingness to take on tasks that require concentration and

mental effort mean that lessons were seen where they were reluctant to leave their work, even at break -times. This applied both to practical activities, such as painting or design and technology, and to more intellectually demanding lessons such as mathematics.

7. The pupils treat each other with respect and are reflecting the caring and considerate attitudes shown to them by the staff in all sorts of ways. They look out for each other's needs on the playground, move sensibly and carefully around the school building and respond quickly to instructions in class. They value the opportunities given to them, in assemblies for example, to celebrate each other's achievements. Incidents of inappropriate or aggressive behaviour are rare and none were seen during the inspection. What was often seen, however, was the careful and mature way they were encouraged to resolve any minor difficulties and their willingness to give consideration to the other person's point of view.
8. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Through well planned lessons and assemblies pupils are encouraged to contribute their thoughts and ideas and learn to speak up for what they think is right. Lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) provide opportunities for discussions on current issues in the school or in the class. An interesting discussion in Year 4 demonstrated pupils' understanding of the need to forgive the mistakes made by others and to realise how their own actions might make a difference to themselves and other people. The pupils love to see their work displayed on the 'writer of the week' board and appreciate that anyone who works hard, whatever their level of ability, is given a chance to achieve this distinction. They feel valued. There is enthusiasm for the activities provided outside lessons. Pupils value the opportunities to use and explore the recently installed interactive whiteboards in classrooms and to attend the clubs after school. Year 6 pupils look forward with excitement to the residential visit to Alton Castle. The pupils are generous in their recognition of good work and spontaneously applaud the achievement of their peers. Social skills are well developed and many opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibility. Younger children learn to tidy away equipment in their classroom, to look after their own bags and books and to perform duties such as returning the class register to the school office. A suggestion box placed near the entrance of the school is available for pupils to use if they have ideas that they wish to be discussed.
9. Cultural development has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good. Through art, drama, religious education, history and language pupils are given many experiences that stimulate an appreciation of their own culture and deepen their understanding of the multi-cultural society in which we live. The library has been overhauled to ensure that there is a better stock of books to stimulate interest in the history and of major religions. A 'multi-cultural week' helps to focus attention on the festivals and customs of other countries. The school employs visiting actors and dancers to perform in school and classes are taken on trips to local museums and places of worship.
10. Pupils across the school cheerfully undertake a range of routine tasks to assist in the smooth running of the school day. Older pupils perform many tasks around the school. They help to look after younger children during playtimes and, through the 'buddy' system, ensure that no child is left to play in isolation or unhappily. There are rotas for running the school library which entails supervising the borrowing and return of books. The new machine for checking books in and out of the library is a popular incentive for taking on this important duty.

#### **Attendance**

11. There has been a marked improvement in the level of attendance in the current year, which is now slightly above that found in primary schools nationally. Many pupils achieve an attendance

record well above the national average and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, the number of families that take their children on holiday during term time adversely affects the overall level of attendance.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	11.6	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

**Exclusions**

There were no exclusions in the school year prior to the inspection.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good and ensures that the pupils achieve well. There is a good curriculum with satisfactory provision for pupils who have special educational needs. The school cares well for all pupils and good links with parents and the community support the quality of education.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and there are good procedures for assessing the pupils’ attainment.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and teachers make good use of pupils’ assessments in English, mathematics and science
- The quality of teaching and learning in Year 6 is a significant strength
- The expectations of what the more able pupils can achieve in the reception class are not high enough

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	7 (18%)	20(52%)	9(24%)	1(3%)		

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

12. The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection and the percentage of good and very good teaching has increased. The significant staffing difficulties faced by the school over the past two years have been resolved. The teaching seen in Years 1, 2 and 3 was good. Although the previous work in the pupils’ books in Years 2 and 3 shows some underachievement, the pupils’ current work is of a much higher standard.

13. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and provide the key to the good quality of teaching and learning. The teachers demand high standards of work and behaviour from the pupils. A significant strength of the teaching is the way in which the teachers assess the pupils' work in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and then use the results of their assessments to plan work that is carefully matched to the pupils' abilities. In each of the core subjects the pupils' progress is tracked very carefully through tests and assessment. Great emphasis is placed on the identification of learning objectives and sharing them with pupils. The teachers plan their lessons to take account of the identified weaknesses in the assessments. Great care is taken to ensure that tasks in lessons are planned at different levels of difficulty to challenge all pupils. The introduction of interactive whiteboards to every classroom and the teachers' confidence in using them has added another dimension to the quality of learning. The white board technology enabled the teachers to present information and explanations in an exciting visual way that raised the pupils' interest and focused their attention sharply on what they were learning. An area for improvement is to ensure that the marking of the pupils' work is consistent across all classes. The inspection of the pupils' work revealed that marking was less effective at times as the pupils were not provided with guidance on how they could improve their work.
14. The teaching in Year 6 is very strong. The pupils' interest is captured in lessons and exciting activities are planned. The pupils know what they have to do to achieve their next target in writing or mathematics and have a very good understanding of the National Curriculum levels. The teacher encourages independence and good opportunities are provided for research using books, computer software and the Internet. In a very good science lesson the high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and of their ability to work collaboratively resulted in very effective learning.
15. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. The children achieve well in the nursery. The teacher has a very good understanding of how young children learn and uses this very effectively to plan a wide range of interesting activities for the children. The expectations of what the children can achieve are high and the children make good progress. There is a balance of activities between those taught directly by the teacher and those that children select for themselves. A high priority is given to developing the children's language, literacy and numeracy and the teacher makes very good use of favourite stories, rhymes and songs to extend their learning. Assessment is rigorous and used carefully to build on prior learning. In the reception class a good range of activities is planned, but the assessments of the children are not used well enough to ensure that the more able children are sufficiently challenged. This particularly affects their achievements in literacy and numeracy and their rate of progress is too slow. The inspection of the children's past work reveals that there has been an overuse of mundane worksheets that has restricted the pace of learning for the more able children.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum that is well matched to the needs of its pupils. The quality of accommodation and resources is satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities
- There are weaknesses in the planning in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1
- Equality of access and opportunity for all groups of pupils is good
- Very good transitional links exist between Year 6 and the next stage of education

