

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, EDLINGTON

Edlington

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106773

Headteacher: Mrs I Dugher

Lead inspector: Mrs J Randall

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 May 2004

Inspection number: 257827

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: | 3 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 187.5 (full-time equivalent) |
| School address: | Bungalow Road Edlington Doncaster South Yorkshire |
| Postcode: | DN12 1DL |
| Telephone number: | 01709 863280 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Father P O'Connor |
| Date of previous inspection: | 14 June 1999 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average-sized school serves an area suffering from significant social and economic stress and is located in a former mining village. At the time of the inspection there were 201 boys and girls, including 27 part-time Nursery children, with ages ranging from 3 to 11 years old. Most pupils are white British or Irish, with two pupils of Indian British origin and five white/black African, and a number of pupils whose families preferred not to give details of origin. Six pupils are in the early stages of learning English and the languages spoken by these pupils are Shona and Malay Alam. Two pupils are settled travellers. No pupils are asylum seekers or refugees and no pupils are in public care. There are thirty-five pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (17.4 per cent, about average) and four of these have statements of special educational needs (above average) for physical and learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 25 per cent (above average) but this figure does not fairly reflect the catchment area of the school and its economic deprivation. Twelve per cent of the pupils joined the school after the usual time of admission. The school accepts a significant number of 'fresh start' pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and the school has a much larger than average percentage of these pupils. Attainment on entry is well below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills.

Since the previous inspection there are new head and deputy head teachers in post. The school is involved in a number of national and local initiatives, which include the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools, the Children's Fund, the Edlington Family centre and the Healthy Schools programme. It has received the Schools Achievement Award in 2001, 2002 and 2003 for its improving results in national tests.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|--|
| 1471 | J Randall | Lead inspector | Geography History Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language |
| 13706 | G Marsland | Lay inspector | |
| 30590 | P Tuttle | Team inspector | Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education |
| 31175 | A Allison | Team inspector | English Science Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good and improving school that has many very good features and gives good value for money. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is very effective in moving the school forward. The significant strengths in the care and concern for all, the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence, the willingness to give pupils from other schools a 'fresh start,' and the efforts to meet the learning and social needs of all pupils contribute to the very high achievement. Despite attainment on entry being well below average and the addition of later entry pupils with learning, behavioural and emotional difficulties, the overall standards at the end of Year 6 are average.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- overall achievement is very high;
- the leadership by the head and deputy headteacher is a significant force in this improving and developing school;
- the school's efforts to include all and meet the learning, social and emotional needs of all pupils are very good and the school cares for its pupils very well;
- the provision for pupils' personal development is very good and, as a result, pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well;
- the planning in the Nursery and Reception classes is not good enough to ensure that all activities and tasks are worthwhile learning experiences;
- the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6;
- links with parents and the community are very good and parents value the school very highly;
- the resources in the Nursery and the Reception classes are not sufficient to provide all the experiences required by the latest national guidance for this stage of learning.

The improvement since the previous inspection is very good. All the issues for improvement have been addressed. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science, and significantly so in information and communication technology (ICT). The school analyses its weaknesses well and takes appropriate action to improve these. The role of subject leaders has improved and they take an active part in school development and assessment. Improved strategies for monitoring and supporting attendance have raised levels to satisfactory. The provision for special educational needs is now good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| English | C | D | E | D |
| mathematics | B | D | D | C |
| science | A | C | D | C |

*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.*

Overall achievement is very good. It is good in the Nursery and Reception classes and very good in Years 1 to 6. Pupils enter the Nursery with overall prior attainment well below average. Standards in the goals that the children are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year are average in personal, social and emotional development, and below average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development, and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Inspection findings are that standards at the end of Year 2 are now average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the national tests in Year 2 at the end of 2003 standards were below

average in reading, writing, and mathematics but have improved since 2002. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in all three subjects but the band in which the school is placed for free school meals comparison does not fairly reflect the levels of social and economic deprivation in the school. Standards at the end of Year 6 are now average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in the national tests in Year 6 at the end of 2003 were well below average in English, and below average in mathematics and science. When compared with schools with similar prior attainment at the end of Year 2 standards were below average in English, and average in mathematics and science. Pupil mobility affected this year group and this means that the overall results when compared with attainment at the end of Year 2 do not reflect the progress that the pupils who were present throughout the school undoubtedly make. **Pupils' personal development is very good**; they have very good attitudes to school and behave very well. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is good in Years 1 to 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Although most lessons in the Nursery and Reception classes were at least satisfactory, with those in the Nursery being good, teaching and learning overall are graded unsatisfactory because the planning is not good enough to ensure that all activities and tasks are worthwhile learning experiences that aim to take full advantage of pupils' potential. However, teachers are caring and work hard for the benefit of the children in their care. In Years 1 to 6, teachers also work hard and have high expectations of pupils. The school's arrangements for grouping pupils are successful in providing well for all pupils. The overall quality of the curriculum is good. The resources in the Nursery and Reception classes are not sufficient to provide all the experiences required by the latest national guidance for this stage of learning. Care and support for pupils and the links with parents and the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good and governors fulfil all their legal responsibilities. The very good leadership of the head and deputy head teacher is guiding the school through significant change. The school reviews itself well and the actions taken lead to improvements in achievement and standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think very highly of the school and appreciate what it does for their children. Parents feel comfortable in approaching the school with concerns. Pupils enjoy school. They speak with enthusiasm about their work and, particularly, the visits that they make to support their learning. They say that the school is a happy place and they feel safe and secure.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- improve the provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes).

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall achievement is **very good** and all groups of pupils in Years 1 to 6 make considerable gains in their learning, attainment and personal development. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well but further achievement is limited by the shortcomings in planning and resources. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good overall because of the school's very good commitment to the care and concern for all.
- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well in Years 1 to 6 because of the well targeted teaching based on the very good tracking of pupils' learning.
- Standards are average at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science despite well below average prior attainment on entry.
- The school works very hard to raise standards against a background of low expectations, aspirations and self-esteem.
- Although good, achievement is limited in the Nursery and Reception classes because of shortcomings in planning and weaknesses in resources.

Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 15.3 (12.8) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 13.9 (12.1) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 15.6 (11.2) | 16.3 (16.5) |

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

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 25.1 (26.0) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 26.0 (26.3) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 28.0 (29.1) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Achievement is very good overall. On entry to the school the overall level of prior attainment is well below average, with particularly low attainment in communication, language and literacy skills. The school accepts a significant number of 'fresh start' pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Despite this the school exceeded its targets for English and mathematics in 2003 for the percentage of pupils expected to reach the average Level 4.
2. In Years 1 to 6, all groups of pupils make very good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding because of the dedication and teamwork of all concerned in the school. The

school assesses pupils' learning well and tracks this learning very systematically through a very careful focus on each pupil. This enables work to be skilfully targeted on each pupil's needs, providing appropriate challenge for higher-attaining pupils and support for those with special educational needs or who are lower-attainers. The performance of gifted and talented pupils, ethnic minority pupils, Travellers and those learning English as an additional language is also carefully monitored. All these groups achieve in line with their peers and there are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. The broad and enriched curriculum supports this very high achievement because pupils gain a wide breadth of knowledge and a keen interest in learning. The developing links between subjects enable pupils to apply learning in different contexts, particularly in ICT. Constant re-evaluation of all aspects of work in the school enables it to focus on initiatives that result in clear improvements in standards, such as the recent improvements in writing.

