

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107157

Headteacher: Mrs P Battams

Lead inspector: Mrs R Harrison

Dates of inspection: 24th - 27th November 2003

Inspection number: 257905

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 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 296 |
| School address: | Barnsley Road Sheffield Lane Top Sheffield |
| Postcode: | S5 0QF |
| Telephone number: | (0114) 2456183 |
| Fax number: | (0114) 2571463 |
| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs Gill Brown |
| Date of previous inspection: | 12 th November 2001 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Patrick's Catholic Primary is large compared with other primary schools. It is situated within the inner city area of Sheffield, where there is a significant level of deprivation and economic circumstances are below the national average. The school has very recently become involved in an Education Action Zone and the local education authority's Primary Attainment Strategy. The school has 296 pupils aged from three to 11 years. Because of the numbers in each year group, the classes are organised in the following way: two single-age classes and one mixed-age class in Years 1 and 2; three mixed-age classes in Years 3 and 4 and three mixed-age classes in Years 5 and 6. Although the majority of pupils (78 per cent) are of White British origin, the school has a diverse ethnic population, with nearly eight per cent being of Black British or Black African origin. The school receives additional funding to support the achievements of these pupils. There are fifteen pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (18 per cent) is average. The school has an above average number of pupils with special educational needs including a number with moderate learning difficulties, speech and language problems and behavioural needs. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. The number of pupils moving in and out of the area is relatively high, with 21 joining and eight leaving at other than the start and end of the last school year. As a result of its success, the school received a Nursery Kitemark in 2003.

Attainment on entry to the nursery class is below that expected for children aged three, with their communication and language skills and mathematical development being particularly low.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 18059 | Mrs R Harrison | Lead inspector | English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology |
| 31729 | Mr B Harrington | Lay inspector | |
| 17543 | Mr R Coupe | Team inspector | Mathematics Geography History |
| 29504 | Mrs S Herring | Team inspector | Foundation Stage Special educational needs Science Music Physical education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory and improving** school. Standards at the end of Year 6, whilst below average, are beginning to pick up because teaching is good. Pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 and in the Foundation Stage. Achievement is satisfactory elsewhere although a small group of boys in Years 1 and 2 is underachieving. Pupils' personal development is good and they form good relationships. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in mathematics and information and communication technology have improved and are average at the end of Year 6.
- Standards are well below average in English and below average in science
- Strategies in dealing with a significant group of boys in Years 1 and 2 are not effective in ensuring that they behave and learn as well as the girls.
- The headteacher and governors have led the school well since the last inspection.
- Most pupils behave well and attendance at school is well above average.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups are integrated very effectively when they start at the school and arrangements for children joining the nursery and those moving to secondary school are good.
- The use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs is inconsistent.
- Opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning and links with the community are good.

The school has made good progress on the key issues from the last inspection and no longer has serious weaknesses. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved at the end of Year 6. Improvement in mathematics at the end of Year 6 has been very good. However, standards at the end of Year 2 have declined and are well below average. Governors now play a more active role within the school. The headteacher has delegated responsibilities well and the monitoring of standards and school performance are satisfactory and improving.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.

Achievement is **satisfactory overall**. Children enter the nursery with below average attainment. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage and make good progress towards the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. However, very few children achieve these goals in their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the start of Year 1. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The girls attain average standards and many achieve well because they are

better behaved and more motivated than the boys. However, in the last three years the proportion of boys has increased to almost double that of girls and a significant proportion of these boys are on the special education needs list. There have been disruptions to staffing for this age group and these factors have had an adverse effect on standards at the end of Year 2, which are well below average for reading, writing, mathematics and science. Teaching strategies are not always effective in holding the attention of these boys. As a consequence, their behaviour and concentration deteriorate and they make unsatisfactory progress. The setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 have been helpful in curbing this underachievement, particularly when the balance of boys to girls has been more equitable. Although still below average nationally and when compared with similar schools, standards have begun to improve at the end of Year 6. In 2003, the school did not meet its targets in English, but fully met and exceeded them in mathematics and science. Attainment is well below average in English and below average in science for pupils in the current Year 6. Standards in mathematics and ICT are in line with those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards of the work sampled in other subjects are broadly in line with expectations.

