

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Churchdown, Gloucester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115709

Headteacher: Mr. T Cooper

Lead inspector: Mrs. J. Ikin

Dates of inspection: 21 – 24 June 2004

Inspection number: 257821

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: 207

School address: Cheltenham Road East
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
Postcode: GL3 1HU

Telephone number: 01452 714053
Fax number: 01452 714207

Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs. Margaret Collins

Date of previous inspection: 07/05/2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is a similar size to most primary schools. It is a popular school and serves the Catholic parishes of Churchdown and Brockworth. The pupils who attend the school come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The majority are from white United Kingdom and European backgrounds. Mixed white and black African, mixed white Asian and traveller heritages are also represented. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The socio-economic nature of the area is above average. There is a very wide range of attainment on entry to the school, but overall it is average. However, pupils' personal and social development is well below average when they enter the school. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and a statement of special educational needs is below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3349	Jacqueline Ikin	Lead inspector	English Information and communications technology Music
10329	Brian Sampson	Lay inspector	
10611	Martin James	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Art and design Physical education Personal, social, health education and citizenship Special educational needs
7336	Lindsay Howard	Team inspector	Science Geography History The Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with some very good features. It benefits from the very good leadership of the headteacher, who has very high aspirations for the academic and personal development of its pupils. The school's very strong Catholic ethos and its links with the church are at the heart of its work. Pupils achieve well and standards are well above average because of the good teaching and the good curriculum that are provided.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and gives the school a clear sense of purpose and direction.
- Pupils achieve very well in English, and well in mathematics, science, history and physical education.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils' spiritual development is promoted very well throughout the school.
- Pupils' personal and social development and standards of behaviour are very good by the end of Year 6.
- There is very good enrichment of the curriculum through after-school activities, visits and sport.
- Children in the reception class meet the goals set for them in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, but do not meet them in their personal and social development.
- Assessment is very good in English and mathematics, and good in science and information and communication technology (ICT). It is not sufficiently systematic in other subjects.
- The skills of independent learning are not systematically taught.
- The outdoor environment is not sufficiently developed to support learning for pupils throughout the school.

The school's improvement since the last inspection is good. It has improved standards in English, mathematics and science, and set itself challenging goals for further improvement. It is on course to exceed them. Teaching has also improved. The evidence of the inspection is that the school no longer has serious weaknesses. Most of the criticisms of the Foundation Stage have been addressed, although there is more to do to improve children's personal and social development in the reception class. The school is fully committed to improving achievement in this area of learning and has the capacity to do so. All the remaining recommendations of the last report have been fully addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The results of national tests have improved since 2001 and the indications are that the school has improved them further in 2004. The evidence of the inspection is that pupils' **achievement is good**. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 they are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in physical education

and history are above those expected by Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected in Years 2 and 6, and pupils' achievement is good in this subject. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Higher attaining pupils and those who are talented and gifted achieve well. Children's achievement in reception is satisfactory overall. Most reach the goals that are expected for them by the end of the reception year in all the areas of learning except personal and social development.

Pupils' **personal qualities**, including their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**, are **very good** overall. Their attitudes to work are good and they behave very well overall. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

Teaching and learning are **good**. In Years 1 to 6 it is good overall and some exceptional teaching occurs in Year 6. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and successfully help them to acquire the skills of literacy and numeracy. Opportunities are missed to help pupils acquire the skills of independent learning. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory overall, but weaknesses occur when children's inappropriate behaviour is not dealt with firmly enough. Assessment is satisfactory overall. It is very good in English and mathematics, and good in science and ICT. Systems have not yet been formalised in other subjects. The curriculum is good. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good and there is good provision for talented and gifted pupils. Traveller pupils are given very good support. There are good links across the curriculum and the curriculum is enriched very well by visits, activities outside the school day and sport. The school is well staffed and resources are good. The accommodation is satisfactory, although the outdoor environment is not sufficiently developed to support the curriculum. Pupils are very well cared for. The school's partnership with parents is good. There are very good links with the Catholic secondary school and the church, and good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **leadership and management** of the school are **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the deputy headteacher gives good support. The governance of the school is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The deputy headteacher carries out her role well and has been very influential in curriculum development. There is a committed team of staff who have worked very hard to successfully develop their roles as subject leaders since the last inspection. They share the headteacher's high aspirations. Governors give strong support to the school and fulfil all their statutory duties well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of every aspect of the school's work and hold it in high regard. Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate the good teaching they receive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Ensure that all the children in the reception class meet all the goals set for them in their personal and social development.
- Improve assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Ensure that the skills of independent learning are systematically taught.

- Improve the outdoor environment so that more use is made of it to support learning for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils in Years 1 to 6 **achieve well**. Standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science in Year 2. In Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science.

Children in the reception class achieve satisfactorily. Nearly all reach the goals set for children at the end of the reception year in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has successfully improved its results in national tests in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards are above average in physical education and history, and pupils achieve well in these subjects.
- Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and pupils are rapidly catching up on work they have missed in the past.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.2 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.3(13.3)	14.6(14.4)
Mathematics	17.2(15.6)	16.3(16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (28.3)	26.8(27.0)
Mathematics	28.3(27.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.9 (30.6)	28.6 (28.3)

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

1. Standards are better now than at the time of the previous inspection and are usually above or well above the national average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 6. Although standards are improving and pupils are doing well overall, there is still room for improvement when results are compared with those of similar schools. Standards observed during the inspection were above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2, and well above in Year 6. Pupils' achievement is very good in English and good throughout the school in other subjects. Standards in ICT, which have improved significantly, are now average. Pupils have caught up ground lost previously and are now achieving well. Standards are set to rise further. Standards and achievement are good throughout the school in history and physical education. These improvements and high standards have been brought about by good teaching and learning, by the commitment on the part of the headteacher to move the school forward, and by the challenging targets the school sets and often exceeds.
2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and many achieve the standards expected by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. This is as a result of very good individual education plans, well targeted support from teaching assistants and good teaching, both in the course of whole-class lessons and in small withdrawal groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and personal development are **very good** and have improved since the last inspection. Behaviour is very good. Spiritual, moral and social development is very good and cultural development is good. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school fosters a very strong sense of community based on Christian values.
- Children's behaviour and personal skills are not as good as they should be by the end of the reception year, but by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 they are very good.
- Pupils have a very good sense of their responsibilities in the smooth running of the school, but are over dependent on adults in the course of learning in some classes.
- Pupils' awareness of the range of cultures and traditions represented in society has improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils' spiritual development is a strength of the school.
- There are good procedures to ensure pupils' regular attendance and prompt arrival at school.