3. Standards in the goals that children are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year are average in personal, social and emotional development and below average in communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. Children achieve well because of the caring and hard working team of adults. Weaknesses in resources and shortcomings in planning for clear development of knowledge, skills and understanding in all aspects of learning and activities provided, limits further attainment and achievement, particularly in outdoor work and for older and higher-attaining children.
4. Standards at the end of Year 2 are now average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the national tests in Year 2 at the end of 2003, standards were below average in reading, writing, and mathematics but have improved since 2002. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in all three subjects but the band in which the school is placed for free school meals comparison does not fairly reflect the levels of social and economic deprivation in the school. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher than nationally expected Level 3 was average in all three subjects.
5. Standards at the end of Year 6 are now average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in the national tests in Year 6 at the end of 2003 were well below average in English, and below average in mathematics and science, but the school was very close to reaching the next level in all three subjects. The school's identification of the need to focus more clearly on writing skills has helped to raise standards. When compared with schools with similar prior attainment at the end of Year 2, standards were below average in English, and average in mathematics and science. Pupil mobility affected this year group and a significant number of average and higher-attaining pupils left before Year 6. Many incoming pupils were lower-attainers or had recognised learning difficulties and this means that the overall results do not reflect the progress that the pupils who are present throughout the school undoubtedly make. The overall trend of improvement based on the last five years is above average and the school has received the School Achievement Award for three successive years for its improvements in standards.
6. Standards in ICT are similar to those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils use well these skills, and those of literacy and numeracy in other subjects, and this contributes to the standards attained and to the very good achievement.
7. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with the highest level of special educational need, attain similar standards to other pupils relative to their special needs. They achieve very well because of the school's very high commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils and the teaching and support that these pupils receive.
8. The school works very hard to raise standards against a background of low expectations, aspirations and self-esteem. Achievement is considerably enhanced by the efforts that the school makes to counteract these. Taking part and winning local competitions such as the local authority 'e-mail' challenge, a local technology challenge for a 'stayed bridge' design and

many other real life experiences contribute to achievement and personal development. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm and excitement when their poems were published in a real book, and it was a significant achievement for a pupil with learning difficulties to read his at a local celebration.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Relationships in the school are **excellent**. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **very good**. The cultural development of pupils is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships throughout the school are excellent.
- Pupils respond extremely well to the very high expectations set for them.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school life and this makes a very positive contribution to their learning.
- Pupils are courteous and very well behaved in classrooms and around the school.
- Pupils' personal development is very good.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social development is very good; cultural development good.
- Attendance rates are improving and are now satisfactory.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.4 | School data | 1.1 |
| National data | 5.4 | National data | 0.4 |

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

9. Attendance and punctuality are now satisfactory. The below average levels of attendance in 2002/3, shown in the above table, have been carefully monitored. The resulting action taken by the school is proving very effective and attendance rates are rising, but are not helped by the number of holidays taken in school time. The school has been awarded certificates for raising attendance levels.
10. Pupils' attitudes to school life are very good and relationships excellent. They like coming to school and, as a result of the very high expectations set for them, they develop interest in their work and are very keen to learn. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers in lessons and show courtesy and respect. They settle quickly to work, readily accepting the challenges set for them. They work hard on their own and in pairs or larger groups. The school has successfully created a calm and productive atmosphere that is very encouraging to high quality learning. Building confidence and self-esteem is a very high priority in the school and in this it is highly successful. All pupils with special educational needs are enthusiastic about school. Their confidence and self-esteem is similar to other pupils. This is because they know that their contribution is valued by all. Most children achieve the nationally expected early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception year.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 78 | 4 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 115 | 0 | 0 |

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

11. Pupils are very well behaved. Exclusions are rarely used by the school and only for severe incidents. There is a strong commitment to value for all and the school accepts a significant number of pupils on a 'fresh start' basis who have been excluded from other schools. The school has a much larger than average percentage of pupils with recognised behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Reintegration programmes are planned to meet the needs of any pupils with specific difficulties. The school uses a very effective 'care slot' system, where all staff are informed of the needs of any pupils with specific behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, and parents expressed appreciation of this. All staff are supportive and are clearly committed to helping pupils to be fully included in the life of the school. The behaviour policy is extremely effective with a clear system of rewards and sanctions. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with immediately, and records and action taken are carefully documented. When interviewed, members of the school council were very clear in their understanding about bullying, for example, and about sanctions and procedures for notifying adults and agree that it does not happen often.

12. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Provision for cultural development is good and has improved since the previous inspection. All pupils are given opportunities to reflect on relationships and the joys of friendships with each other and with God. Pupils learn about other faiths and traditions in assemblies and in lessons. In a music lesson, pupils in Year 2 reflected on moods associated with the music they heard. In Year 5, pupils showed pleasure and expressed their feelings very well as they held and studied fruits from around the world.

13. Social and moral development are promoted very well throughout the curriculum. Pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Older pupils show a very good sense of personal responsibility and they are very good ambassadors for their school. Pupils work very well together and are very supportive of each other. The cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils learn with interest in their religious education lessons about the traditions and beliefs of Jews and Hindus. A visit from an African Theatre Company helps pupils to learn of the African culture. The school is currently introducing some exciting new ideas for developing pupils' cultural awareness by teaching through cross-curricular themes. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 make good gains in new learning when they study the production of food in the world, particularly in Africa. They learn how some African people are poor and undernourished but have to export food to the western world.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The curriculum is good and this, combined with the good quality of teaching and learning and the excellent commitment to providing for all individuals and groups of pupils, contributes well to the very good achievement. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory except in the Nursery and Reception classes. Care and guidance for pupils and the links with parents and the community are very good and support achievement very well.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. It is good in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 to 6, and unsatisfactory in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and very good classroom management skills; they build excellent relationships with pupils and care and concern for the individual permeates all that they do.
- The pace, challenge and match of tasks to pupils' needs is good in Years 1 to 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6, and pupils' confidence and self-esteem is fostered very well.
- Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are taught well.
- Some activities in the Reception class are over-directed and work is undemanding.
- In the Reception class there are too few meaningful interactions with children working on self-directed tasks.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 2 (6.7%) | 4 (13.3%) | 16 (53.3%) | 6 (20%) | 2 (6.7%) | 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.