Pupils enjoy school, form good relationships and generally work hard. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Most have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They are caring towards each other and enjoy taking on responsibilities. Attendance is very good and most pupils arrive at school punctually.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and enables children to make a good start at school. They learn well from a wide range of interesting activities and experiences. Support staff are used to good effect throughout the school. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory overall, but ineffective strategies to deal with the attitudes of a small group of boys result in these pupils' learning being unsatisfactory. In the juniors, teaching and learning are good. Pupils with special educational needs learn effectively because they are supported well. While the assessment procedures are good, assessment is satisfactory overall. In two or three classes, teachers do not make best use of the information available to ensure the work they plan matches pupils' needs, and this is particularly so for those boys in Years 1 and 2 who find it hard to concentrate and behave well.

The curriculum is satisfactory, and enrichment activities are good. The quality of care is very good and the guidance and support given to pupils is good. The partnerships with parents, community, and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership by the headteacher is good and overall management is **satisfactory**. The work of the governing body is good. Governors have worked closely with the headteacher to ensure the serious weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed. They are now taking necessary steps to re-appraise the strategies required to address the underachievement that has been identified amongst the increasing number of boys in Years 1 and 2.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are satisfied with the school. They feel their children are cared for well and make good progress. Pupils are happy at school and feel safe and well looked after.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English and science throughout the school and in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Ensure the underachievement amongst the boys in Years 1 and 2 is addressed.
- Improve teaching in Years 1 and 2 to match that seen elsewhere in the school.
- Ensure better use is made of assessment information to plan work that matches the needs of all pupils in lessons other than English and mathematics and science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall achievement in the school is satisfactory. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good. For pupils in Years 3 to 6 achievement is good and standards are improving. Achievement is often good for girls in Years 1 and 2, but it is unsatisfactory for a minority of boys in Years 1 and 2. As a result standards at the end of Year 2 have declined since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At the end of Year 6, standards in English are well below average and in science they are below average.
- Standards are well below average at the end of Year 2.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in mathematics.
- The overall trend for improvement is below the national trend.

Commentary

The Foundation Stage

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage with below average levels of attainment in all areas of learning, the weakest aspects being in communication language and literacy and in mathematical development. These two areas remain below average at the end of reception, although children make good progress and gain confidence in their learning. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage because teaching is consistently good and activities are interesting. Children's achievements are recorded carefully, and teachers ensure subsequent work matches each child's needs accurately. Most children exceed the early learning goals in their personal development and here achievement is good. Attainment is average in knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development. Because some of the younger children have less full-time provision in the reception class, because they start full-time education in the second term of the academic year, their progress is sometimes restricted.

Key Stage 1

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 14.3 (16.2) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 13.4 (13.4) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 15.0 (16.4) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. However, a group of boys of all abilities, mainly in the two single-age classes, does not engage fully in learning and displays behavioural problems that are not always

successfully managed. Pupils from the diverse minority ethnic groups generally achieve well because they tend to be highly motivated. Despite the fact that most do not join the school at the start of nursery, and many are new to the country, they generally apply themselves enthusiastically and make good progress.

3. In the Year 2 national tests and assessments in 2003, standards were well below the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards were also well below average when compared with similar schools. This shows a decline on the findings in the previous report where standards were in line with the national average. The school has recognised that the decline is largely due to the underachievement of a minority of boys in Years 1 and 2. These boys are capable of better work, but do not apply themselves fully and are not always managed firmly enough. In addition, both the pupils in the current Year 2, and those pupils who were in Year 2 in 2003, had disrupted teaching due to frequent staff illness and a high turnover of temporary staff working in their classes. The boys who are in the mixed-age Years 1 and 2 class are achieving better than their peers in the single-age classes because teaching in this class is consistently good. The achievement of the girls in these classes has not declined, and they make satisfactory progress.

Key Stage 2

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 25.3 (24.2) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 27.2 (24.1) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 27.8 (27.6) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, overall standards in English were still well below the national average and that of similar schools, although improved since the previous inspection. There was significant improvement in mathematics where pupils achieved in line with the national and similar schools' averages. Standards in science also improved and were below the national average, but still well below similar schools. Pupils' weak literacy skills have a bearing on these standards, as a good number of pupils struggle to explain their investigations accurately and their recording skills are insecure. The improvements are largely as a result of the good, and often very good, teaching, especially at the upper end of the school, the very detailed monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress and the provision of additional support where necessary. The setting-by-ability arrangements in Years 3 to 6 are beginning to have a positive impact on raising attainment.
5. At both key stages, overall improvement is below the national trend, but standards are improving in the junior classes, with mathematics and science making the greatest gains in the last two years. This is despite the fact that a higher than expected number of pupils move out of the school during Years 3 to 6 in order to move to areas where they can attend secondary schools of their choice. Where vacancies are created others join the school and thus their schooling is interrupted. The school put into place a number of successful strategies to counteract any emerging underachievement amongst the boys in Years 3 to 6 some time ago that also helped to raise standards. These strategies are being re-considered, as they are not having the same positive impact in Years 1 and 2.