## Commentary

15. Curriculum planning is good overall and helps to ensure continuity in the pupils' learning. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when policies and schemes of work did not provide sufficient detail to guide teachers in their lesson planning. The difficulties encountered by the school in providing settled staffing in the infants over the past two years and in Year 3 has, however, led to inconsistencies in the planning for pupils' learning and slower progress. Strong links have been established with the local secondary school with significant benefits for music, mathematics and ICT.
16. There is a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons, including sports clubs, crafts club and extra-curricular music lessons, which allow pupils to enrich and develop their own interests. There are plans to extend the range of activities on offer in the autumn, to include a choir and foreign language teaching. The provision for information and communication technology has improved considerably since the last inspection. Skills are taught progressively across the school and the scheme of work is followed carefully in every class. The ICT suite is timetabled for all classes and is in regular use. The use of ICT to support work in other subjects is well developed.
17. Teachers in the nursery and reception class plan conscientiously but there is a lack of continuity of planning across the Foundation Stage. The curriculum planning is not co-ordinated across both classes. It is planned separately for each class and does not identify the ways in which the work covered in the nursery class can be extended so that it progressively builds on, and extends the children's learning in the reception class. This results in underachievement for the older, more able children in the reception class.
18. The school has a very positive Christian ethos that places strong emphasis on the inclusion of all pupils in all activities, ensuring that there is equality of access to every aspect of provision. There is a clear commitment to providing opportunities that enable all pupils to take a full part in school life and to receive the help they need to access the curriculum. The provision for special educational needs is satisfactory. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has worked very hard to improve the procedures which enable all staff and parents to work together. This is an improvement since the last inspection and ensures that those pupils who have special needs are well supported in achieving the targets in their individual education plans. Class teachers and learning assistants work well together to provide effective support for these pupils. Training for learning assistants is planned but they have had limited opportunities in the past to develop their skills. There is good provision for PSHE that includes lessons on sex education, relationships and drugs and alcohol abuse. This has a very positive impact on pupils' personal and social development.
19. The school's accommodation and resources contribute satisfactorily to the quality of education. The provision for information and communication technology has improved considerably since the last inspection. The computer suite provides a well equipped, central facility and all classes now have well-used interactive whiteboards. The school library has been relocated and equipped with a well-chosen stock of books, including a growing supply of multi-ethnic literature and information. This has become a valuable learning resource, encouraging the growth of independent reading and providing opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility for organising the flow of borrowed books in and out of the school. Recognising the need to extend the facilities for the Foundation Stage the school is investing in the outdoor area and a veranda is currently under construction and additional resources have been purchased.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school's effective practices support a good level of care, welfare and health and safety. The school carefully monitors the pupils' achievements and personal development. The pupils are actively engaged in the life of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Recently reviewed policies provide clear and effective guidance for staff
- The time given to individual guidance greatly supports the pupils' development
- Pupils have a voice in the school's work and development through the recently formed School Council

### **Commentary**

20. In recent months the new headteacher has involved the whole staff, teaching and non-teaching, in the review of policies relating to care, guidance and health and safety. As a result, everyone is well briefed in the best possible practice and there is a consistency of both understanding and application of these policies across the school.
21. Considerable emphasis is given to the individual care of each child, and the school's aim that every child should reach its full potential, both in terms of academic success and of personal development. Whenever any issue of concern arises, whether relating to work in class or to personal and social issues, these are addressed promptly. Many instances were seen of staff in quiet conversation with pupils, helping them to see the best way forward. The respect that is paid to each child and the value placed on every pupil is a contributory factor to the good achievement of the pupils and their personal development.
22. A feature of the school is the way the pupils are encouraged to undertake a responsible role in its day-to-day management. Opportunities exist to stand for the School Council and for Year 6 pupils to stand for election as Head Boy and Head Girl. The pupils are enthusiastic about their School Council. The recent elections have stimulated considerable enthusiasm for the democratic process within the school and the pupils appreciate the way their views and suggestions are given serious consideration. Those who have been elected as class representatives take their role very seriously and are proud of having been elected by their peers. Careful minutes are kept of the meetings of the council and full feed-back is given to each class by their representatives.