14. Although the majority of lessons in the Nursery and Reception classes were at least satisfactory, with those in the Nursery being good, teaching and learning overall were graded unsatisfactory because the overall planning is not good enough to ensure that all activities and tasks are worthwhile learning experiences that take full advantage of children's potential and that aim to take full advantage of children's potential. Teachers and other adults are caring and work very hard for the benefit of the children. They develop children's social skills very well. In the two unsatisfactory lessons, work was dull and undemanding, children waited a long time for a turn and the levels of pace and interest were not good enough to stimulate children's efforts and learning. There were many missed opportunities to develop listening and writing skills. Some activities in the Reception class are over-directed by the teacher, giving too few opportunities for children to use their own ideas or initiative and some have too little support or adult intervention to ensure that learning is moved forward, for example through challenging questions. In the best lessons, in the Nursery, adults are quick to pick up on children's self-initiated activities and skilfully question the children to challenge them and move their learning forward.
15. In Years 1 to 6, all teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and very good classroom management skills. They build excellent relationships with pupils and care and concern for the individual permeates all that they do, contributing very well to the very high achievement. Many pupils with recognised behavioural, social and emotional problems are integrated so well that they are not noticeable in class. Lessons are effectively planned to

promote good learning. The challenge and match of tasks to pupils' needs is good in Years 1 to 2. It is very good in Years 3 to 6, where particularly challenging teaching was seen in groups and classes for older pupils, and the use of cross-curricular skills of research, mathematics and ICT is more highly developed. In the best lessons, teachers use penetrating questions to extend pupils' learning. The school is beginning to develop an approach to lessons where learning in several subjects is linked. At present, this is more effective in the classes for older pupils. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are taught well, and the effect of this good teaching is shown in the improving standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers share the aims of the lessons with pupils and review learning well at the end. This helps pupils to know what they need to do next. Marking often reinforces this self-knowledge well. It gives pupils guidance and celebrates effort, but sometimes teachers' writing is not a good model for pupils to copy. Homework makes a satisfactory contribution to learning.

16. In some lessons there is a tendency for some teachers to over-lead pupils, and this limits learning potential. In science, pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan their own investigations. When given opportunities for independence, learning is very good. In Year 6, pupils talked with excitement about the challenges of researching in groups through the Internet, CD-ROM and books and presenting their work to others through multi-media presentations. Learning, achievement and self-esteem are particularly well developed through this approach. In a particularly imaginative and challenging lesson, a reading task required pupils to infer and deduce, from a booklet outlining an African literacy lesson. In a history lesson in Year 2, pupils were intrigued by photographs of holidays in the past, and the teacher encouraged 'looking for historical clues' to help sequence these. Teachers provide work that is well suited to pupils' prior attainment and they usually make good use of classroom support assistants, particularly in work with lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. However in some lessons assistants were not used fully in whole class sessions to support or to record attainment or, in the Reception class, to create smaller teaching groups.
17. Teachers plan well for pupils with special educational needs with tasks matched to prior learning and closely linked to individual education plans. The teachers, and the learning support assistants, who assess learning to help the teacher plan for subsequent lessons, provide very good help for these pupils. The pupils are included fully in all aspects of the lessons, for example in whole class questioning by teachers. Pupils learning English as an additional language are well integrated into lessons and their needs are well met at all times.
18. Assessment procedures are used well in Years 1 to 6 to target teaching and learning and to track the progress of individuals and groups. Assessment supports the school's setting arrangements and identifies where intervention is needed. Assessment books are shared with parents. In the Nursery and Reception classes the school is using a good range of formal assessments and some day-to-day progress is carefully noted. In the Reception class there are too few adult interactions with children working on self-directed tasks to note progress. Tasks and activities are not always clearly based on tracking of attainment and needs in all areas of learning.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is **good**. Accommodation is **satisfactory**. Resources to support the curriculum are **satisfactory**. For children in the Nursery and Reception classes, the curriculum, the accommodation and the resources are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- All groups of pupils have very good access to the curriculum provided and the school has a very high level of commitment to providing as well as possible for all individuals and groups.

- Provision for ICT has improved well since the previous inspection.
- The school provides a good range of worthwhile activities outside the school day.
- The accommodation, resources and the curriculum offered to pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

19. The curriculum overall is good and is generally broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements, but there are shortcomings in the Nursery and Reception classes. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when weaknesses were identified in the provision for ICT, special educational needs and the limited range of extra-curricular activities.
20. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is good. The decision of the school to include many cross-curricular links in planning lessons is becoming increasingly successful and is making good use of time. Many good examples were seen during the period of the inspection when the theme of 'food' was the focus of study. This strategy makes the curriculum meaningful for pupils and is in line with the spirit of the latest national primary document. The decision for 'setting' throughout the school enables pupils to be taught in groups where their abilities are well matched with other pupils. This strategy is contributing to the raising of standards and both parents and children have shown satisfaction with this system for teaching and learning.
21. The curriculum for the Nursery and Reception classes is unsatisfactory. There is no planning for working outside in either class, and the outdoor area is under-used by the Nursery class and is available only in the afternoon for the Reception class. Although the school is beginning to plan in line with the latest national guidance, it is not yet fully meeting requirements.
22. Provision for the curriculum to be enriched beyond the school day is good, with activities organised by teaching staff, parents and outside specialist helpers. The events cover a good range of sporting, musical and leisure themes. The uptake by pupils is good. The school is rightly proud of the achievements of its pupils in sporting and artistic events held beyond the school day.
23. The school identifies at an early stage those pupils who may have special educational needs and makes good provision for them. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are structured very well, and help teachers and learning support assistants to provide good help for these pupils.
24. The school places great emphasis on the personal, social and health education of its pupils. The inclusion of this in many subjects results in pupils developing very good attitudes to each other and showing both respect and courtesy to their teachers and their classmates. It also results in pupils behaving responsibly and showing very positive feelings to school life and to society. The school gives very good guidance to pupils on sex and relationships education and the dangers associated with the misuse of drugs.
25. The school prepares pupils effectively for the next stage of education and there are good links with both local secondary schools. Pupils in Year 6 work on transition themes of study. Pupils are excited by the work they do and show a real enthusiasm and interest in it. Visiting teachers from the secondary schools give lessons for the pupils and, by explaining procedures and answering questions, ensure the transfer is smooth and effective for the pupils.
26. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and the school is very clean and well maintained. Classrooms for the youngest pupils in Years 1 to 6 are adequate in size, generally bright and enhanced by a range of good quality displays that celebrate much of the good quality work. The school has identified classroom size as an issue for older pupils, as is the size of the

teaching areas for children in the reception and nursery classes, which limit the range of available activities and this concern is on the school's agenda for discussion, with the view to making improvements. Staffing levels are appropriate and all have appropriate experience and qualifications. The resources to support pupils' learning are satisfactory overall. Weaknesses in resources in the Nursery and Reception classes inhibit the full desirable curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Pupils receive **very good** support, guidance and advice. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a safe and secure environment for learning.
- Staff know their pupils very well and promote academic and personal development successfully.
- Very good procedures are in place for induction into the Nursery.
- Pupils have the opportunity to express their views through both the class and school councils.