Commentary

3. The sense of belonging to a close Catholic community is promoted in all aspects of school life. The parish priest, who knows all the children by name and is a regular visitor to the school, makes a significant contribution to this. Pupils are keen to play their part and are very proud of their school and all that it has to offer. Year 6 pupils confidently show visitors around the school, and talk with evident pleasure of their friendly and supportive teachers and their favourite lessons.
4. The school has very high expectations of pupils' conduct and it works very hard to achieve them. When they first start school pupils' social and personal skills are well below the level expected for children of a similar age. Although their achievement is satisfactory

overall by the end of the reception year in relation to their starting points, behaviour is still not as good as it should be because the children find it so hard to share and to think about others. As a result of the very good provision that the school makes, pupils of different ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs and traveller pupils, learn and work well together by the time they move into the junior classes. The house system gives older pupils very good opportunities to take responsibilities around the school. Whilst there are some very good opportunities for pupils to work independently in some classes, for example, in Years 2 and 6, opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in the course of their learning are not consistently promoted in all classes. Pupils do then not use their initiative or persevere with more difficult work.

5. Pupils develop a very good understanding of their responsibilities in the wider world as a result of taking part in events to raise money for charities such as CAFOD. Pupils are highly respectful of their own values and traditions, and they also have a good level of respect for ways of life and traditions that are different from their own. This is because of the many opportunities that are provided for pupils to learn about their own culture and increasing opportunities to learn about the culture of others. A good example of this was seen during the inspection when a Moslem pupil demonstrated some of her religious traditions and recited a prayer in Arabic.
6. Pupils develop a very good understanding of right from wrong and understand the school's rules. Most pupils are polite, talk confidently to visitors and mix well with each other. This contributes to the family atmosphere, which pervades the school. Most pupils behave very well in lessons and get on with the tasks they are given to do because they know what is expected of them. On the few occasions when pupils behave thoughtlessly in Years 1 to 6, it is quickly checked to avoid disturbance to lessons. However, in the reception class, thoughtless behaviour is not always checked firmly enough and this then interrupts learning. Pupils and parents alike do not consider bullying to be a problem in the school and most say that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with very effectively. There have been no exclusions.
7. Spiritual development is very well promoted through the clear Christian aims and ethos of the school. Religious education lessons and the daily acts of prayers and worship, plus the 'Here I am' programme, provide a firm foundation for pupils' spiritual development. Opportunities for reflection on feelings and the wonder of world about them are provided in most subjects and this contributes to the standards achieved. There are very good opportunities throughout the curriculum for pupils to consider matters of right and wrong, fairness and justice. A good example is in history where Year 6 pupils have discussed the way the Jewish people were treated in the Second World War.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.6	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

8. The school's routines and the very good support given by parents ensure regular attendance and punctual arrival at school. For example, pupils are allowed to go into

school ten minutes before the official starting time. Most pupils are keen to do this so that they can make a prompt start to their early morning activities.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are effective. The curriculum is good and the school provides a very good standard of care for its pupils. There are very good links with parents and good links with the community

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Assessment is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection, although there are some weaknesses in the management of challenging behaviour in the reception class.
- Teachers have a good range of strategies to ensure that all pupils have access to learning.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- The teaching provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator is very good.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn the skills of independent learning.
- Assessment is very good in English and mathematics, and good in science and ICT and the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

9. The improvements in teaching and learning that are evident throughout the school are significant factors in the improvement in standards and achievement since the last inspection. Good teaching occurs in Years 1, 3 and 5. Where unsatisfactory teaching occurs it is in the teaching of personal and social development in the reception class where pupils' inappropriate behaviour is not always handled firmly enough. There is very good teaching in Year 2 and some outstanding teaching occurs in Year 6. The teaching of English is very good and the teaching of mathematics, science, ICT, history and physical education is good overall. Although some good teaching was seen in design technology, art and design and music, there is not enough evidence to form an overall judgement about teaching and learning in these subjects.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(2 %)	7 (18 %)	19 (49 %)	10 (26 %)	2 (5 %)	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 school has responded very well to the criticisms made about the teaching of writing in the last inspection. Very good teaching of writing was seen in Year 2 and excellent teaching was seen in Year 6. Learning objectives are now set for all lessons and in the best lessons they are very precise. There are high expectations for all pupils and the use

of worksheets has been greatly reduced. Pupils learn well because they know exactly what is expected of them and work is appropriately challenging.

11. Teachers make good use of questioning to ensure that all pupils, whatever their ability, are involved in lessons. All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and, as a result, an atmosphere of mutual trust has been created in which pupils grow in confidence and are eager to learn. There is very good support and encouragement for individual pupils, and good use is made of written comments in books to help pupils know what they have to do to improve their work.
12. The teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good when it involves the special educational needs co-ordinator. Individual needs are very well targeted, relevant experiences are provided and the pupils' skills and knowledge are developed very well during the sessions. There is very good communication between the teachers and their assistants and this flow of information ensures that pupils' work and progress is monitored carefully.
13. Teachers make good use of all the time that is available in most lessons. Pupils are very well managed and there is good preparation and use of resources to support pupils' learning. In some classes, for example, in Year 2 and Year 6, there are high expectations of what pupils should be able to do for themselves, and tasks are set up to encourage the development of independent learning. A good example of this was seen in a Year 6 history lesson, where pupils had to explore an aspect of children's lives in the 1950s. They had to decide on a precise focus, plan their research method and organise their presentations. However, in some classes too much is done for pupils. They then become over dependent on the adults who work with them for things that they should be able to do for themselves.
14. The quality and range of assessments of pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are not sufficiently systematic in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology because they rely too heavily on teachers' good informal knowledge of their pupils. The school has well-established plans to address this. Target setting for reading, writing and mathematics is rigorous and pupils' attainment is closely monitored to ensure that their learning is moving forward. Pupils have a good awareness of the targets that are set for them in English and mathematics and are involved well in evaluating their progress and checking their own work.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to widen their experiences through after school activities, sport and visits to places of interest. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been designed well to promote high achievement.
- Personal development is promoted very well in Years 1 to 6, but there are weaknesses in the reception class.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school is very inclusive, and all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and succeed.