6. Standards in reading are currently below average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' reading skills. Pupils are supported well in guided-reading sessions and there are regular opportunities for them to be heard reading. Pupils' speaking skills are well below average throughout the school. Although teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and views in most classes, such opportunities are missed in one or two classes. Higher-attaining pupils contribute well, but a significant number of the others lack confidence and are hesitant in their knowledge and use of good vocabulary.
7. Standards in writing are well below average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils are hampered by their limited skills in reading and speaking, but the very good teaching at the upper end of the school is challenging and expectations are high. The current Year 6 pupils are set to improve on the results from last year. Expectations are not high enough for some pupils in Year 2. Here, while most girls produce good quality work, a significant minority of the quite capable boys produce little because they have poor attitudes on occasions. Literacy skills are applied satisfactorily across work in other subjects, but teachers do not always insist on accuracy and pupils make basic errors in punctuation, grammar and spelling frequently because their skills are not always secure. Higher-attaining pupils are confident in carrying out independent research using material from books and from the Internet.
8. In mathematics, there has been very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were well below average. The school has worked hard to ensure numeracy skills are developed step by step, and pupils' achievements are monitored very carefully to check they are making good progress. Basic numeracy skills are developed well, and the subject is a priority for improvement, especially with regard to practical tasks and problem solving, which most pupils enjoy doing. Pupils in the current Year 6 are performing at average levels. For lower-attaining pupils, their limited literacy skills and their lack of confidence in using the correct mathematical vocabulary hamper progress in problem solving. Pupils in Year 2 are working at below average standards. As with English, the same factors impact on pupils' progress, which is satisfactory overall.
9. Standards in science are currently well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. The school has placed good emphasis on developing pupils' enquiry skills through some well-planned investigations, where pupils are encouraged to explore and explain what they discover. However, this provision is relatively recent and not all teachers are confident in managing these investigations, especially in the single-age classes in Years 1 and 2 where a few boys demonstrate poor behaviour and lack of attention. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory, although the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 results in some pupils making good progress. Here teachers place good emphasis on developing the pupils' ability to think, reason and test their ideas effectively.
10. Standards in information and communication technology have improved and are now in line with expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. The information and communication technology suite has been of huge benefit in providing pupils with good opportunities to learn and to begin to apply computing skills in other subjects. Access to material on CD-Roms and the Internet is also helping raise standards in literacy as pupils learn to research and select information, for example, in design and technology and art. Whilst pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have daily access to the suite, opportunities are sometimes missed to make greater use of the computers in classrooms for pupils of all ages to practise their information and communication technology skills more often. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.

11. From the work sampled, standards in all other subjects are at least in line with expectations, at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are **good** overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for personal development in the nursery and reception enables children to foster positive attitudes to school when they start.
- Good relationships prevail amongst most pupils throughout the school.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a minority of boys in Years 1 and 2 are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils learn right from wrong and there is mostly a good atmosphere of mutual respect.
- A good range of cultural and multicultural experiences develops pupils' respect for others.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and also new to this country are integrated well into school.

Commentary

12. Pupils are keen to come to school and enjoy learning. They are eager to join in after-school clubs, which are well attended. The welcoming and stimulating atmosphere in the nursery and reception classes promotes good attitudes to learning from the start. The very good relationships between adults and pupils in the junior classes motivate pupils well. When activities in class are stimulating and challenging, pupils participate in lessons with great enthusiasm. However, in the small number of lessons that lack pace and the opportunities for pupils to take an active part, a small minority of boys in Years 1 and 2 become restless, and this adversely affects their attitudes to learning. In these same lessons, their behaviour also deteriorates if not managed firmly and this disrupts teaching and learning for all pupils.
13. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The background music playing in the dining hall provides a calming atmosphere for pupils to enjoy their lunch. Pupils play well together in the playground, and the 'Buddies' in Year 6 help to referee games and talk to and encourage younger pupils. Pupils are happy to take responsibility, as classroom helpers in the younger classes or as prefects in Year 6. The school sets high expectations and deals with occasional instances of unfriendly behaviour quickly and effectively. There were two fixed-term exclusions in the last year. Both boys were excluded during lunchtimes for poor behaviour.