Commentary

27. The school provides a safe and caring environment. Pupils are supervised well around the school by staff and lunchtime supervisors. Established routines ensure their welfare and safety. Potential hazards are identified through whole-school risk assessment and promptly resolved. The school also accommodates before- and after-school care clubs, ensuring that pupils have a safe and productive learning environment until their parents collect them at the end of the day. Arrangements for child protection are very good and meet the requirements of the local Area Child Protection Committee. All staff have received training, including teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors.
28. Staff know the pupils very well and have a high level of concern for their well-being. Health professionals and the police support personal, social and health education. Pupils who are in need of additional support are identified swiftly. The 'care slot' provides additional support from all staff for the most vulnerable pupils. Frequent liaison is established between home and school. The school reviews very carefully the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to these discussions. Individual education plans highlight key areas for improvement for pupils, with an appropriate number of concise targets with clear criteria by which to measure success. The requirements of the statement of special educational need for the pupils with the highest level of special educational needs are fully met. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 negotiate their targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy with their class teachers, to enable them to assess their progress and identify what they must do to improve their work.
29. Very good induction procedures in the Nursery help the children to settle quickly into school life. Visits and meetings are arranged so that the children and their parents can meet the teaching staff and become familiar with the school environment. Home visits are arranged so that the staff can assess the needs of each individual child.
30. The class and school councils meet regularly to discuss issues and ideas of interest to pupils. They value the improvements to the school accommodation. Their suggestions have been incorporated into the school's procedures for behaviour management and they have raised funds to provide litterbins and wet play equipment. They know that their views are valued and often acted on.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains **very good** links with parents. Links with the community and other schools are **very good**. These strengths have a positive effect on pupils' achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive very good quality information about the school and their children's progress.
- Parents support the school and are frequently consulted before changes are made.
- Very good links with the community enrich the curriculum and contribute to the pupils' personal development.
- There are very good links with local secondary schools.

Commentary

31. The quality of information for parents is very good. The prospectus, the governing body's annual report, regular newsletters and the school website provide all the key information and news that is required. Parents receive very good information about the curriculum and what their children will study each year. For example, workshops have been held to explain the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The pupils' progress reports are good. They now contain all the required information, targets to inform parents how their children can improve their work and an acknowledgement slip for parents' comments.
32. The school ensures that parents are kept well informed and are invited to discussions as soon as possible when the school identifies special educational needs. Parents are also invited to meetings when the individual education plans and statements are reviewed so that they know what progress has been made, discuss what the next targets are and how they may help pupils at home. To foster this, parents have their own copy of the individual education plans. Parents appreciate the support provided by the school.
33. The school actively seeks and listens to parents' views. For example, parents were consulted about the school's healthy eating policy. Parents are comfortable approaching the school if they have any concerns or complaints, and hold the school in high regard. They provide voluntary help in classrooms and on educational visits, and the parents' association raises a considerable amount of additional funds. Many parents have continued their involvement with the school by becoming teaching assistants. Parents support the school's homework policy, and many have attended Family Learning Courses run by the local college on the school premises, covering ICT, literacy and numeracy. These courses have the potential to help parents to assist their children with their learning and the school has evidence to show that they are effective in this.
34. The school's strong links with the church and local community make a very good contribution to pupils' achievement. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. The Dr Barnardo's charity runs the 'Keep Safe' course for Year 6 pupils and the headteacher actively pursues links with the local community, at the local community centre for example. Tree planting on the former mining slag heaps supports the pupils' education and enhances the local environment. Links are also in place with the Family Centre and local businesses. Educational visits and outside visitors also support the pupils' academic and personal development.
35. Strong links with the two local secondary schools ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary education. Joint curriculum projects in subjects such as ICT and science are arranged. The Catholic secondary school also hosts a retreat for Year 6 pupils. There are frequent staff meetings prior to transition and 'taster' days and lessons are also arranged. Further links are established with the local Beacon School and a secondary school where the pupils work together on writing projects and the performing arts.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is good. All legal responsibilities are met. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The very high aspirations, commitment and very hard work of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher set very good examples for all staff and pupils to follow. The school's excellent commitment to care and provision for all enables all pupils to achieve very well. Management is good. The actions taken are effective in helping the school to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vision, very high aspirations and dedication of the headteacher, with the very strong support of the deputy headteacher, is driving standards forward.
- The school's excellent commitment to care and provision for all enables all pupils to achieve very well.
- Staff set very good examples and motivate pupils very well.
- The thorough analysis of national and other tests, combined with a detailed self-evaluation and review of most aspects of school life and performance, is raising achievement and standards.
- The planned provision for subject leaders to check the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects is yet to be implemented.
- Good strategic planning is reflected in financial management that helps the school to achieve educational priorities.

Particular aids or barriers to raising achievement.

- The teamwork of the whole staff and the school's efforts to providing for the learning and social needs of every pupil supports achievement very well.
- There is a well above average number of pupils with behavioural, social and emotional problems.
- The aspirations of a significant number of parents are low and hinder achievement.
- Many pupils have a limited experience of using language and a limited vocabulary on entry to school, and this hinders progress.

Commentary

36. The headteacher has an impressive vision and determination to ensure that every single pupil has the opportunity to achieve as well as possible. With the very strong support of the deputy headteacher she leads by example and is creating a team with similar high aspirations. The emphasis on personal and social education and the on-going refinement of teaching strategies has led to higher standards and very good achievement by all pupils.
37. All staff set a very good example for pupils, especially in promoting excellent relationships and a determination to do their best. These relationships make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development and to their very good achievement. The school's policies, planning and teaching indicate a genuine concern to provide for all pupils. This is reflected in the classrooms by the teachers, particularly those who teach the oldest pupils in Years 5 and 6, whose good planning incorporates interesting and challenging tasks, matched very closely to the prior learning of all groups. The subject leaders have developed an increasingly effective role since the previous inspection in leading and managing their subject, but most have not yet had the intended opportunity to check the quality of teaching and learning and to take action as a result of this. The school has recognised this and has plans to introduce this very shortly following appropriate training.
38. The main points for action from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. The school has remedied the weaknesses, particularly in ICT, with a consequent improvement in the standards attained by all pupils. Improved assessment procedures have also been a significant factor in raising standards in English, mathematics and science and in improving the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

39. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and realistic. It is very closely linked to the standards attained. The school analyses the results of national, optional and school devised tests and uses the information gained very well to improve standards. The school also checks carefully on the learning of all pupils to see whether they are making the progress predicted on the basis of assessments. This information enables the school to identify areas for the school improvement plan very effectively and to focus intervention programmes for pupils where necessary. The strategies to improve standards in writing exemplify this. The school's self-evaluation is also closely linked to a detailed review of the performance of teachers and learning support assistants. It results in target setting that improves pupils' performance by focusing on improving teaching and learning through planned professional development. Professional development for staff, for example in ICT, is effective in raising attainment in this subject, as well as in making good use of ICT to extend learning opportunities in other subjects. The school manages well the recruitment, retention and deployment of staff.
40. The governing body fulfils its role well by the way it both challenges and supports the school because it has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. It fulfils all its legal responsibilities. This was clearly shown when the governors made a succinct, but effective, computerised presentation to members of the inspection team. The chair of the governing body comes into the school most days and has a good understanding of the challenges the school faces and the school's success in meeting these challenges. The link governors for literacy, numeracy, physical education, religious education and special educational needs also ensure that the full governing body is kept well informed about these aspects of the school. This knowledge of the school enables the governing body to make an effective contribution to the school improvement plan. When taking decisions, close attention is paid to 'best value' principles. The school budget is lower than the national average for schools of this type. This means that, when spending, attainment on entry and the achievement of pupils are considered, the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 521,253 |
| Total expenditure | 524,061 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,736 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 15,508 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 11,592 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. Children enter the Nursery with overall prior attainment that is well below average, although all levels are represented. Skills in communication, language and literacy are particularly low. Achievement in this stage is good in the Nursery and satisfactory in the Reception class, where much of the learning is not significantly different from the Nursery. The quality of teaching and learning overall in the Foundation Stage is judged to be unsatisfactory overall, although two lessons in the Nursery were good and three in the Reception class were satisfactory. This is because of the shortcomings in the planning for each activity or task that does not ensure that the learning is developed systematically as children move through the two classes, or that learning is developed in line with day-to-day assessments of children's progress and needs. There is too little difference in the learning in, for example, the role-play area or the work with small world equipment, for children of different ages or prior attainment. Some activities in the Reception class are over-directed by the teacher, which gives too few opportunities for children to use their own ideas or initiative learning and some have too little support or adult intervention to ensure that learning is moved forward through challenging questions for example. There is no planning for specific learning through work outside in either class. The outdoor area is under-used by the Nursery class and only available in the afternoon for the Reception class. In the Reception class, lessons are sometimes dull and the levels of pace and interest are not high enough to fully stimulate children's learning well enough. Although staff record children's attainment, day-to-day assessments are not used to plan detailed learning experiences. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses play a valuable part, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and language development. In the Reception class they are not always used to the full, for example to create smaller groups instead of whole class teaching groups or to record learning when the whole class is taught directly by the teacher.
42. All adults work hard and have very good relationships with children. They are caring and supportive and make every effort to provide for children's needs. Teaching areas are small and the cramped conditions limit the opportunities for the full range of desired activities. Resources are dated and worn and the range is not sufficient to allow teachers to provide the full requirements of the latest national guidance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This aspect of learning is part of all that takes place in both classes.
- Adults all have very high expectations of behaviour and participation.
- Sometimes work in the Reception class is too directed by the teacher for children to pursue their own line of enquiry or ideas.