- The enrichment produced through extra-curricular activities and educational visits is very good.
- The ICT suite is too small and the outdoor environment is not yet sufficiently developed to support learning in the Foundation Stage and also in Years 1 to 6.

Commentary

15. All subjects of the curriculum are now carefully planned for pupils in Year 1 to 6, and all the statutory requirements are met. Improvements have been made since the last inspection in the provision for writing, science, ICT, and in the planning for all aspects of design and technology. There is also a very effective teaching and learning policy, which promotes the use of visits, visitors and links between subjects to make learning relevant and interesting to pupils. The school makes very good provision for English and mathematics, and effectively promotes their use in other subjects. Work is often aimed at achieving levels beyond the levels expected for pupils of a similar age. This, together with setting arrangements for mathematics in Years 5 and 6, has contributed to the good achievement being made by pupils. The very good links with the Catholic secondary school has made a significant contribution to the curriculum, not least in ICT, where they have funded the purchase of an interactive whiteboard.
16. The school places great emphasis on the provision for physical education and engages the services of professional coaches for specific sports. This results in standards that are above those typically seen. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils throughout the school. These activities are very well supported by pupils, teachers, teaching assistants and parents alike. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, whatever their background or capability, and this enables them to achieve well.
17. The curriculum for children in reception is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Planning clearly reflects national guidance and there is a good balance of opportunities for pupils to learn through teacher directed tasks and activities that they have chosen for themselves. The school knows that more needs to be done to develop pupils' personal and social skills in relation to their ability to work with others and how to behave in social situations, and there are well-established plans for this.
18. In Years 1 to 6 personal, social, health education and citizenship is integrated into every aspect of the curriculum as well as being specifically taught to reflect the Catholic nature of the school through the school's 'Here I am' programme. All the appropriate policies are in place relating to sex and relationships education and alcohol and drugs misuse. A residential visit to South Cerney is a highlight of the year for pupils in Year 6 and it makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as enhancing their understanding and skills in different curriculum subjects. All these arrangements are very effective and, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils are very well prepared for their secondary education.
19. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Clear procedures are in place and the Code of Practice for the identification and assessment of pupils is closely followed and has been implemented very effectively. Good quality individual education plans are provided for pupils, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are fully involved in reviews and consequently are fully aware of their targets for improvement. They study

them regularly to see *'how they are doing'*. Considerable care is taken to ensure that the work provided for pupils is closely suited to their needs.

20. Classrooms are generally adequate in size, although the large numbers of pupils in some classes requires good organisation by teachers, and close co-operation on the part of the pupils. The ICT suite is too small to accommodate a whole class, which limits the time that pupils have to develop their computer skills. The library is housed in the mobile classroom, which limits its accessibility for pupils' independent research in the course of their work. The school has plans to address the issues of both the ICT suite and library. Rooms throughout the school are clean and well maintained, and displays of pupils' work, which have improved since the last inspection, enhance their appearance.
21. Outside play-areas are satisfactory in terms of size, but at present they are not sufficiently developed to enhance learning for children in the reception class and pupils in Years 1 to 6. Resources are good. Storage space is at a premium, but staff work wonders in keeping items stored neatly and tidily, whilst at the same time keeping them available to both themselves, and to pupils. The school is now well staffed on a permanent basis, by a dedicated and well-informed group of teachers and support staff. They complement each other well in providing for their pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

The pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring and the way that the school involves pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views are both good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very effective in ensuring that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Each pupil has a very good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.
- The house system is used effectively to involve older pupils in the running of the school, but it does not yet involve pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

22. Health and safety procedures are reviewed regularly and there are thorough risk assessments for all eventualities. The school promotes healthy living, for example, through diet and exercise, very well. Pupils are taught how to use equipment safely and they learn to look after themselves and to take care of each other. The school works very effectively with professional outside help, such as social services, the school nurse and educational psychologist to support pupils when they need it.
23. Staff have very good relationships with all pupils and a thorough understanding of their achievements and personal development. The results of pupil questionnaires and discussions with pupils show that the vast majority have trusting relationships with their teachers and would turn to them readily if they had a problem. They mentioned many incidences when they had received academic, personal advice or just a comforting word. Pupils are very confident and self-assured by the time they leave the school as a result of this. The induction arrangements for all children are satisfactory and ensure a smooth transition from home to school.

24. The school involves its pupils well and pupils know that their views are listened to and taken seriously. This enables pupils to grow in maturity and prepares them well for their secondary education and later life. They help to devise class rules and are encouraged to raise issues that are of concern to them, as well as thinking of ways to improve the school routines and facilities. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not yet involved in the house system and this is an area for development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good**, whilst those with the community and other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Communication keeps parents very well informed about the school's work and their children's learning.
- Any complaints are dealt with sensitively and resolved very effectively.
- Parents are actively involved in the school and give very strong support to its work.
- The school is an integral part of a close knit Catholic community.