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

The school has worked hard and established good links with the parents, following a period of difficulty caused by frequent staff changes. There are satisfactory links with the local community, with strong support from the local Catholic Church. The mutually supportive links with the main receiving secondary school are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good quality of information is provided for parents
- The headteacher actively seeks a dialogue with parents
- A minority of some parents have concerns about their relationship with the school

### **Commentary**

23. In the short time she has been in post, the headteacher has arranged to provide parents and carers with a wide range of information and frequent opportunities for them to come into school. There are evenings about different areas of the curriculum, formal evenings to discuss pupils' progress and targets for the future and opportunities for informal contact with the staff. A regular weekly newsletter and a school web page have been introduced to keep the whole school community abreast of day-to-day events and curriculum information.
24. As well as the provision for giving out information about the life and work of the school, the headteacher actively seeks information from the parents, giving them the opportunity to raise any concerns and to discuss any proposed changes. Informal discussions are held with groups of parents so that issues can be promptly addressed.
25. The adjacent secondary school plays an active role in supporting different curriculum areas, most notably mathematics, science and music in Year 6. As a result, the older pupils are familiar with the school premises to which the majority will be moving and the staff have the opportunity to know them well before they transfer to secondary education. The expertise of the secondary specialist teachers, and the good working relationships established between the staffs of both schools have a positive benefit for both staff and pupils and help to raise standards in the subjects where teaching is shared.
26. Not all parents have a positive view of the school. A small minority, whose children have had to cope with frequent changes of class teacher, still have concerns about the quality of provision for their children and their own relationship with the school. While these concerns are understandable, the inspection evidence indicates that most have now been properly addressed.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good have improved since the last inspection. The leadership by the headteacher is very good. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has been very effective in leading school improvements and overcoming serious weaknesses.
- The role of the curriculum co-ordinators needs to be further developed
- The role of the governing body in monitoring standards and the curriculum is underdeveloped

### **Commentary**

27. The headteacher has worked very successfully to improve the school since her appointment a year ago. The most important weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection were aspects of the leadership and management of the school. These have been successfully addressed. The school has strengthened its monitoring systems significantly, with key staff evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. It has given the headteacher a very clear view of where improvements have been needed. This has enabled the headteacher and other key staff to coach the less confident teachers, working alongside them in the classroom, jointly planning lessons and supporting their development. The impact of this can be seen in the improved quality of teaching and in the well above average standards attained by the pupils when they leave the school. The headteacher's commitment to improve the school has inspired the staff and raised standards.
28. The many staff changes have caused difficulties in appointing subject leaders to monitor the work in different subjects and identify areas for improvement. The headteacher has taken on the role of English co-ordinator and the responsibility for special educational needs. This has ensured that the development work in the core subjects has been able to take place and successfully implemented. This is evident in the improvements in ICT, a subject deemed to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, to increased investigational work in science and improved assessment arrangements in English, mathematics and science. The co-ordination of foundation subjects remains underdeveloped. A number of co-ordinators have still to gain a clear overview of standards across the school in their subjects, but they are enthusiastic and most have many ideas for how they would like to see their subject areas develop further.
29. The school is managed well. The close scrutiny of test papers and of the pupils' work identifies where improvements are needed. Effective tracking systems to measure the pupils' progress and target setting for individual pupils have been introduced, although there is more work to be carried out to make sure that the individual targets are achieved. In the short time that the headteacher has been in post she has had to face significant staff changes and overcome difficulties in finding replacements. The continuity of the pupils' learning has been affected, particularly in the infants, but recent staff appointments have improved both the quality of teaching and learning in this part of the school. The weakness in the teaching in Reception has been identified by the headteacher and appropriate steps are being taken to bring about improvements. The pupils have very positive attitudes to school. The consistent implementation of the discipline policy ensures that the pupils behave well and feel secure in an environment in which they are valued.

30. Many new governors have been appointed since the last inspection. They make regular visits to the school and they are strongly committed to its improvement. They fulfil all of their statutory duties. Financial planning and management, judged to be a weakness at the time of the last inspection, are good and the governors are provided with good quality information on which to base their financial decisions. These decisions are carefully linked to the school priorities for improvement. The governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but their monitoring role, particularly in relation to standards and the quality of the curriculum, is underdeveloped. As yet, they do not have a systematic approach to evaluating the effect of their decisions on the quality of education that the school provides and the standards that the pupils attain.

### ***Financial information***

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	524,430
Total expenditure	514,027
Expenditure per pupil	2,368

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	- 42,304
Balance carried forward to the next	13,000

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

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

31. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and the children make a good start to their education in the nursery class. At the time of the inspection, 12 children attended the nursery in the morning and 11 children in the afternoon. Thirty reception age children attend full time. When the children enter the nursery class their attainment is generally above average. The majority of the children are likely to reach the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage in all of the areas of learning. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery and satisfactory overall in Reception. Attainment is average in literacy and numeracy, but the more able children in Reception underachieve in these aspects of their learning.
32. The teachers and teaching assistants are very caring. They manage the children well by creating a secure and happy atmosphere. Children's development is assessed carefully from the time they enter the nursery and teaching is planned to meet the children's differing needs. In the Reception class, although the work is carefully planned, assessment is not used well enough to ensure a good match of work to the abilities of more able children. Children with special educational needs are well supported, helping them to participate and to learn effectively.
33. A well-planned curriculum in the nursery ensures appropriate experiences for the youngest children. The six areas of learning are covered well, and there is a good balance of child initiated and teacher directed activities. However, although the curriculum for the children in the reception class covers the six areas of learning adequately, there is a lack of continuity in learning because the curriculum across the Foundation Stage is not yet planned as a whole. A new co-ordinator has been recently appointed to lead the Foundation Stage team and plans have already been drawn up to ensure that children's learning is planned progressively across the Foundation Stage.