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 | 210 | 1 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 21 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 4 | 0 | 0 |

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

14. The good provision for pupils' spiritual development is firmly based on the school's Catholic traditions, with prayer and periods for reflection an integral part of the school day. The school, however, encompasses fully the significant number of pupils who are not Catholic; for example, a Muslim family shared their celebration of Eid in the school assembly. Similarly, non-Catholics play a full part in school events. This creates a good atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well through participation in 'arts week' and other such events. They extend their cultural experiences, for instance, through watching and then joining in with dancers from Zimbabwe, and through the Indian arts day. Pupils new to the country and from minority ethnic groups are made particularly welcome and good attention is paid to celebrate their cultures.
15. Pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong through specific instructions, stories in assemblies and from the good examples set by adults in the school. Support staff make a good contribution in this respect, encouraging good behaviour through strategies such as 'Good sitting' signs. Pupils are aware of sanctions, such as missing minutes of playtime, if they do not to respond. These sanctions are effective when they are applied consistently, but a few boys in Years 1 and 2 do not take notice of these. Pupils contribute well to the school community through co-operating in choir and school productions. They show a great generosity to those less fortunate than themselves through supporting local charities such as the 'Drop in Centre', and to the wider world community by supporting projects abroad.
16. Attendance is very good and most pupils arrive at school punctually. The school promotes good attendance well. Parents are provided with clear guidance that family holidays taken during the first week of the autumn term and during national testing week are unacceptable.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003 (%)

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data: | 3.8 |
| National data: | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data: | 0.2 |
| National data: | 0.5 |

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Overall teaching is **good** and the curriculum is **satisfactory**. Pupils are cared for and supported **well**. Links with parents and the community are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are **good**. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. The use of assessment information is inconsistent in two or three classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in Years 3 to 6 are good at setting work which matches pupils' abilities.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- The unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of boys in Years 1 and 2 is not always managed well.
- Teachers miss opportunities to use information and communication technology in lessons regularly.
- In some lessons in two or three classes teachers do not always make best use of the available assessment information to match work to pupils' needs.
- Assessment is good in English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

17. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 and as a result learning in these classes is good. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The best teaching is in Years 5 and 6, which has resulted in the good improvement in achievement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the lessons. Learning is most effective when work is specifically adapted to meet the needs of individuals, and the skilled classroom assistants give good support.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 8 (19%) | 18(43%) | 13 (30%) | 3 (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.

18. Where teaching is very good, teachers start by sharing with the class what the lesson is about and end by checking whether pupils feel they have achieved this learning. Explanations and instructions are made very clear, work is challenging and lessons run at a lively pace. Teachers ensure that the work set matches pupils' abilities and, if additional support is required, this is made available. Older pupils and higher-attaining pupils of all ages manage themselves confidently and are prompt to settle to activities when not directly supervised. Lower-attaining pupils are helped sensitively to participate fully. The school's initiative to apply 'Power Learning' techniques is beginning to have the desired positive impact on raising pupils' expectations of themselves. A small number of teachers play music in the background to calm pupils when working on independent tasks, and many find this helps them concentrate better. Relationships between staff and pupils are generally good, especially as pupils progress through the school and become more mature in the way they respond to others. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, like and trust their teachers and support staff and this helps them to tackle work with confidence. As a result of all these strengths, learning is good.
19. In the best lessons seen, activities were interesting and presented in a lively way that captivated pupils' interest and imagination so that they worked enthusiastically throughout. For example, the energetic pace of quick-fire questions and answers in a history lesson in Years 5 and 6 kept pupils fully engaged as they searched for information from old maps of their locality to explain changes. Teachers use what information they have about individual pupils' prior attainment well in these very good lessons.
20. In those lessons judged to be satisfactory, teaching lacks pace and challenge or the activity is sometimes too difficult for all pupils to follow. It is not always made clear to pupils what they are to learn, and opportunities are missed to involve them in discussions or explain what they have learnt. Occasionally, teachers' presentations are too long and a significant number of pupils struggle to listen and sustain concentration. As a result learning is satisfactory. In general, other than in the direct teaching of information and communication technology, a few teachers miss opportunities to use information and communication technology to support teaching and learning.
21. In Years 1 and 2, there is a small group of boys, who have limited attention spans and who behave badly when not managed firmly. These pupils slow down their own progress, and sometimes that of others, because time is lost in managing them. These same pupils become better engaged when doing practical activities, for example, art or investigative tasks. Also, those in the Year 2 class have not yet made up the gaps in their learning as a result of disrupted teaching when they were in Year 1. As a result learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Boys in the mixed-age class for Years 1 and 2 are managed much more firmly because teaching is consistently good in this class, and they are achieving in line with expectations. Girls throughout Years 1 and 2 make at least satisfactory gains in their learning because they are better motivated and keen to do well.
22. Assessment procedures are good and are being used effectively to plan work more accurately in the Foundation Stage and in core subjects. Use of the information gathered has initiated good practice, which has had a direct bearing on the improved standards for pupils at the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics. The impact, however, has not yet been as great in English and science although standards are beginning to improve. The successful initiatives the school is pursuing include the formation of ability groups in English and mathematics for all pupils in Years 3 to 6, and the reviewing, setting and sharing of learning targets with pupils and parents. Regular testing of pupils identifies individual and collective strengths and weaknesses