Commentary

25. Parents have very positive views about the school. They feel that it is very well led and managed and that their children are well taught. Although they did not agree with the findings of the last inspection, they feel that the school has moved on well since then and that it has continued to provide a good education for their children. The inspection team agree that this is now a good school and that there have been good improvements since the last inspection.
26. The quality of information provided for parents is very comprehensive. Information regarding the school and its activities is detailed, both in the handbook for parents and the governors' annual report to parents. Ongoing contact and information about forthcoming events is maintained very well through regular newsletters. Curriculum information is circulated to parents each term, effectively enabling them to see what their children will be covering during the course of the year. They then support their children at home and so contribute effectively to achievement and standards.
27. Parents feel that the school is very accessible and welcome the way the school encourages suggestions, takes any concerns they have seriously and deals with them promptly. They are kept very well informed about the progress their children make. The annual reports are very detailed, clearly identify what pupils are able to do and set targets for improvement. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept very well informed about their child's achievements and are fully involved in the review processes. There are very good links with parents of traveller pupils.
28. The significant contribution of parents to their children's learning is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. The school warmly encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning. This mainly involves listening to reading or helping out in the school or on school trips. Where parents regularly listen to their children read, it contributes very well to the standards achieved.

29. St Mary's School is very much part of the local Catholic community. Many parents have been involved with the school for a number of years, and there are very strong connections to the church. Parents are invited to school events and Masses, which are generally well attended. The Friends Association is very effectively run by a committed group of staff and parents. A number of fund-raising and social events are successfully held each year. These are well attended and generate additional funds to help purchase resources for the school. The very strong links with the secondary school and strong links with other schools in the area are used well to support curriculum developments, particularly in sport. Transfer arrangements to the secondary school are very good. There are, however, few links with the business community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The deputy headteacher provides good leadership and management. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clarity of vision and sense of purpose of the headteacher is very good.
- The school's commitment to inclusion is very good.
- The use of self-evaluation is very good.
- Governors' knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is good.

Commentary

30. The leadership and management of the school have improved since the last inspection. All the issues regarding leadership and management have been addressed. The school benefits from the very strong and principled leadership of the headteacher, who is deeply committed to the school and its community. His high expectations for standards and achievement are reflected in the clear sense of educational purpose and direction in all aspects of the school's work. Teaching and learning are at the heart of the school's improvement efforts, and the implementation of an innovative and rigorous teaching and learning policy has made a significant contribution to the improvements in the quality of teaching and the good standards that are now being achieved by pupils. The deputy headteacher provides effective support and she has been very influential in curriculum development. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher set very good examples by the quality of their own teaching. Leadership is encouraged at every level and subject co-ordinators have responded well to this. They give generously of their time and talents, and have worked hard to gather the information they need to improve provision for their subjects.
31. The strong Catholic ethos in which the unique nature of each individual is emphasised, underpins the school's very strong commitment to inclusion and the values of mutual respect and trust that pervade the school. All members of the school community know that their work is valued and that they have an important part to play in the school's development. The school very successfully ensures that all pupils, whatever their needs or backgrounds, are included in all aspects of the school's work and take full advantage of the many good quality learning opportunities available to them. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who is experienced and well qualified, is well supported by the

headteacher and teachers. She makes very good use of her time to manage special needs provision, monitor its effectiveness and link with teachers.

32. The governing body gives a good balance of support and challenge to the school. They are ably led by the chair of governors, who works very closely with the headteacher and is very well informed about all matters concerning the school. The chairs of committees carry out their responsibilities efficiently and meetings are always well attended. Governors take a keen interest in the school and visit it regularly. Their positive and constructive approach has had a beneficial effect on both the academic and pastoral life of the school. In summary, the governors have a good awareness of the school's performance, know the challenges that it faces and ensure that the statutory requirements are met.
33. Staff and governors are fully involved in agreeing priorities in the school development plan. Actions have been effectively managed and led to the good improvements that have been made since the last inspection. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses as a result of its very good self-evaluation procedures. There are well-established plans for further improvements, including the Foundation Stage, assessment and outdoor provision. The good arrangements for the professional development of staff are securely focussed on further improving the quality of education provided. There are effective arrangements to support newly qualified teachers and those new to the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	503,648	Balance from previous year	36,400
Total expenditure	511,671	Balance carried forward to the next	28,377
Expenditure per pupil	2,437		

34. The administrative officer, together with the headteacher, ensures that finances are efficiently managed. The budget is carefully targeted towards school improvements and governors are provided with clear budget reports. The carry over in the budget is to sustain staffing levels. Governors apply the principles of best value well and governors debate expenditure rigorously. The strategic financial management of the school is good and ensures that there are sufficient funds to sustain developments. The school provides good value for money.

The school is well placed to continue its improvement efforts as a result of:

- The very good leadership of the headteacher.
- A strong staff team who are committed to raising standards.
- Good teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6.
- A stable and committed governing body.
- Pupils who have very positive attitudes to the school.
- A successful partnership with parents and parishes.

35. The school recognises the need to improve the personal and social development of reception aged pupils further and has the capacity to do so. There are no major barriers to further improvement.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

Most of the issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been addressed and this has resulted in improved provision. An appropriate curriculum, reflecting national guidance, is in place and there is a good balance between tasks that are directed by the teacher and those that the children have initiated themselves. Planning makes suitable curriculum provision for all six areas of learning. Assessment procedures are now good and data from them is used to inform planning to meet the needs of individuals. The indoor accommodation is used to its best advantage with a good range of practical activities being offered to children all of the time. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. It has been well supported by the local authority and this has contributed to the improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **unsatisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall achievement is satisfactory.
- The provision for spiritual development is good.
- Unsatisfactory teaching occurs when challenging behaviour is not dealt with firmly enough.

Commentary

36. Overall provision is judged to be unsatisfactory because not enough children meet the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, although there are some important strengths in the teaching for children's spiritual development through daily prayers and the understanding of the liturgy.
37. Most children are interested in the activities that are provided throughout the curriculum, and are confident in trying them out and selecting resources independently. Most stop and listen attentively to the teacher when asked to do so, and are able to concentrate for increasing lengths of time without adult intervention, especially when experiencing creative activities. These are improvements since the last inspection.
38. The children have a good awareness of their own needs and feelings and a good understanding of what is right and wrong, but some find it difficult to apply this knowledge in practical situations. There are weaknesses in children's ability to relate to the needs and feelings of others, to take turns and share, and to recognise how they should behave on different social occasions. For example, there are many children who become upset when they are not chosen to help or to lead an action song, and some children are prone to shouting out when responding to the teacher's questions. This challenging behaviour is not always dealt with as firmly as it should be and two lessons were judged to be

unsatisfactory because of this. The teacher and teaching assistants treat all pupils with patience, kindness and respect and set a good example of courtesy and politeness in their relationships with them. This is another improvement since the last inspection. The teacher works hard to help children understand the importance of working together, but her efforts are not always as effective as they should be. For example, she told a story about two farm horses who were roped together but could not eat because they were each trying to pull towards different haystacks. In spite of all the teachers' efforts, the children still felt that the best way to solve this problem was for the horses to pull harder!