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

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

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

- Good relationships foster children's confidence and they enjoy school
- Children have very good attitudes to each other

#### **Commentary**

34. The children have developed confidence and established good relationships with one another and with staff in both the nursery and reception classes. They are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop their independence and demonstrate a growing confidence in selecting and carrying out activities. In the nursery the children were observed selecting construction activities and joining each other in imaginative play in the *Guest House*. They willingly take turns when taking shots at goal in the football competition. Children in both classes share fairly the responsibility for clearing equipment away at the end of each session. Effective use of praise and encouragement motivates the children. *Circle times* are used well to share ideas and to *plan* group work. The children understand what is right and what is wrong, they willingly try new ideas and they have ability to initiate and discuss them. Activities that are supported by an adult are carefully planned and they intervene appropriately to extend the children's learning. On occasions child initiated learning is not sufficiently emphasised within the planning and the children miss the opportunity to explore an aspect of learning without the direction of an adult.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children make good progress and achieve well in the nursery but the more able in Reception underachieve

### Commentary

35. Strong emphasis is placed on reading books to the children in whole class sessions and basing further work on the book that has been shared with them. During the inspection the children enjoyed sharing *Train Ride* in the nursery and a seaside story in Reception. This emphasis on literature develops a strong interest and love for stories and the children are able to recall the stories and sequence the main events within them. The teachers plan group activities across different areas of learning that are appropriately linked with the stories. The children share books and enjoy singing and reciting rhymes. The children make good progress with early reading and writing skills in the nursery because the teacher tracks their development well and builds learning in small steps. The children draw up lists of things they must do before going on a journey to their holiday destination. The development of writing skills is slower in Reception and there is an overuse of worksheets that limit the children's ability to write freely. The teaching of reading is well organised in both classes with books taken home on a regular basis. Detailed records are kept and in reception the children are encouraged to learn key words at home. Speaking and listening skills are above average and teachers encourage the children to improve their skills during whole class discussions. After studying African culture the nursery children shared with the whole school their paintings and artefacts and sang an African song.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in the nursery is good and the children learn through well planned interesting activities
- The teacher's planning in Reception does not take sufficient account of the children's varying abilities

### **Commentary**

36. Children in both classes enjoy games and other activities devised to promote their understanding of numbers, shapes and measures. The youngest children build on their skills through a wide range of teacher directed and self-chosen tasks. In a good lesson in the nursery the teacher taught the children to order numbers by linking the work to the topic on journeys. Train carriages were numbered and hidden in the outdoor learning area. As they found them the children had to place their carriage in the correct location behind the engine. The teacher ensures that the more able pupils are extended by introducing them to ordinal numbers. Learning was exciting and successful.
37. The children are taught to recognise shapes and they can name simple shapes and sort and classify objects by colour, shape and size. They learn a range of counting songs and rhymes which support their knowledge of basic number. In Reception most children recognise numbers up to 10 and count up to 20: some can add two or three single digit numbers together. A lack of challenge in the planned activities means few children work with numbers beyond this level and the more able are quite capable of doing so. The teacher's planning does not identify how the more able pupils are to be provided with challenging work. All of the class gather together for part of the mathematical session, but the teacher covers work at the same level of difficulty and her questions take little account of the children's varying abilities. Reception children, particularly the more able do not achieve as well as they should and the teaching is unsatisfactory in the area of learning.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Stimulating experiences and topics are planned to promote children's natural curiosity about the world.

### **Commentary**

38. The staff provide a wide range of activities to help the children to make sense of the world around them. The children are given opportunities to study why things happen and how things are made. They observe changes brought about by heat when they cook pancakes and porridge. In topics such as *Ourselves* the children in the nursery study how they have grown and gain a simple understanding of chronology in relation their own lives and their parents. Reception children find out about the community in which they live, take walks in the locality and visit the church. The school grounds are used well with the pond a resource for studying the life cycle of frogs. The nursery children observed snails laying eggs and Reception children, when visiting a farm, observed ducklings hatching. These experiences help the children understand, in simple terms, life processes. The school's photographic, pictorial and recorded evidence of past work shows a wide range of provision within this area of learning. They children can use simple tools safely and

competently as they cut out carriages to paste on a 'train' in the nursery and create seaside collages out of card and paper in Reception.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teachers plan a good programme for physical activity, both indoors and outdoors.