and provides a valuable basis for tracking each pupil's achievement methodically. As a consequence, pupils who need additional support or further challenge are identified early in order to help them achieve well. Where such information is not used well, for example, in inflexible literacy hour sessions with lower attaining or less-attentive pupils, they find it hard to remain fully involved and progress is restricted.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. This represents an improvement in the curriculum for Years 3 to 6 since the last inspection. Provision for enrichment activities is **good**. Accommodation and resources for learning are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good.
- There is a good range of activities outside the school day.
- A good range of visits and visitors to school enriches the curriculum.

Commentary

23. The practical approach of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and the high priority given to personal, social and emotional development are well suited to the needs of young children and give them a good start to learning in school. There is satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education with aspects of sex education and drugs awareness being suitably covered. Development of sex and relationships education through the Catholic tradition is currently being revised by the governing body.
24. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils' Individual Education Plans detail a manageable number of targets for improvement. The arrangements for teaching pupils in Years 3 to 6 in sets, according to their ability, have helped staff to plan work at the appropriate level. The previous report highlighted the fact that some pupils were withdrawn from the same lesson each week to receive additional literacy support. This is still happening occasionally but steps are taken to ensure teachers and support staff help pupils catch up where necessary.
25. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of activities outside the school day, including sports clubs and music groups such as the choir. In addition, pupils benefit from learning another language in the French and German club. An innovative addition to the curriculum for older pupils is the introduction of 'Power Learning' techniques that are helping to develop their problem-solving skills and independence in learning. The curriculum is enhanced through regular visits to places of interest, such as the Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet, and by visitors coming to the school, such as authors and other artists who have helped pupils create lively pieces of artwork around the school.
26. The accommodation is of good quality, clean, bright and well maintained. The new information and communication technology suite is used well and teachers and pupils benefit from the expertise and support provided by the technician. The attractive library is a valuable resource for pupils of all ages and provides older pupils with research opportunities and administrative responsibilities. The school has made significant efforts to make the building attractive and interesting. Displays of pupils' work in art and design and attractive murals on walls, both inside and outside the school, provide

an inspirational setting for learning. There are a good number of teachers to deliver the curriculum and good levels of support staff.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **very well** cared for and are provided with **good** support and guidance. The school's action to seek pupils' views is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their pupils well and take very good care of their personal and social needs.
- All staff have received training in child protection; health and safety procedures are very good.
- There are good arrangements for pupils of all ages joining the school.
- There is no formal system for eliciting pupils' views.