Communication, Language and Literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide range of opportunities for children to speak and to listen to adults.
- Children's skills in using language for thinking and for co-operating with each other are not well developed.

Commentary

39. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are in line with those expected for children of a similar age when they start school. By the end of the reception year most children reach the goals expected and higher attaining children exceed them. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their starting points and is a result of the satisfactory teaching of basic literacy skills.
40. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and have improved since the last inspection. Children listen with enjoyment to stories and most sustain attentive listening during whole class literacy sessions and there is good use of questioning to deepen children's understanding of the text. Where weaknesses occur it is in the management of group activities and planning for the development of children's use of language for thinking, for example, by commentating on their actions or talking through imaginative ideas. Most children play either alone or alongside each other and are only just beginning to develop the language skills that they need to co-operate with their classmates. By the end of the reception year, most children use the correct words to name objects, can retell their experiences when encouraged to do so and speak in grammatically correct sentences.
41. There are regular opportunities to take books home, to share good quality texts in whole-class literacy sessions, and to read and share books with their teacher. This ensures that all children enjoy looking at books and are aware of how they work. Most children show a good understanding of the sequence of a story when listening to stories being read aloud. Older and more able children can read simple stories independently and are able to tell their versions of the stories using their emerging knowledge of words and clues from the illustrations.
42. As a result of the regular opportunities that are given for the development of basic literacy skills, most children learn the initial sounds of words and associate them with letters of the alphabet by the end of the reception year. The children are actively encouraged to make their own attempts at writing from an early stage. Children are formally taught how

to form their letters correctly and, as a result, most write their own name by the end of the reception year and many, with support, begin to write short phrases or simple sentences. Higher attainers attempt more lengthy pieces of writing.

Mathematical development

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an appropriate range of practical tasks that help children to acquire an early understanding of number, shape and measure, but there is not enough challenge in these activities for higher attaining children.

Commentary

43. When children enter the school at the age of four, their mathematical development is at the level expected for their age. They achieve satisfactorily and most reach the goals expected for them by the end of the reception year.
44. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and have improved since the last inspection. There is a good range of opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills across the curriculum. Children gain a sound understanding of basic mathematical ideas as a result of focussed direct teaching and the provision of a wide range of practical activities. They have regular opportunities to count and order objects. As a result, most can count accurately from zero to ten and many can count well beyond this by the end of the reception year. Children begin to gain an early understanding of addition and subtraction when they work out how many objects they have when one more is added to a set or one is taken away. However, higher attaining pupils do not get enough opportunities to use these skills in problem solving activities.
45. A satisfactory range of opportunities ensures that most children can identify and describe simple two-dimensional shapes. Opportunities to make models from construction equipment contribute to children's understanding of three-dimensional shapes. Play activities that involve the use of sand and water are used appropriately to help develop children's learning about shape, space and measure. However, these tasks are often too similar for all pupils and higher attaining children do not have the opportunities that they need to move on to work at the lower levels of the National Curriculum.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are now good opportunities for children to work in groups and to explore and investigate within the classroom.
- The outdoor area is not sufficiently developed to support learning.

Commentary

46. Most children achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points on entry to the school and reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year.
47. Teacher and learning are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is made interesting to the children and, as a result, they show curiosity and interest in their surroundings. They develop the confidence they need to explore and find out about the world around them well. There is a good range of opportunities to develop an early understanding of place by exploring the outside area and talking about where they live. Children develop a sound sense of the passing of time and of how things change over time by thinking about how they have changed as they grow older. Children have a satisfactory range of opportunities to explore the natural world; for example, they have played in the snow and handled small animals in the course of a school visit. During the inspection, they learned about their own sense of smell. Where there are weaknesses in provision, it is because the outdoor play area does not provide the opportunities that young children need to explore the outdoor environment for themselves.
48. Children have ample opportunities to investigate how a range of construction materials work and learn how they can be fitted together to make objects of their own choosing. There are many opportunities for children to use a computer throughout the day. They develop good mouse control and can complete many programs independently.

Physical development

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide range of opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills.
- The outdoor area has not been developed sufficiently to support pupils' physical development.

Commentary

49. Children's physical skills are at about the level expected when they enter the school. Most children achieve satisfactorily and reach the standards that are expected by the end of the reception year.
50. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are satisfactory opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills when using construction toys and when drawing and cutting. They are taught how to hold pencils and scissors correctly, and this supports their work in other areas of learning. Opportunities for pouring sand and water from one container to another, and for rolling and pressing play-dough, also help them to strengthen their fingers and to improve their manipulative skills and their hand-eye co-ordination.
51. Children develop their skills further by taking part in lessons in the hall, where they learn to use small games and gymnastics equipment, and to move with control and co-ordination. The organisation and management of these sessions has improved since the last inspection. However, the outdoor area has not been sufficiently developed to give pupils

opportunities to explore and refine their physical movements and actions outdoors. This limits opportunities for children to learn about their own space in relation to that of others and for them to improve their social and communication skills in the course of physical play.

Creative development

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- When working with adults children develop their imaginative ideas well but they find it hard to work with each other in the course of imaginative play.
- There is a wide range of opportunities for children to paint, draw and make collages.
- Children achieve well in music.