### **Commentary**

39. The teaching in this area of learning is good. Limited space is available out-of-doors for both classes but the staff make very good use of what is available to plan an imaginative programme of work for the children. This helps them to achieve well in both classes and most children are on course to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning by the start of Year 1. Both the indoor and outdoor facilities are used well to provide the children with a range of activities that include climbing, balancing and riding wheeled vehicles. The younger children in the nursery are given lots of opportunities for regular outdoor activities. They are taught to co-operate when, for example they use the large parachute. In reception the majority of children demonstrate that they have achieved the early learning goals in their ability to explore and refine jumping, climbing and rolling movements using large apparatus in the hall. Manipulative and co-ordination skills are being developed through using a range of pencils, pens and brushes as well as through the use of construction equipment.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children are provided with opportunities to work with a range of media

### **Commentary**

40. The children are provided with many opportunities to experiment with colour, texture and shape and they listen to music and make their own. They can print patterns using a variety of different objects such as sponges and vegetables. In the nursery they are given time and space to explore paint, water, and other messy media freely, and this builds their confidence to experiment with their own ideas. Role-play and other activities in both classes are well designed to link areas of learning and to promote the development of imaginative story lines as children play. The children are on course to meet the early learning goals by the time they enter Year1 and the quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Creative work is linked closely to curriculum themes and, as part of their African studies in the nursery, the children have painted African shields and animals. They have painted fruit from the various countries and created colourful fabric prints. The older children in Reception build on these skills and the children have produced effective under-the-sea collages and constructed seaside hotels as part of their topic on the seaside.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- The standards in writing could be higher by the end of Year 2
- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6
- Strong leadership by the subject co-ordinator is leading to more accurate assessment of the pupils' needs
- The quality of teaching is consistently good or better

#### **Commentary**

41. Good progress is made across the junior classes and the pupils' achievement is good. Standards are higher by the time the pupils leave the school than they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are given sound support to help them achieve the targets in their individual education plans.
42. During the inspection, an analysis of work in pupils' books provided evidence of inconsistent progress in writing in Year 2 and 3. The difficulties the school encountered in finding permanent replacement teachers for these classes had a significant impact on the standards being achieved by these pupils. However, there is also evidence to show that there has been good improvement recently as a result of a more settled staffing situation. This has led to better focussed work and higher demands being made of the pupils. The pupils' reading skills are systematically taught and carefully monitored. A love of reading is fostered from the time children start school and books are changed frequently and sent home daily to share with friends and family. This support from home is greatly appreciated by the school and contributes significantly to the progress made by each child. Group reading is a common feature of many lessons and a spirited session observed during the inspection of the whole of Class 2 reading 'The Owl Babies' was most enjoyable. Conversations with Year 6 pupils reveal that they enjoy reading for pleasure and have very good levels of comprehension. They have definite preferences for certain kinds of literature, seek out the work of preferred authors and become proficient, silent readers.
43. Speaking and listening skills are developed through all areas of the curriculum and many pupils are confident and articulate in class discussions. It was very evident in all the lessons observed that teachers constantly seek to extend pupils' vocabulary through skilful and probing questioning and also through their own correct use of appropriate language.
44. In Years 2, attainment in writing is below average. The inspection of the pupils' books reveals that the range of purposes for writing has been too narrow and expectations too low. Few opportunities have been provided to write independently and at length and there has been too heavy a reliance on worksheets that limit the opportunities for the pupils to write in their own words. Repeated spelling mistakes of high frequency words suggest the need for better focus on the teaching of phonic skills. Standards are now improving and continue to improve steadily throughout the junior classes. By the end of Year 6 the quality of the pupils' writing is very good. They write for a wide variety of purposes, show good understanding of how to plan their tasks, employ a wide and interesting vocabulary and produce well-presented, correctly punctuated and lively work. Spelling is mostly accurate. The more able pupils are able to write independently and at great length using vivid and imaginative language. Handwriting is well taught and work is well presented.

45. With the appointment of new staff, the quality of teaching has improved in the infant classes. During the inspection the teaching observed in both the infants and juniors was never less than good; in some classes it was very good. Lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives for what the pupils are expected to learn. Expectations are high, all teachers establish a good rapport with their pupils and there is a common approach to behaviour management. The teachers maintain a brisk pace and offer challenge through probing questions and thought provoking tasks. The work in the pupils' books is regularly marked but there is inconsistency in the quality of the marking and targets for improvement are not identified by all teachers.
46. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The coordinator has a very clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and the areas where further development is required. She is committed to raising standards even further.

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

47. Language and literacy are used satisfactorily to support work across the curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are employed in all discussions in history, geography, religious education and science. Year 6 have some very good examples of extended writing in history with lively accounts of 'The Great Exhibition of 1851' and 'The effects of rationing on the lives of the British people during World War 2'. There are good examples of writing in religious education books. However, the overuse of worksheets in some lessons restricts the opportunities for pupils to write their own accounts.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

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

- The quality of teaching is good and teachers set tasks that are well matched to the abilities of the pupils
- Standards are not high enough by the end of Year 2
- Solving of problems by pupils is well developed
- The effectiveness of marking is inconsistent
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to support pupils' learning