Commentary

27. The school takes very good care of all pupils and teachers pay very good attention to any issues or concerns that arise with individual pupils. Where necessary parents are informed and the headteacher and staff are always available if parents need to discuss things with the school. Child protection procedures are observed very carefully and all staff understand the need to be alert and sensitive to such matters. The governing body conducts risk assessments of the premises regularly and members of staff conduct risk assessments of activities such as school trips. Most support staff are trained in first-aid and a designated person is always on duty. The recent refurbishment of the toilets to an extremely high quality helps to provide pupils with a safe and healthy environment. The whole site is maintained to a high standard.
28. There are good induction arrangements for pupils of all ages joining the school. The 'buddy' system is particularly effective so those pupils who are alone are sought out and encouraged to join in activities. The system extends to classrooms where pupils new to the school and sometimes new to the country are introduced to routines sensitively by their 'buddies' in order to help them settle more quickly. Visits to the reception class by children in the nursery and attendance at the school assemblies by reception children provide them with confidence and the ambition to be like their elders.
29. The John Cox Award recognises pupils who have made a significant contribution to school life throughout the term, and the award is highly valued by pupils and staff alike. Pupils from each class are nominated for the award and this provides class teachers with a mechanism for the monitoring of pupils' personal development. Pupils state that teachers are helpful, and this is borne out by supportive comments seen in exercise books. A small number of older pupils, however, do not feel that there is an adult in school with whom they would share a confidence.
30. The school is exploring initiatives such as the 'Power Learning' programme to encourage pupils' to take greater responsibility for their learning. These techniques are helping pupils to make a greater contribution in lessons and to apply what they already know to new situations more successfully. Pupils are involved in the life of the school through prefect, monitor and buddy systems, librarianship, and the home-school agreements. There is no formal method for eliciting pupils' views, such as a school council, and pupils say they would like to be consulted more.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents, the local community and other schools. Information to parents is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school regularly invites parents into school and keeps them fully informed about school matters.
- Regular workshops are organised to introduce parents to various aspects of schoolwork.
- Parents are encouraged to help pupils with their learning at home and in school.
- Links with other schools, including arrangements for pupils' transfer to secondary education, are good.
- Links with the community are fostered well.

Commentary

31. The school has good relationships with parents, and the majority of parents responding to the inspection questionnaires were supportive of the school's work. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about day-to-day events in school. A small number of parents, however, have reservations about the general information that they receive from the school, particularly about how their children are getting on. Reports are generally satisfactory, although occasionally a minority provide information that is not always helpful to parents. The headteacher and staff welcome individual meetings with parents in order to address promptly any concerns or issues they may have. Arrangements for pupils' transfer to the secondary school are good, and parents are kept fully informed of any events pupils are involved in to ensure the successful move into Year 7.
32. Substantial information regarding pupils' progress is presented to parents at consultation evenings. This ensures that conversations are specific and focused on the achievement of each child. Parents of children with special educational needs are involved at an early stage and attend regular reviews of their child's targets. Such relationships are fostered well in order to help these pupils achieve well. Additionally, parents of all pupils are regularly invited to attend workshops, which provide insights into, for example, the literacy and numeracy strategies, and additional strategies for managing their children's behaviour and learning at home. They are regularly encouraged to help their children work at their learning at home, and to use the good range of resources in the well-equipped library.
33. Parents and pupils are very supportive of local, national and international charities. For example, large sums of money have been raised to support the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development and pupils' contributions have been successfully developed into the charity's promotional posters. "The Friends of the School" raises significant funds, which provide additional learning resources for the school. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school enhance pupils' perceptions of their community and, where necessary, the school ensures all pupils can afford to participate. Presentations of the beliefs of other faiths by members of the community help pupils appreciate the richness of a multicultural society.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The leadership by the headteacher and her deputy is **good**. Overall management is **satisfactory**. The work of the governing body has improved and is now **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management of the Foundation Stage and provision in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- Management practice across the school is not always consistent.
- The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- There is a lack of rigour in aspects of governors' forward planning in finance.

Commentary

34. The headteacher, supported by the hardworking and effective deputy, provides good leadership. Together they provide good role models for other teachers. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have led well on the issue regarding standards at the end of Year 6, since the previous inspection. Teaching has improved and is now good in many classes and standards by the end of Year 6 are rising. Management of the Foundation Stage is now good. There has been effective delegation of responsibilities in other areas. However, the strategies the school applied effectively to raising achievement amongst the boys in Years 3 to 6 have not been successful in doing the same for boys in Years 1 and 2. Governors, the headteacher and the senior management team are re-appraising the strategies required to improve standards in Years 1 and 2 and to stem the underachievement of the small minority of boys. The day-to-day management is good. However, overall management of the school and the strategic planning for the development of the school is satisfactory.
35. At present, the senior management team and subject leaders are developing their roles. There are still a small number of inconsistencies in practice across the school and between the key stages, as new staff have been appointed and not all co-ordinators have had sufficient time to monitor teaching. For example, the new co-ordinator for special educational needs has developed good procedures for identifying pupils' needs at an early stage, tracking their progress and involving outside agencies where appropriate. However, she has had no opportunity yet to review and influence teaching methods. Nevertheless, staff work hard and there is the collaborative will and capacity to raise standards further across the school.
36. The wide range of training opportunities provided for all staff, including those new to teaching, are good, as are the arrangements for the induction of new staff. The school's finances are efficiently managed and recent audits identify safe and secure practices.
37. Since the last inspection, the governing body has made many effective changes to its composition. The chair of governors has spearheaded essential training to ensure all governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities in order to achieve good governance of the school. They have established a strong sense of purpose, which has enabled great strides to be made in the effective development of an improving school. For example, the large carry forward of money from last year was used to support the setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 where standards are now beginning to rise. The governors have a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the