Commentary

52. Achievement is satisfactory and children attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected by the end of the reception year. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The wide range of opportunities for children to be creative and use their imagination is an improvement since the last inspection. Adults now work effectively alongside the children to help them make up their own imaginative stories when using the role-play area and this, combined with the provision of resources, helps the children to begin to develop their own ideas. However, when playing without adult intervention, the children tend to work alone or alongside others and make little use of talk to develop their imaginative ideas.
53. Children enjoy painting and drawing and make collages with a range of materials. They explore colours and textures and develop a satisfactory understanding of how to vary the tones of colours and materials to create different effects.
54. The children readily join in with action songs and rhymes, and enjoy singing and moving in response to the sounds that they hear. They are taught to play un-tuned percussion instruments correctly and many manage to keep a regular beat. For example, when the class was divided into half, both halves were able, with adult support, to keep a regular contrasting beat. Achievement in this area of the curriculum is good.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good; standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are good overall.
- In some lessons, the pupils are over-reliant on adults for tasks that they should be able to do for themselves.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

- Literacy skills are used very well across the curriculum.

Commentary

55. The school's results in the national tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 in 2003 were well above the national average. When compared to schools with similar numbers of free school meals they were above average for Year 2 pupils and average for pupils in Year 6. These results are better than when the school was last inspected. There are early indications that the school has exceeded the challenging targets that it set itself for 2004 and that further improvements have been made.
56. From average standards on entry to Year 1, over a third attain standards that are above those expected in reading, and a quarter of pupils do so in writing by the end of Year 2. About three-quarters of pupils reach standards above those expected for their age by the end of Year 6 in both reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their starting points, with many attaining standards that are in line with those expected for their age by Year 6. The school gives its pupils ample opportunities to speak with confidence and to listen carefully. As a result, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed.
57. By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters and groups of letters make, together with their ability to deduce meaning of the context of text, enables them to read fluently and confidently. Their familiarity with the basic grammatical structure of sentences, including basic punctuation, results in pupils being able to read with good expression and phrasing. They are introduced to a wide range of good quality literature during the course of their work in English and this results in pupils being able to recognise the organisational features of different kinds of texts. These skills serve pupils very well when they produce writing of their own. Most pupils spell well for their age in Year 2, and their handwriting is neat and well formed.
58. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils have very well-developed skills in the critical analysis and appreciation of many kinds of fiction and information texts. Year 6 pupils use their well-developed knowledge of vocabulary and grammar to write with accuracy and relevance. They write sustained stories with very good attention to characterisation and plot, interweaving elements of dialogue, description and action. They display good skills in using narrative techniques, for example, opening with dialogue or action. There is very good attention to alluding to the thoughts and feelings of characters, which makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory use of their word processing skills to present their work. They also use reference books and information sources on computers competently for research.
59. Teaching and learning are very good overall and some excellent teaching occurs in Year 6. There has been a particular improvement in writing since the last inspection and all the criticisms raised in the last report have been addressed. There is little use of worksheets and pupils are given ample opportunities to compose their own stories. Teachers insist that proper terms for language are used and the use of the techniques used by authors, together with new and adventurous words, and this is very effective in helping pupils to make their writing interesting and relevant. In the best lessons, there are very high expectations of all pupils and learning objectives are very precisely aimed at individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils respond very well to this. For example, Year 6 pupils

produced powerful descriptions of characters from the book *Carrie's War* after being challenged to allude to the setting, without mentioning it, and to include at least three connective words and extended sentences. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, learning objectives are less precise. On occasions, pupils are over reliant on teachers and teaching assistants for tasks that they should be able to do for themselves. For example, they ask for help in spelling new words rather than use a dictionary, and they wait to have resources given out to them.

60. The leadership and management of English are very good. The literacy co-ordinators are extremely knowledgeable about the subject and set very good example by the high quality of their own teaching. They have a good overview of the subject as a result of observing teaching, monitoring planning and analysing test results. This information is used well to set targets and plan for improvement. Resources for English are very good. Teachers make good arrangements to overcome the lack of a centrally situated library, by having their own classroom collections of books relevant to topics being studied.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. Pupils make very good use of their language and literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. They respond very well to the materials they read because of their good understanding of the organisational features of many different kinds of information text. They use different forms of writing well in other subjects of the curriculum; for example, they use note-taking techniques, accounts of visits to places of interest and stories written from different points of view in history.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very significant improvements in standards and achievement have been made since the last inspection.
- The subject co-ordinator has made a significant contribution to the recent improvements.
- Teachers making very good use of assessment to provide pupils with suitably challenging work.
- The attitudes and behaviour shown by pupils are very good. Most clearly enjoy mathematics.

Commentary

62. The school's results in the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2003 were above the national average. When compared to schools with similar numbers of free school meals they were average. These results are better than when the school was last inspected. There are early indications that the school has exceeded the challenging targets that it set itself for 2004 and that further improvements have been made. Inspection findings show that standards are above average at Year 2 and well above average at Year 6, where over half the pupils achieve above the levels expected, some at very high levels. This is a result of the very good teaching that pupils are receiving in Years 5 and 6, an improvement in the use of assessment and target setting to provide challenging work for all groups of pupils and the very good support given to pupils who

have special educational needs. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.

63. Pupils throughout the school are confident in tackling all aspects of mathematics, and they show above and well above the expected levels of understanding and skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 readily reduce a fraction to its lowest form, and they find fractional and percentage parts of whole numbers. Pupils' skills in shape, space and measure develop well. In Year 2, they measure accurately with a range of standard and non-standard measures, and Year 6 pupils measure angles to the nearest degree and find the area of shapes using a formula. Their skills in data handling are also well developed. Pupils in Year 2 collect information, for example, about their favourite fruit and produce graphs to illustrate their findings, and pupils in Year 6 readily use a probability scale and learn to use spreadsheets on computers. Pupils throughout the school tackle suitable and often challenging practical and problem solving activities.
64. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good in Years 5 and 6, where setting arrangements are also very effective in promoting high standards. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Most teachers make sure that they fully involve all pupils during the mental sessions at the start of lessons. In the best lessons, the pace of work is breathless and very good use is made of assessment to ensure that all pupils receive work that is closely suited to their particular needs. Work is often taken from programmes for older pupils. Teachers make very good use of their subject knowledge and they clearly explain different methods and processes. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory rather than good, it is because learning objectives are not as precise as they should be and work is too similar for pupils of different capabilities. In some classes, pupils wait to be given the resources they need and give up too easily when they meet a problem. Teachers and teaching assistants are quick to provide suitable help, but this sometimes leads to an over dependence on adults and pupils do not develop the skills they need to learn independently.
65. The subject co-ordinator has played a significant role in improving both standards and overall provision, and her leadership and management are good. In particular, she identified the cause of the lower standards, especially in relation to similar schools, and suitable strategies were put in place to improve matters. As a result, the issue has been successfully addressed. She regularly monitors the work being produced by pupils, and she also observes lessons to see for herself the standards being achieved in class. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment procedures for mathematics are very good and they are used well to inform planning for pupils' differing needs and capabilities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are set for mathematics and this has proved to be an effective strategy for driving up standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Pupils make good use of their mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum. They use their measuring skills in science and design and technology, for example. Good use is also made of ICT, especially in relation to data-handling.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- The skills of scientific enquiry are systematically planned into all lessons.
- There are good links with mathematics, English and ICT.
- The subject co-ordinator has been successful in improving the planning and assessment of science.