#### **Commentary**

48. There has been good improvement in standards by the end of Year 6 since the last inspection. The teaching in Year 6 is very good and pupils make rapid gains in their learning. The pupils' work is marked thoroughly and individual targets are set to help them to improve. The pupils are 'kept on their toes' by very good questioning, good pace and a high level of challenge. As a result, they enjoy mathematics and work hard. Inspection evidence shows that the number of pupils achieving the higher levels is increasing and is well above average. This improvement in standards has come about because the teaching is good and the tasks are modified for different groups of pupils. Tasks set for more able pupils have a good level of challenge. This was evident, for example, in a Year 5 lesson, when the pupils were reading, drawing and interpreting line graphs and more able pupils were challenged to evaluate and explain trends.
49. In 2003, the results at the end of Year 2 were well above average. Inspection evidence shows that standards in the current Year 2 are below average. This decline is because of the lack of

continuity in the teaching staff and low expectations of the pupils leading to slow progress. The staffing situation has now stabilised and standards are beginning to rise. The school has recognised the need to raise standards quickly and has planned a programme of booster work to accelerate the rate of progress for these pupils and improve their ability to recall, and use number facts.

50. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. The initial mental activities are brisk and feature good use of mathematical vocabulary. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and this shows in the way they question pupils and explain fully what they are going to learn. The skills of mental calculation are systematically taught and this helps pupils build up a range of strategies that assist them in calculating mentally. Teachers use resources and interactive white boards to interest and engage pupils. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher used the board to present with clarity a range of methods for subtraction that enabled pupils to successfully carry out the calculations. Marking is inconsistent and where it is weaker comments do not help pupils understand how well they have achieved or how they might improve their work. Classroom assistants are skilled in helping different groups of pupils, including, those with special education needs, and this enables them to make good progress in improving their mathematical skills.
51. The teachers set an interesting and challenging range of problems for pupils. For example, in Year 6, the pupils were asked to solve money problems. The more able pupils used a good range of strategies to quickly find solutions. They were able to articulate and explain very well the processes and calculations used.
52. The co-ordinator is a leading maths teacher and she provides good guidance for her colleagues. She observes their lessons and makes suggestions about how they might improve. She makes very good use of assessment information to help teachers track the pupils' progress. Pupils who make insufficient progress are swiftly targeted for additional support. The careful analysis of test questions has led to the identification of priorities that focus on raising standards further and improving pupils' problem solving skills.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Mathematical skills are being used well in other subjects. Pupils make accurate measurements in science and design technology lessons. Science books in the junior classes abound with graphical presentations. In Year 2, pupils measure the rate that ice cubes melt in different conditions and in Year 6 they learn mathematical formulas to interpret spreadsheets. Good opportunities are provided to use computer skills in mathematics, for example when transferring information and presenting this in different forms.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are consistently well above average in Year 6
- The pupils plan and carry out a wide range of investigations
- The quality of teaching is good
- The standards in Year 2, although improving, are not high enough

### **Commentary**

54. The pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding of science develops steadily in the junior classes. It accelerates in Year 6 and the pupils leaving the school this year and those that left in the previous two years have achieved standards that are well above the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The pupils cover a wide range of work in lessons and many investigations are recorded in their workbooks using charts, graphs and tables, some of which are compiled using computers. The subject leader's work is very effective and she has led staff training and introduced *science boards* that help the pupils to plan a systematic approach to carrying out investigations. This learning support has been particularly successful in the junior classes and has recently been adopted in Years 1 and 2. The revision of the scheme of work and the purchase of additional resource materials has ensured that teachers have the guidance and means to progressively build on the pupils' skills and understanding as they move from class to class. The pupils enjoy science and work well together. In a very good lesson in Year 6 fair tests were devised as the pupils explored how shadows change when the light source was moved. Predictions were made based on good scientific ideas and the pupils discussed how accurate these were after carrying out their investigation. Space was at a premium in the classroom but the groups of pupils co-operated very easily with each other and made rapid gains in their understanding of how light travels. A strong feature of the work is the way in which mathematical skills are used to present scientific findings.
55. The inspection of the pupils' work in Year 2 confirms that their progress over the year has been slow. Low expectations of what they can achieve and an overuse of mundane worksheets has resulted in standards that are broadly average, but could be higher. The scrutiny of the pupils' most recent work in Years 1 and 2 and the observations of lessons in these classes reveal an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. The newly appointed teachers have higher expectations of what the pupils can do and there is a stronger focus on investigational work: standards are beginning to rise.
56. Overall the teaching in the subject is good. The teachers are confident and have good subject knowledge. The pupils are assessed at the end of each half term and the teachers make good use of these assessments when planning future work. The planning of lessons is very good and the level of challenge for the pupils is now consistently high across the school. The pupils with special educational needs are provided with additional help from teaching assistants and this ensures their good progress. Links with the local secondary school have been established and Year 6 pupils have undertaken some exciting work in determining the best material for a space suit. The standard of the work produced was very good and the pupils used their ICT skills to devise a multi-media presentation of their investigations. The pupils in Year 5 are to take part in a similar project next year.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils achieve standards that are above those expected for their age
- All staff are confident in the use of computers and make good use of them to support the pupils' learning across the curriculum
- The quality of the teachers' planning is good