Commentary

43. Children in both classes respond very well to adults, who all have very high expectations of behaviour and participation. They settle well into the routines of the Nursery. By the end of the Reception year children take turns, co-operate well and speak freely in discussions. They plan their own activity when given the opportunity but sometimes work in the Reception class is too directed by the teacher for children to pursue their own line of enquiry or ideas. In the Nursery, children select and tidy away their own equipment. In a good lesson in the Nursery a small group of children planned and created a complex system with apparatus in

the sand. Nursery staff are very quick to include a child who is still unsure about choosing an activity. Children with special educational needs are very well integrated into the classes and are always part of groups and games. There are some opportunities for children to learn about other cultures, for instance when sharing the book *One Child, One Seed*, a story about another way of life and culture. Nursery children choose the prayer for the day and say this reverently. In both classes there is good sharing and celebration of children's achievements. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and most children in the Reception class will meet the nationally required targets for this area of learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery, this aspect of learning permeates every activity.
- Literacy teaching in the Reception class is undemanding and many activities do not have enough planning or adult interaction to move learning forward.
- There are many missed opportunities in the Reception class for children to write.

Commentary

44. In the Nursery this aspect of learning permeates every activity and the adults miss no opportunity to extend children's vocabulary. Children listen to stories and extend their skills in discussion. Adult interaction in activities challenges children with new words and improves sentence structure. When describing their work in the sand one boy said, "We have created a new adventure" (meaning 'invention') and this was praised and valued. Nursery children who were 'shopping' were learning the names of fruits. The literacy session in the Reception class did not provide enough learning. The whole class session was undemanding and many of the activities that followed did not have enough planning or adult interaction to move learning forward. There were many missed opportunities for children to write or to listen to tapes for example, or to extend skills by interacting with children in the role-play area. The small group session with a teaching assistant, when a few children 'read' a simple guided reading book, skilfully supported the children in learning the parts of a book and in using the pictures to 'tell' the story and to predict. Children are beginning to know the sounds of some letters at the beginning of words. There is a satisfactory collection of good quality books. Teaching and learning is good in the Nursery and unsatisfactory in the Reception class. By the end of the Reception class, just over a quarter of the children are likely to reach the nationally expected learning goals in this area.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities in the Nursery for children to develop mathematical understanding.
- Satisfactory learning takes place in the Reception class when the teacher works with groups of children.
- Mathematical activities that children choose for themselves are not well planned enough to ensure that learning is increased from that taking place in the Nursery.

Commentary

45. Children in the Nursery are beginning to count to ten and to understand 'how many?'. They sing number rhymes and count how many children are left when going home. Children

develop a good understanding of capacity and volume when working with sand and water. A display about the book *Handa's Surprise* emphasises the language of position. Children play a board game and develop number recognition and counting skills through this. However, children in the Reception class also undertook the same activity showing little development in learning between the two classes. In the Reception class, the teacher worked successfully with groups of children in weighing fruit, for example using a balance to compare the weight of a banana with a tangerine. However, children did not do this for themselves but watched and answered questions while the teacher did it. Satisfactory learning took place in a whole class session when children were challenged to count forwards and backwards in twos to ten, and the majority achieved this. There was a good demonstration of number formation but no children knew 'one less than' and there was a missed opportunity to explain this. Reception children also work with sand and water but there is little difference in their activity from that of Nursery children, and activities are not planned to be more challenging or to have different learning outcomes. Teaching and learning is good in the Nursery and satisfactory in the Reception class. By the end of the Reception class just over a quarter of the children are likely to reach the nationally expected learning goals in this area.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults do not interact enough in the Reception class to challenge or excite pupils into further understanding or into gaining a higher levels of skills and knowledge.
- There are too many missed opportunities for children to investigate for themselves and to be challenged.
- The outdoor area is significantly under-used to develop knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Equipment for children to explore and to gain an understanding of the world around them is unsatisfactory.
- A good lesson in the Nursery enabled children to develop skills of investigation and discussion.

Commentary

46. In a good lesson in the Nursery, children learned much about fruit when they investigated and discussed what it feels and looks like. Children were fascinated when the teacher cut open fruits that they had not seen before. They enjoyed tasting different fruits despite some reluctance and discussed why they liked or disliked it. They wrote their names on smiley or non-smiley faces to show this, and the teacher successfully developed skills of observation and speaking and listening skills through the activity. When investigating in the sand and water children develop technical skills with an 'hydraulic system' and create complex systems for moving sand between pieces of apparatus. However, when Reception children use the same equipment, planning is not good enough to ensure that work is more challenging or that children's learning moves forward. Adults do not interact enough at this stage to challenge or excite pupils into further understanding or into gaining a higher levels of skills and knowledge. Children in the Reception class also learned about fruit but there were missed opportunities to explore fruit under microscopes or magnifiers for example, or to look at maps to see where the fruits grow. Visits to local places of interest support learning in this area well. In both classes children work with a very limited range of 'small world' equipment, such as a doll's house. Children use computers to 'paint' and to complete simple tasks. There is no construction equipment beyond a limited range of small construction and children do not have access to a range of tools for working with wood, for example. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall as there are too many missed opportunities for children to investigate for themselves and to be challenged. The outdoor area is significantly under-used to develop knowledge and understanding of the world, although there are opportunities for children to learn about road safety from the new markings on the playground. There is no

detailed planning in either class for outside activities. Equipment for children to explore and to gain an understanding of the world around them is unsatisfactory. The quality and range of this equipment and the lack of interesting experiences are too limited for children to meet the full range of early learning goals for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The limited range of equipment is old and worn and some has little potential for helping children to learn.
- Nursery staff are aware of improvements in physical development but day-to-day assessment is not used to design activities to take learning forward.
- There is very little difference between the learning in the Nursery class and that in Reception or in the activities provided.
- Children use small equipment satisfactorily for their age.