Commentary

67. The school's results in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2003 were above the national average. When compared to schools with similar numbers of free school meals they were average. The results of teachers' assessments for Year 2 pupils were well above the national average. These results are better than when the school was last inspected. There are early indications that the school has met the challenging targets that it set itself for 2004 and that further improvements have been made. The evidence of the inspection is that standards are above average at Year 2 and well above average at Year 6, where three-quarters of the pupils achieve above the levels expected. These improvements are due to the very good teaching that pupils receive in Years 5 and 6 and the emphasis that the school now puts on developing pupils' skills of scientific enquiry. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
68. Overall, teaching and learning throughout the school are good. Some very good teaching occurs in Year 6. Marking is consistent and comments on scientific content in a way that helps pupils to understand what they should do next. The recent thrust on investigative work means that teachers now have a sharper focus, making good links between acquiring skills of setting and carrying out fair tests and the learning of scientific facts. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils explored ways of finding out which foods would go mouldy the quickest. The practical reinforcement of scientific concepts is a significant factor in the improvements in standards and achievement that are evident throughout the school. ICT is used successfully to support learning. There are good links between science, English and mathematics, and this improvement since the last inspection is contributing to pupils' achievement in national tests. The subject also makes a very good contribution to pupils' understanding of personal, social and health issues. For example, in Year 2, pupils learn about healthy eating and, in Year 6, they learn about the dangers of smoking. Opportunities to look at the natural world are used well to contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
69. The leadership and management of the science co-ordinator are good. The co-ordinator has worked closely with members of staff to improve the promotion of the skills of scientific enquiry. Assessment now focuses on these skills and this has helped teachers plan and deliver interesting enquires through which pupils are learning scientific knowledge as well as skills. As a result of these interesting investigations, pupils' attitudes are very good and this has a significantly positive impact on standards and achievement. Resources are good and well maintained. This means that teaching staff and pupils have good quality resources readily available and this aids learning and makes a positive contribution to achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been good improvements since the last inspection and pupils are catching up on work they have missed in the past.
- Teachers and learning have improved as a result of good training.
- There is good use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum.
- The subject is effectively led and managed.

Commentary

70. There have been good improvements in ICT since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning are now good, and pupils are achieving well. Standards are not yet good, but pupils have caught up ground lost previously, and standards are likely to rise further as a result of the current good provision. Pupils apply their ICT skills well in the course of their work in other subjects. There is a thorough scheme of work, which covers all areas of the National Curriculum and resources are improved. There is now a small but well equipped computer suite. All of these factors have contributed to the improvement in standards. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and benefit from working collaboratively with their classmates.
71. In Years 1 and 2, pupils confidently use their knowledge of how computers work to help them to generate, amend and record their work and share their ideas in different forms. Pupils develop their skills to enter data into the computer well and, through a series of instructions, can print out simple block graphs. They are developing a sound understanding of how computers can be used to make things happen, for example, by giving series of instructions to a programmable robot.
72. In Year 3 to 6, pupils develop their skills and knowledge of an increasing range of ICT applications well. They access and retrieve information competently, for example, when using the Internet and information banks to carry out their own research. In Years 5 and 6, they move on to multi-media presentations using 'PowerPoint', and organise, refine and present information through the use of text, sound and pictures. They make satisfactory use of control technology, for example, to make lights work in models made in design and technology and in the use of sensors to give precise information in science. Pupils develop their skills well when using spreadsheets, entering numbers, labels and simple formulae and using the data to calculate totals.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable and, as a result, give clear explanations and instructions that help pupils to understand what they have to do. There is a good scheme of work that is used well to ensure appropriate planning for units of work and for opportunities to use ICT to support other subjects of the curriculum. Tasks are generally well matched to pupils' differing needs, and the organisation and management of pupils gives good opportunities for pupils to plan and collaborate together. They respond well to this and work sensibly together, sharing equipment and discussing ideas.

74. The work of the co-ordinator has had a significant impact on the improvements that have been made in the subject. Her initial audit revealed low standards and she quickly took effective action to improve them. There is a good assessment system that is used well to inform planning for future work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator gives effective training and support to staff when it is needed. Resources for the subject are good, although the size of the ICT suite limits opportunities for whole-class work. The school has benefited from the very good links that it has with the Catholic secondary school, which has fully funded an interactive whiteboard.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. Pupils make good use of their skills in ICT in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, they use the Internet for research as part of their work in making bread in design and technology, they use spreadsheets as part of their problem solving techniques in mathematics and use word processing packages to present their written work in English.

Humanities

History was inspected in full and is reported below. Geography was sampled.

76. It was not possible to observe any lessons in **geography** and insufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about overall provision. An analysis was made of samples of completed work, work on display around the school was looked at and discussions held with pupils. From this evidence, it is clear the subject meets statutory requirements. The curriculum is enhanced well by visits to places of interest, the sewage works being a notable example for pupils in Year 6. Pupils use their literacy skills well in geography.