### **Commentary**

57. The provision for ICT and the standards achieved have improved since the last inspection. The standards of the work seen in lessons, and through an analysis of the pupils' work, is in line with national expectations in Year 2 and above expectations in Year 6. Those pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the adults that work with them and they achieve well. Pupils of all ages are confident in using the equipment provided for them and their teachers plan the way that computers will be used in a systematic way. The skills acquired in the Foundation Stage are built on, and the pupils learn to apply them within other subjects. In science in Year 1, the pupils are able to select text from a word bank to create food menus and in mathematics they partition tens and units and handle data to devise simple graphs. The ICT suite is in regular use to both teach discrete skills and to support work in other subjects. In Year 2 the pupils' word processing skills are good and they are able to select pictures to illustrate the poems they have written.
58. The teachers speak enthusiastically of how their subject knowledge has improved and how the staff support each other in sharing knowledge and assisting each other's teaching. The introduction of interactive whiteboards in every classroom and the effective use made of them by the teachers helps to enliven the lessons and add a new dimension to the pupils' learning.
59. Each lesson has very clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. The impact of this can be seen in the achievement of pupils over time and the high quality of their work. In a good lesson in Year 3 the pupils demonstrated sound skills in downloading pictures from the Internet to add to advertising posters. The teacher taught small groups of pupils to amend the size and colour of the font and to improve their skills in creating an eye-catching poster. The Year 6 pupils' knowledge of using spreadsheets is well advanced. There are many examples of high quality work stored in the pupils' folders and they understand when it is appropriate to use technology to help them with a task.

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

60. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good. The use of ICT to support learning is common in almost all subjects, including the creative and aesthetic areas of the curriculum. Biographical studies are enhanced as pupils build profiles of famous people in history, and mathematical programs are used to improve the pupils' basic skills. In the best examples the pupils amend the information and present it with illustrations. On a few occasions information is just copied from internet sites and added to the pupils' work without any revision or interrogation of the text. The quality of learning suffers in these cases. Older pupils have the ability to combine different forms of information and present it to an audience and, using modelling techniques, to present information in different ways. Year 6 pupils write story-books with sound effects for younger pupils.

### **HUMANITIES**

61. No lessons were observed in **geography** and so it is not possible to make judgements about standards, achievement, teaching and learning in this subject. Teachers' planning was examined and work was seen in pupils' books and on display around the school. There is strong emphasis place on physical geography in Years 5 and 6 with work on rivers and detailed work on mountain ranges around the world. Ordnance survey maps feature in the work and the pupils learn how to read four and six digit map references. The work is lively and interesting, indicating good provision in geography. Good use is made of the local environment and visits to enrich the curriculum.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 6 are but could be higher by the end of Year 2
- Lessons are interesting, resulting in motivated learners
- The subject is used well to extend pupils writing skills
- Regular use of educational visits reinforces development of history skills

### Commentary

62. History is taught through a cycle of topics. For example, in Year 1, the pupils study old and new toys and in Year 2 they look at holidays in the past and present. In Year 3 the focus is on Ancient Egyptians and in Year 6 they study Ancient Greece. These themes capture the pupils' interest and lead to good levels of concentration and good attitudes to learning.
63. Standards in history by the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection. This is due to good teaching. Although standards are not as high as they should be by the end of Year 2, they are improving because the teaching is now good. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils used a range of resources to find out about the differences between holidays now and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pupils were engrossed by video footage and enjoyed studying a range of photographs and pictures. Skilful questioning by the teacher helped the pupils to think as historians.
64. Teachers are careful to ensure that the work is more demanding as the pupils get older. In Year 6 the pupils are able to link information from a range of sources. From a variety of evidence, the pupils can justify why they believe Greek soldiers were a powerful force. The school is aware that the teaching of historical enquiry is not consistently developed across the school and the newly appointed co-ordinator has appropriate plans to secure improvement.
65. History lessons incorporate a range of trips and visitors that play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. For example, whilst pupils are studying the Victorians they visit Iron Bridge, Shrugborough Hall or the Black Country Museum. Pupils have also been given the opportunity to ask questions about World War 2, when a teacher arranged for her mother to come into school to share her experiences.
66. The subject is used well to develop the pupils' writing and they record their work learning in a variety of ways. Pupils write recounts, descriptions, leaflets, diaries and fact sheets in their work in history. Older pupils also make good use of ICT in their research and in the presentation of their work. The subject leader is new to the post, she has enthusiasm for the subject and has clear ideas and plans to bring about further improvement in the provision for history.

### CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. It was only possible to observe two games lessons in **physical education** and none in **design and technology**. It is not, therefore, possible to make a firm judgement about the quality of provision in the subjects. It is evident from finished work seen design technology around the school, photographic evidence, a scrutiny of the scheme of work and teachers' planning, that the subject has a secure place in the school curriculum.

68. Pupils are systematically taught the basic skills of planning, cutting, sticking and joining. There are good examples of moving or pop-up greetings cards in many classes. In Year 6 work is in progress on designing and making slippers which pupils will eventually be able to wear. There are examples in Year 5 of designs for vehicles and the finished product.. Year 2 produced vivid patchwork designs based on their reading of 'Elmer the elephant'. The curriculum coordinator runs an after-school craft club in which, amongst many other interesting projects, pupils design and make papier-mâché bowls that are then filled with their own self-made biscuits. These are given as Easter presents to their parents. There are many examples of soft toys which pupils have sewn. There is also evidence of pupils' written evaluations of their own work
69. The inspection of teachers' planning and the observation of extra-curricular activities confirm that all of the required elements of physical education are covered. The pupils enjoy physical education and in the lessons observed they joined in activities enthusiastically and worked together sensibly. The quality of teaching and learning was good and the games lessons were well planned with clear learning intentions. The pupils in Year 3 practised and improved their skills in passing and receiving the ball and in Year 5 the pupils developed good techniques in fielding and striking. The standards achieved in both lessons matched those expected for the age of the pupils.
70. A good range of after-school activities is provided that enable the pupils to further develop their skills. These include football, cricket, rounders and netball. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to participate in inter-school football tournaments and in a local dance festival. The subject leader is new to the post and has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning or to implement further training for the staff.