Commentary

47. Children use pencils, pens and scissors in a manner appropriate for their age. They satisfactorily manipulate the computer mouse and join together small pieces of a construction kit. The use of the outdoor area is unplanned and teaching is unsatisfactory. The limited range of equipment is old and worn and has too little potential for pupils to learn. Children use balls and quoits but activities are not well planned to increase skills or learning. For example, children ride bikes and scooters around a track and take turns in a 'rocker'. They enjoy crawling through a plastic tunnel but these activities are not extended as children become older and more agile. The school does not have large blocks, for example, for building structures, or construction kits from which children can make their own wheeled vehicles. Nursery staff are aware of improvements in physical development but day-to-day assessment is not used well enough to design activities to take learning forward. There is very little difference between the activities and learning in the Nursery class and that of Reception children. Because of these weaknesses children do not reach the nationally expected targets in all aspects of this area of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are satisfactory opportunities in both classes for children to paint, draw and create models and collages and good use of colour was demonstrated in the Reception class.
- In the Reception class, the pace of learning is inhibited by insufficient adult interaction to move learning forward, and some undemanding tasks that provide too little stimulation.
- Resources are not good enough to provide a rich curriculum.

Commentary

48. There are satisfactory opportunities in both classes for children to paint, draw and create models and collages. Children mix paint and learn what colours can be made. Good use of colour was demonstrated when children in the Reception class painted in the style of various abstract pictures. These children also used a computer program to paint pictures of holidays. Children showed independence when painting pictures of fruit but there were missed opportunities for children to look carefully at fruit through magnifiers, for example to

make careful observations and discuss these with an adult before painting. The role-play areas in both classes provide opportunities for children to imagine but in the Reception class this is not well enough supported by adults to move learning forward. In the Nursery children listen to music, play instruments and sing. They know a number of simple songs from memory. In the Reception class, the music session was undemanding and the pace of learning was too slow. There are no opportunities for children to create music themselves or for listening to tapes. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in the Nursery but unsatisfactory in the Reception class, where work is not planned well enough to move learning forward or to be stimulating enough. Resources are not good enough to provide a rich curriculum. The outdoor area is under-used and its activities are largely unplanned. Children are likely to attain the nationally expected early learning goals in the artistic aspects of this area of learning but not in the imaginative or musical aspects.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well and this, with the good quality of teaching, enables them to attain standards similar to those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The very positive attitudes and very good behaviour of all pupils contribute very well to the good gains in their learning.
- The school makes good use of its detailed assessment systems in order to guide planning and to set targets for improvement.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good and help to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
- Teachers' handwriting in pupils' books too often fails to provide a good model for pupils to copy.
- There are good opportunities to use English skills in other subjects.

Commentary

49. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with those found nationally and are an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The school's results in Year 6 in national tests compared with national results fluctuate because of the differences between the groups of pupils. The significantly higher proportion of pupils who attain at the higher Level 5 compared with the 2003 National Curriculum tests is a feature of differences in the present year group from the previous year. However, another strong factor that has enabled almost one third of the current Year 6 pupils to attain at the higher Level 5 is the focus on improving attitudes to reading and writing, particularly of boys. The need to improve attitudes resulted from the school's thorough systems of assessment that help staff to check pupils' progress and to identify ways to help pupils improve. The project has also been beneficial in helping pupils in Year 2 to achieve very well. Teachers also use assessment information to set targets for improvement for the school as a whole and for individual pupils. In this way, teachers and pupils are clear about what they need to do in order to improve, and the school identifies areas such as writing, for example, for further focus in order to raise standards. This focus resulted in a dynamic writing project with other local schools that involved meeting and working with authors and poets, who set a very good model for pupils. The project inspired pupils, and the reading and writing opportunities have led to improvements in attainment as well as fostering their enthusiasm.
50. The school provides many interesting opportunities to encourage pupils to listen, speak, read and write. For example, they take part in drama productions, receive visits from theatre groups, poets and authors and write to authors about their books. Pupils are given a wide

range of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. The class and school councils are instrumental in this. Pupils learn to listen very carefully, respond to questions and become aware of the importance of eye contact and body language. In a literacy lesson, pairs of pupils in a Year 1 class described very impressively and sensibly to each other, in sentences, the features of a fruit, without naming the fruit. This reflected teachers' high expectations and the school's consistently strong emphasis on personal and social education.

51. Because teachers generally have good subject knowledge and teach basic skills very well, most pupils in Year 2, including lower attainers, make good use of a range of strategies in reading, such as sounding letters and using pictures. Pupils in Year 6 use similar strategies but also refer to the meaning of text when they meet new or unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 6, most pupils use reference books confidently when completing research and also understand how to use the Internet for research purposes. A feature in the improved standards in reading since the previous inspection is the school's provision of a wider range of texts to interest all pupils. This is coupled with the school's encouragement of pupils to read regularly at home. During literacy lessons, pupils are frequently challenged to write in a range of styles and are encouraged to choose and use words for effect. In Year 6, in a poem entitled 'Some days school is ...' there was the very evocative line '*An open door leading to another world.*'
52. Teaching and learning are good. Occasionally, teaching is very good or excellent. All teachers plan carefully and share lesson aims with pupils. They return to these at the end of lessons to check if they have been achieved. Pupils have clear individual targets for improvement. This is why most pupils have a good understanding of their own learning. It is enhanced by the helpful and very focused comments some teachers, notably in Year 6, provide when they mark pupils' work. However, some teachers' handwriting in pupils' books does not set a good enough example for pupils to follow. Where teaching is excellent, the interest of all pupils was instantly engaged through imaginative teaching strategies. The pace was very brisk and the teacher's expectations of work and behaviour were very high. The tasks were very challenging. For example, a reading task required pupils to infer and deduce, from a booklet outlining an African literacy lesson, what the teacher's intentions were in relation to teaching English, and about the cooking of 'ugali', the apparent theme of the lesson. All pupils were fascinated and engrossed, not least when the teacher encouraged a pupil originally from Africa and for whom English was not his mother tongue to describe how 'ugali' would be eaten. This lesson made a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development as well as to their personal and social education. During lessons, teachers provide work that is well suited to pupils' prior attainment and they make good use of classroom support assistants, particularly in work with lower-attaining pupils and those pupils with special educational needs. In this way pupils are appropriately challenged and this helps groups with all levels of prior attainment to achieve very well. There is good and increasing use of ICT to support learning.
53. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of its strengths and what needs to be done to improve standards, although she has not yet had the planned opportunity to observe teaching.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. The school makes good and increasing use of literacy in other subjects. This helps to extend pupils' literacy skills and deepen their understanding of other subjects. Pupils used their speaking and listening skills well in an ICT lesson in Year 2. In history, pupils in Year 5 write about their village in days gone by and compare education here with that in other countries. Pupils in Year 3 label diagrams when learning about databases and write questions to challenge other pupils. In Year 6, pupils search the Internet for information about the Aztecs and this promotes reading skills well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils is very good as a result of the consistently good teaching in mathematics.
- Standards are similar to those expected nationally, and improving.
- Relationships are very good; teachers set very high expectations for pupils, who behave very well.
- Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of how to teach numeracy.
- There are some very good planned links made between mathematics and other subjects.
- Teachers' marking and target setting for pupils is very good and as a result the pupils know how to improve.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support pupils' learning in mental starter sessions.