school and carefully monitor their sensibly prioritised action plan to guide their decisions through the well-structured committees that now exist. They are kept fully informed by the headteacher who has regular meetings with the chair to discuss emerging issues. For example, despite all the strategies that have been tried, they are aware of the decline in standards at the end of Year 2 and are looking at strategies and resources to address this. However, there is a need to draw up a financial contingency plan to meet the possible changes in the current staffing arrangements if the number of pupils on roll stay as they are. Financial management is satisfactory. Other than omitting to publish one minor issue in its annual report to parents, all statutory requirements are fully met.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 737 554 |
| Total expenditure | 777 384 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2 557 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Balance from previous year | 118 357 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 78 527 |
| | |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good.

38. Children enter the nursery with skills that are below average for their age. Teachers and classroom support assistants work very effectively as a team, planning a wide range of practical experiences to help children learn well. The consistently good and often very good teaching provides children with a stimulating start to their school life and consequently the children achieve well. This maintains the good practice identified in the last inspection. The good assessment procedures are used consistently to match work closely to the needs of individual children, enabling them to achieve well.
39. The school has good systems to introduce children gradually into nursery and reception. There is close contact with parents who are given extensive information about the early stages of education and how they can help their children. Consequently, children settle quickly. Parents co-operate well in helping children with regular homework tasks, encouraging children to develop good habits from an early age.
40. The provision is managed well by the knowledgeable and committed nursery teacher, and all the new recommendations for the Foundation Stage are fully in place. The nursery has earned a quality Kitemark, which suitably reflects the good quality of the provision, including the effective involvement of parents. The accommodation is cheery and bright and used well. A particular strength is the very good outdoor provision, which is adventurous, but safe, and is used very effectively to engage children's interest in all areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children behave well and soon learn what is expected of them
- Routines are established very effectively
- Children are encouraged to work independently in a wide range of situations.
- The very effective teamwork between adults provides children with very good role models.

Commentary

41. This very important aspect of children's development is given a very high priority. The nursery and reception classes are organised very efficiently to enable children to get what they need themselves, and this develops their independence quickly. Good behaviour is rewarded through very good use of praise and through the 'smiley face' board in the nursery. Expectations for children to share and take turns are fostered very well. Children are motivated to succeed through clear targets and are very keen to please. For example, children in reception try to fasten their own coats and are proud when their success is acknowledged. Self-esteem and confidence are promoted extremely well, for example, when children in the reception class are invited to nominate themselves for a 'smiley face' for behaviour and explain their reasons. All

adults work well together, setting very clear examples for children to follow. Children are treated with respect and are expected to show similar consideration for each other. As a result of the very good teaching in this area, children attain standards that are above those expected in the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening skills are promoted very well.
- Children learn to identify letter sounds from an early age.
- Children occasionally have restricted opportunities to practise their writing skills.

Commentary

42. All adults promote speaking and listening skills very well by constantly talking to the children, whatever the activity, and by encouraging children to contribute their ideas in lessons. Teachers speak clearly and explain things well, so children listen carefully to what they have to do. Good questioning requires children to explain in detail when they reply.
43. Children develop a love of books from an early age, as they listen to adults telling stories in an exciting way and encouraging children to join in where they can. Letter sounds are taught systematically so children learn to pick out initial sounds quickly. Regular practice enables children to achieve well in reading, and reach average standards at the end of the reception year. There are many opportunities for children to practise forming letters, in the sand, when painting or in following the dots. In the reception class, most children write their own name and higher attaining children begin to write a simple sentence with help. Children enjoy making marks when working in the shop and try to write their shopping list, for example. However, children do not have sufficient focussed activities to enable a higher number to reach the expected level in writing. While children achieve well overall, standards in this area of learning are below those expected in the early learning goals when pupils enter Year 1.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of practical activities to develop counting skills well.
- Teachers ask children to explain their answers and this develops greater understanding.