## **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum coordinator provides strong leadership
- A well organised scheme of work assists teachers with their planning
- Pupils are enthusiastic

### **Commentary**

71. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson in each key stage. However, evidence from these lessons, discussion with the curriculum coordinator, scrutiny of the scheme of work and observation of work on display around the school indicate that standards in art are above average and pupils make good progress.
72. Pupils are given experience of work in a wide range of media – pencil, paint, crayon, pastel, collage, clay – the range of planned activities is wide. Basic skills are well taught and progressively improved. The Year 1 class was observed learning how to mix primary colours successfully to produce secondary and tertiary colours. Enthusiasm for the activity was so great, that in some cases, brushes were dispensed with in favour of a 'hands-on' approach! In the plenary at the end of the lesson, the pupils demonstrated their understanding of which mix of colours would produce certain shades. Through the planned curriculum, the demands in various skills become more advanced and difficult. This was apparent in the lesson observed in Year 6. Pupils were attempting to draw fluidly in a Japanese style using a brush and ink. There was a high level of interest in the task and many of the results were very successful. The recent introduction of sketchbooks in all classes allows children to experiment with preliminary drawings for some of their work. This helps to keep a record of their progress. Resources to

support teaching in design and technology are good although facilities and space for displaying the finished product are limited.

73. Work around the school is displayed with care, demonstrating the value placed on it by the staff and children. Conversations with pupils indicate the popularity of the 'Picture Gallery' in which samples of work from pupils in every class are displayed and changed frequently to allow other work to be shown. The prominence of this display ensures that it is seen by a wide audience and helps to boost pupils' self-esteem. A wide variety of work is on display in classrooms and corridors, from the sea paintings, fishy tales and sunflowers of Years 1 and 2 to the Viking ships of Year 4 and the book illustrations in Year 6. Examples of art from other cultures abound. There are samples of Indian tie-dye, batik prints, Chinese prints, drawings of Greek vases and patterns, Mexican God-eyes and, in Class 6, beautiful and delicate Japanese figures and patterns. The work of Van Gogh, Seurat and other great artists provide inspiration for painting.
74. The curriculum coordinator plays a leading role in maintaining the good standards being achieved in art. She has very good subject knowledge, a clear understanding of the work which goes on in each classroom, advises colleagues when requested to do so and sets a good example through her own teaching skills. Resources to support the delivery of the curriculum are good.

## **Music**

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Link with the music department of the local secondary school are strong
- Staff and pupils enjoy the scheme of work
- The local authority provides good extra-curricular instrumental tuition

### **Commentary**

75. During the inspection, all the lessons observed were in Years 3 to 6. Evidence from these lessons, discussion with the curriculum coordinator and a scrutiny of teachers' planning and the scheme of work for music indicate that the standards overall are satisfactory but there are some good features.
76. The links established with the music department of the local secondary school have had a significant impact on the quality of music being taught in Year 6 and the standards being achieved by these pupils. A very good lesson was observed in which pupils sang sea shanties, clearly improved their performance, were involved in playing percussion instruments and in following musical notation on an individual score. The pupils sustained interest and enthusiasm for the entire lesson and demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of correct musical language. The lesson was enlivened by references to some of the historical nuances of sea shanties and the considerable musical expertise of the class teacher ensured a lively pace throughout. The lessons in Years 4 and 5 demonstrate how well the scheme of work for music supports staff planning by providing interesting musical experiences for the pupils. There is an emphasis on listening carefully to the tempo of music, playing instruments or singing in time to different rhythms and, in developing an understanding of the dynamics of music. Children show interest in performing, confidence to demonstrate before the whole class and learn to evaluate each other's work sensibly and critically.
77. The school is fortunate to have a certain amount of instrumental music tuition provided by the local authority. All pupils in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to audition for the limited number of places available to learn to play violin, cello, trumpet, flute and clarinet. There are plans to begin

recorder groups for many more children that will be taught by school staff. Pupils are provided with opportunities to perform at school assemblies, church services and concerts.

78. Resources for teaching music are good. Percussion instruments are readily available for use by all classes.

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

79. No discrete **personal, social and health education** (PSHE) lessons were seen during the inspection. However, the school does follow a programme of work that is carefully planned and co-ordinated. The school identifies this area as vital to its work and regular PSHE lessons and circle times (activities where pupils sit in a circle to share feelings and experiences) are planned across the school. Adults in school encourage pupils to resolve disagreements by looking at alternatives, making decisions and explaining choices. The good relationships between staff and pupils inspire confidence and self-assurance.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