Commentary

55. Standards have risen well since the previous inspection. Standards are now average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The school has been very successful in its determined effort to improve standards. The introduction of a system of grouping pupils according to their needs throughout the school provides well for the different levels of prior attainment of the pupils and helps to extend the higher-attainers from an early age. The achievement of all groups of pupils is very good. Teachers constantly challenge pupils to focus and apply themselves throughout lessons. Pupils are very well behaved as a result of the high expectations set for them and the very good relationships that have been established. They enjoy the work they do and are keen to explain their strategies in answering the problems set for them.
56. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the skills necessary to take pupils' learning in mathematics forward in a continuous and progressive way. They provide stimulating mental challenges to introductory sessions for lessons and resources are used effectively in supporting pupils' learning. Teaching assistants give good support in individual and group activities but are not always used to support pupils' learning during these important mental starter sessions. Good mental challenges are seen in Year 1 as pupils count in 5s and 10s. As a result, pupils improve their accuracy in counting skills. Pupils in Year 2 develop counting skills further in counting forwards and backwards in 20s from 0 to 200. A small number of higher-attaining pupils confidently continue counting back from 0 using negative numbers. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 continue to develop their mental skills in lessons. They have now developed a variety of good mental strategies and are keen to explain how they worked out their answers. Challenging pupils to explain their methods is a common feature of many mathematics lessons. Pupils in Year 4 learn well by exchanging strategies and then discussing the easiest method. This results in pupils gaining a greater understanding of the different ways possible in arriving at the correct answer. Pupils in Year 6, in a very good lesson that linked very effectively with a secondary transition topic on chocolate, readily showed their skills in interpreting graphs when using bar charts and pie-charts from computer data. The majority quickly estimate fractions that are equivalent to given percentages. Problem-solving exercises are an integral part of many mathematics lessons at the school and pupils' skills in this are good.
57. Teachers' marking is good. This is particularly so in the Year 6 books. Teachers commend pupils for their accuracy and effort in their mathematical calculations and carefully guide them by giving clear strategies for further development. Where pupils need additional help in setting out work, teachers give clear written examples for them. This helps pupils to learn,

understand and to make progress in developing their skills in mathematics. Target setting is a common feature for all pupils throughout the school. The targets are challenging and pupils are able to track their progress and achievement through each year. This is also helping to raise standards in mathematics.

58. The headteacher is acting as an interim subject leader. She has a good grasp of how the subject needs to be developed and can show how the school's focus on problem-solving is now helping to raise standards. Along with her colleagues in the senior management team, she checks the quality of teaching and learning and this is also contributing to the rising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The school plans its curriculum to include many cross-curricular links. This was seen to very good effect in an excellent Year 5 lesson combining geography, personal and social development and mathematics. The excellent teaching strategies used in the lesson enabled pupils to use their mathematical skills to interpret data. Pupils analysed pie-charts and learnt how to use percentages and fractions in determining the world's production and consumption of food. Mathematics is also used to good effect in other subjects such as science and design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well and attain standards similar to those found nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good gains in their learning and to achieve very well.
- Very good behaviour and very positive attitudes of pupils to science foster learning well.
- The subject is led and managed well and this contributes to the rise in standards.
- Good assessment procedures inform planning.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan their own investigations.
- A systematic programme of lesson observations to help to raise further the quality of teaching and learning is not yet in place, although it is to be implemented shortly.

Commentary

60. Standards in science have improved since the previous inspection. The school has successfully addressed this issue identified in the previous report. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are similar to those expected nationally because only about six pupils in Year 6 are unlikely to attain the nationally expected Level 4, and almost a third are likely to attain the higher Level 5. Similarly most pupils in Year 2 have attained the standards expected nationally, with a small group of about three pupils below this and a similar group of three or four pupils at the higher Level 3. All groups of pupils make good gains in their learning and achieve very well.
61. The quality of teaching is good. This judgement is based on lesson observations, a detailed analysis of pupils' work and displays of work. During the inspection the school's theme for the week was food, so lessons in subjects other than science, for example a literacy lesson with pupils in Year 2, contained elements of science relating to health. These lessons contributed to the overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in science. A science lesson with pupils in Year 6 exemplified the strengths of the teaching. These strengths are the consistently high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, the match of tasks to prior learning, based on good on-going checking of what pupils know and can do, the

brisk pace of the lesson and the effective strategies to engage, interest and motivate all pupils. Teachers include all pupils in questions that challenge their thinking and foster their speaking and listening skills. One pupil explained lucidly and concisely what is meant by the terms 'a blind taste test' and 'market research'. The small group discussions during the lesson were of a very high order and bore testament to the high emphasis the school places on personal and social education. Pupils also have good opportunities to use their writing skills to promote learning in science. The use of information and communication technology is instrumental in motivating pupils as demonstrated when using a digital microscope in an investigation. The good teaching promotes very effectively the enjoyment and interest in the subject by all pupils, who behave very well and are very enthusiastic. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations and so learn to hypothesise and test. All work is marked, but the best marking has more detail about what pupils have achieved and comments that will take learning forward and is a good example for others to follow. This boosts the confidence of pupils and ensures they know what they need to do to improve.

62. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has very high aspirations and is determined to help all pupils achieve as highly as possible. The subject leader checks samples of work, but has not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching to help raise the quality to that of the best, although this is planned to take place shortly. The curriculum is enriched well by educational visits and visitors, such as the visit to *Eureka* and by participating in a Science Week for schools in the area. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection. The analysis of national test results and the on-going assessment of learning are used well to inform planning. The school plans to improve assessment further so that all pupils have targets that they can work towards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen and are now similar to those expected nationally.
- Teaching and learning are good and help all pupils to achieve very well.
- The confidence and very positive attitudes of all pupils help them to achieve very well.
- The subject is led and managed well and this contributes to the higher standards attained by all pupils.
- Use of ICT to promote learning in other subjects is good.
- Planned arrangements are not yet in place for a systematic programme of lesson observations to help to raise the quality of teaching and learning further.

Commentary

63. The school has improved resources significantly since the previous inspection. Staff have been given good training that has enhanced their skills and boosted their confidence. Not only do pupils have many good opportunities to work with computers, but also with items of ICT such as programmable toys, digital cameras, a digital microscope and a multi-media projector. As a result, standards in this subject are now similar to those expected nationally and all groups of pupils make good gains in their learning and achieve very well.
64. On the evidence of lessons seen, displays of work and, importantly, discussions with pupils about what they can do, teaching and learning are judged good. Teachers and learning support assistants are confident when using ICT resources and understand the requirements of the subject. This was shown in a lesson with pupils working with databases and by a learning support assistant working with a group of pupils from a Year 2 class on how to enter instructions into a programmable toy to move from one part of a grid to another. Other strengths of the teaching that enable pupils to make good gains in their learning are the high

expectations that teachers have of pupils' work and behaviour, tasks that are matched well to prior learning and the high level of commitment to ensuring all pupils have opportunities to learn effectively. For example, the teacher in a Year 2 class ensured that the learning support assistant knew that a pupil recently admitted to the school had no previous experience of working with a programmable toy. He was given the required careful help and encouragement to enable him to achieve as well as his peers.