History

Provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and make it interesting for pupils.
- There is a good focus on developing pupils' skills of historical enquiry.
- There are good links with other subjects of the curriculum, including personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- Assessment procedures are not rigorous enough.

Commentary

77. All pupils achieve well and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, attain above average standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 acquire a good understanding of the lifestyles of people in the past. For example, they know something about how holidays have changed over time by looking at photographs from the past and comparing them with holidays taken today. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a good understanding of significant people from the past, such as Henry VIII, and events from the

past, such as the Second World War. Pupils with special educational need receive good support and achieve well.

78. Teaching and learning are good. Visits to places of interest, such as the Black Country Museum, are used well to bring the subject alive for the pupils. There are good links with other subjects of the curriculum. For example, pupils make good use of ICT and information books for research. They use their literacy skills well to take notes and to write accounts of events. Pupils' work about the Second World War demonstrated how a teacher encouraged thoughtful discussions about the treatment of the Jews at that time and linked it to how pupils believe people are being unfairly treated today. Such strategies make a very good contribution to an understanding of citizenship. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good, and teachers can engage in open discussion and debate secure in the knowledge that pupils will respect each other's views. This has a positive impact on the achievement of good standards. There is good attention to historical enquiry. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were asked to explore the life of a child in the 1950s and this gave pupils plenty of scope to follow their own interests when researching the topic.
79. The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher and this has resulted in good improvements in the quality of the curriculum that is offered to pupils. The school is aware of the need to improve assessment arrangements and there are well-established plans for this.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education was inspected in full and is reported below. Art and design and design and technology were sampled; not enough lessons were seen to make a secure judgement about provision. Music was not inspected due to the main foci of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements.

80. In **art and design**, only two lessons were seen during the inspection, and so no overall judgement is made. However, in the lessons seen, in Year 3 on producing art work in the style of Chinese artists, and in Year 5 on mixing and producing different colours for different purposes and occasions, the overall quality of teaching was satisfactory, and the pupils' behaviour was very good. Standards were in line with those expected, and a study of other examples of work confirms this. However, a study of examples of observational drawing shows good standards throughout the school, in this aspect of art. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have produced closely observed pictures of fruit and flowers, whilst those in Years 3 to 6 have produced similarly detailed pictures of such things as religious artefacts and buildings, musical instruments and footwear. Pupils throughout the school readily produce work in the style of famous artists, and they are also provided with suitable opportunities to study and reproduce art work from other parts of the world. Pupils also now use computers to produce various pictures and illustrations. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' work shows less evidence of paintings or drawings resulting from the use of their imaginations.
81. During the inspection only two lessons were seen in **design and technology**, and no overall judgement is made. However, in those lessons, where pupils in Year 5 successfully planned and made a variety of bread, and pupils in Year 6 carried out preliminary tests on structures before making their own more permanent model, the teaching was good and pupils showed very good attitudes to the subject. A good array of

resources was available for pupils to use, and much good advice and demonstration was provided by the teachers. The subject is fully included in the curriculum and there are suitable links with ICT. These are improvements since the last inspection. For example, younger pupils make cards with moving features, puppets and fruit salads, and older pupils make picture frames, money containers, biscuits, musical instruments and model fair-ground rides. A study of these examples of work shows standards to be broadly in line with expectations. However, pupils make more limited use of evaluations to improve their work.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been good improvements in standards, teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and they are most keen to participate.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work.
- The role played by the co-ordinator is good.
- The very good range of teams and after-school clubs helps the pupils to further develop their skills.
- Assessment is not sufficiently rigorous.

Commentary.

82. Pupils achieve well in physical education and they attain levels above those expected in Years 2 and 6. In the lessons observed, pupils in Year 2 carried out games activities with better control and co-ordination than that expected for their age. They controlled a ball well using a hockey stick, 'dribbled' with confidence and passed accurately to a partner. Pupils in Years 3 and 6 show good skills in throwing, catching and hitting a ball, and they successfully put these skills to use when playing tennis and cricket. They show an increasing understanding of the rules of these games. They also recognise the need for fair-play when taking part in competition. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 attend swimming lessons during the year and, by the end of Year 4, about 90 per cent can swim 25 metres. Many can swim significantly further.
83. The overall quality of teaching and learning is much improved since the last inspection, and is now good. Teachers are suitably dressed to join in and demonstrate for pupils, their subject knowledge is good and they provide appropriate apparatus for pupils to use. Teachers provide relevant advice and careful coaching to pupils about their work, and this enables them all to achieve well. They are well supported in this by coaches from local clubs, who considerably enhance the overall quality of instruction. Whilst teachers often use pupils to demonstrate good practice, opportunities are usually missed to allow pupils to discuss their work. This would help them identify areas for further improvement. Pupils enjoy physical education and they join in with enthusiasm, both when working alone and with others, and their behaviour overall is very good. Lessons are fully inclusive and boys, girls and those with special educational needs work happily together.

84. The subject co-ordinator provides suitable advice and support for colleagues, and she has contributed well towards the good standards being achieved. She has observed lessons taking place, and this has helped her identify ways in which those standards can be improved. She also contributes significantly to the various clubs and teams that the school provides. Her leadership and management role is good. The school is aware of the need to improve assessment and there are well-established plans for this.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No formal teaching was seen in this area of the curriculum so no judgement about provision is made.

85. The personal, social and health education and citizenship curriculum is very successfully embedded within all subjects from Years 1 to 6. It also forms part of the 'Here I am' programme. Through topic work, lessons and extra-curricular activities, pupils are taught to maintain safe and healthy lives. The school has clear policies for sex education and drugs misuse. Social responsibility is at the heart of the behaviour policy of the school and in all lessons and around the school, there is a high expectation that pupils will observe the common courtesies expected of a well-ordered community. Relationships as a result are very good both amongst pupils and between pupils and adults.
86. Citizenship is being developed well through the school house system and pupils have a good voice in the organisation of the school. Older pupils help look after younger pupils, and this recently included helping them to take Mass. Debates of historical events and current affairs in lessons make a very good contribution to this area of the curriculum.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
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).