65. Pupils in Year 6 talk about ICT lessons and the use of ICT in other subjects with marked enthusiasm. This came through very strongly when a member of the school council described how ideas and suggestions were communicated to the headteacher by e-mail. Other pupils talked animatedly about a computerised presentation in assembly on the theme of 'behaviour' and the use of a digital camera to photograph objects of educational interest in connection with their work in history. This excitement about ICT is strongly indicative of good teaching that provides many opportunities for pupils to achieve well.
66. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has a clear sense of purpose and strong commitment to raising standards with a successful range of strategies to improve teaching and learning. She has not yet had opportunities to check the quality of teaching but the school has plans for this to take place soon.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT to foster learning in other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 used the Internet to research the Aztecs and this led to presentations using the computer to the class. Pupils in Year 2 work with databases in connection with a holiday topic in geography. This fosters learning in mathematics. A digital microscope is used to promote learning in science lessons. Paint programs support learning in art and design. Pupils in Year 6 prepared a computer presentation on 'behaviour' for an assembly and this contributed well to personal and social education. These opportunities put the school in a good position to raise standards further, not only in ICT, but also in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was not inspected because this is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided school. No judgements have been made about **history** and **geography** as only two geography lessons and one history lesson were observed.

Geography and history

68. In a Year 1 **geography** lesson, pupils enjoyed a book about the story of bananas and located both England, and various countries where bananas grow on a world map. They try to decide which fruits grow in hot countries. In Year 5, pupils demonstrated a sound knowledge of the continents of the world and locate the origins of various commodities in an atlas. The lesson made a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Mathematical and ICT skills enabled pupils to have a good understanding of data handling using percentages, spreadsheets and graphs.
69. In Year 2 in a good **history** lesson, pupils compared holidays in the past and the present using a holiday time line. The teacher set penetrating questions and encouraged pupils to look for historic clues. The packs of photographs used really stimulated pupils' interest and new gains in learning took place as pupils' worked on sequencing these.
70. Pupils in Year 6 spoke with great enthusiasm about their work in both **history** and **geography**. They were fascinated by the Aztecs, particularly enjoyed making headdresses, and remembered a great deal about all the topics experienced in history. They remembered the work on the water cycle very well and were particularly impressed by a visit to the waterworks. They also valued the visit to a coal mine. The visits to a nature reserve have

made a significant impression on pupils. They talked with excitement about the research undertaken for both subjects using the Internet, CD-ROM and books and how they worked in groups to prepare computer generated presentations.

71. Subject leaders have a good view of the areas for development in their subjects and school resources are supplemented by those from the museum service and the multicultural centre. Information and communication technology is used well as a vehicle for learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about provision in **art and design, design and technology, music** and **physical education** as these subjects were only sampled.

Art and design

72. Pupils' work shows that they have had planned opportunities to learn, to develop and to use a good range of artistic skills. Work displayed around the school is of a good standard. Pupils in Year 2 combine collage and good quality painting in showing the Great Fire of London. The use of colour tones and tints by pupils is extremely effective. Collage work in Year 5 on the theme of mini-beasts shows that pupils have developed a good sense of imagination in the use of paper, textiles and additional objects and materials. Pupils in Year 6 show a good appreciation of colour, shade, tone and tints in portraying their display of a 'Country Scene'. Some of the pictures of the pike fish are very good. The subject leader checks the quality of teaching and learning in art and design and reported that it has been revitalised following the adoption of a new scheme.

Design and Technology

73. Pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the various processes to be undertaken in making objects in design and technology. During discussions on constructing a model of a moving vehicle, a pupil in Year 2 readily explained the need to think carefully about the type of vehicle one wants to make before you start, then to design your vehicle writing down the materials you are going to use. She further explained about what type of axle to use, and about testing the vehicle on its completion. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 design and make good quality picture frames using twigs, string and papier maché. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, plan, design and make a variety of three-dimensional Aztec and African masks. Following completion of their work, pupils evaluate it, seeking to improve their designs by suggesting alternative ideas. From an examination of the sequence of procedures, pupils now record in plans and in writing and there has been a marked improvement since the previous inspection. The subject leader has identified that storage space is a problem and an area for improvement.

Physical education

74. In the two lessons observed, pupils worked safely with interest and enthusiasm. In Year, 2 pupils develop their movement skills satisfactorily and the majority can sequence movements with increasing co-ordination and control. These pupils are developing a good understanding of evaluating their work with a view to making improvements. The teaching strategy of 'think about' then 'show me' in Year 6 is very effective in focusing pupils on the skills they are practising. Good co-operation between pupils in setting up apparatus shows that very good social skills are being developed. As a result, pupils are able to get on with their work quickly, showing very good skills in balance, shape and movement. These pupils evaluate their own work, as well as that of others, in a mature way that contributes to improvement and progression in learning. A broad and rich curriculum offers a wide range of experiences, including swimming. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, most achieve the minimum swimming distance expected of them. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to enjoy. Participation in competitive sports results in high levels of achievement and success.

Music

75. In **music** the school has addressed successfully the issue identified in the previous inspection. The curriculum is enriched well and the school provides good opportunities for pupils to have instrumental tuition for violin, guitar and woodwind. Additionally, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to learn the descant and treble recorders. There is also a choir for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The choir and the instrumentalists perform for other pupils, for parents and at a local day care centre and hospital. These opportunities raise confidence and self-esteem, making a good contribution to personal development. In the one lesson observed, in Year 2, teaching and learning were good, standards were similar to those expected nationally and all achieved well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

76. Not enough lessons were seen to make judgements on teaching and learning or standards. This aspect of the curriculum pervades every aspect of school life and contributes significantly to pupils' self-esteem and confidence. It is seen as an integral part of the mission and ethos of the school. Moral and social issues are built into subjects. For example, the water topic includes the search for clean water and 'Coming to England' includes work on racial awareness. The school council provides a good foundation for citizenship. The council is made up of two representatives for each class in the school; older pupils represent the very young children in the school on the council. There is an opportunity for pupils to comment on school issues and to raise points from their own agendas. All pupils have very positive attitudes to this work. It gives a valuable experience of citizenship and members take their role very seriously. Sex and relationships education and education about the misuse of drugs are built into the science programme. Pupils in Year 6 spoke with great feeling about what they had learned from the work of the 'Crucial Crew' emergency team.
77. In a good personal, social and health education lesson in Years 4/5 pupils discussed hunger and related this well to malnutrition and famine. They distinguished with maturity between hunger and starvation. They demonstrated an awareness of healthy eating through the 'healthy school' project. In an excellent subsequent lesson in which the food topic and mathematics were linked, pupils developed strong views about how the world's wealth is distributed and expressed their opinions confidently. They showed amazement over the distribution of the world's population.

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 | 2 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 2 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 4 |
| 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 | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 2 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 2 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 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).