Commentary

44. Children learn to count and recognise numbers quickly in the nursery as they focus on the number of the week, repeat a good range of rhymes, count the objects, paint the numbers and print the pattern of numbers. In the reception class, the teacher, posing as "Miss Count!" makes good use of a number line and deliberate mistakes to make lessons fun and keep children interested in numbers and counting, with many counting

confidently beyond 20. Teachers set children simple puzzles and activities that make them think. When children are asked questions, they are encouraged to explain their strategies, for example, when adding two or more items together. Brightly coloured resources and materials enhance the children's interest in learning. Most children in the reception class repeat a pattern of three colours and identify 'longer' and 'shorter than', accurately in their books. Higher-attaining children solve simple addition up to five, but lower-attaining children experience some difficulty in forming numbers clearly. The majority of children achieve well, although standards are still below the expected goals at the end of the reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use the computers with confidence and skill
- Activities are interesting, purposeful and varied.

Commentary

45. Children enjoy learning in this area and achieve well. Most attain the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. The school provides an interesting range of activities throughout the Foundation Stage, which promote children's understanding of the world well. There is a good balance between directed activities and the freedom to learn through play. For example, children in the nursery are asked to choose specific pouring equipment in the water or are given a totally free choice. In the reception class, children learn about their local area as they think about what they can buy in the different shops. Children develop a ready confidence with the computers through using them regularly to support a range of activities. They move objects around the screen with skill and know how to change the colour when using a paint program. Very good use is made of the outside area to plant seeds and watch them grow and to observe changes in the seasons and the weather. They learn about their own culture well through Bible stories and the liturgy sessions, and there are good examples of children experiencing wider cultures, for example, in listening to the story of *Handa's Surprise*.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the outdoor area.
- Children are taught how to use simple tools and implements correctly.

Commentary

46. Teachers provide children with many opportunities to use a good range of implements and adults demonstrate how to use these safely. The good assessment procedures highlight those children who need more practice, for example, in using scissors, and so more support is provided. The outside area is planned very well to provide interesting opportunities to develop balancing, climbing and steering skills effectively. In a lesson in the hall, children from the reception class demonstrated good awareness of space and developed running and dodging skills well in a simple but effective game of tag.

Their attainment is average in this area of learning and they achieve well because they enjoy all that is provided for them.

Creative development

47. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the provision in creative development as no specific lessons were observed. However, the following observations can be made. Work on display in the nursery and reception classes is of the expected standard and shows that children have used a good range of different materials, including paint pencils and collage. Children use their imaginations well when playing in the 'Post Office'. They move rhythmically in time to the music in the hall. They sing a good range of songs tunefully.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average although overall achievement is satisfactory.
- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 and particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Setting arrangements are having a positive impact on raising standards.
- A significant minority of boys in Years 1 and 2 underachieve.
- Assessment procedures are good and satisfactory use is made of the information to support planning in most lessons.
- Teachers do not always match work accurately for pupils in all lessons.

Commentary

48. Standards have begun to rise at the end of Year 6 and overall achievement is satisfactory. The school has made good progress in improving standards at the end of Year 6 where pupils' underachievement was highlighted in the previous inspection. Whilst the results of the national tests in 2003 show standards in English to be well below average, the current Year 6 pupils are making good progress. The setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 are having a steady impact on raising standards. The school's assessment information indicates results are set to rise, although they are well below average at this stage of the year. Teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6 and this is beginning to bring about successful improvement, and effective arrangements are in place for pupils to receive additional support after Christmas to raise their performance further.
49. Pupils' performance at the end of Year 2 has declined in reading and writing since the last inspection. This is largely due to the underachievement of a small minority of boys and weaknesses in teaching in the classes for pupils in the single-age classes for Year 1 and Year 2. The school has recognised this to be an issue since the numbers of boys in these classes has grown considerably, and their poor attainment is having a marked impact on overall standards achieved at the end of Year 2. In contrast, girls in these same classes often achieve well and their attainment is just above average. Overall achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory.

50. Reading skills, particularly for younger and less able pupils, are taught well and the school provides pupils with good strategies to improve their reading. Support staff work very effectively with all pupils but especially those who are lower attaining or have special educational needs and most of these make satisfactory progress. Time is given to listen to all pupils reading regularly. Guided-reading sessions throughout the school nurture a healthy interest in books, and the skills pupils acquire are satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy reading and are keen to progress. However, some younger pupils do not pay good attention, and lower-attaining pupils find it hard to concentrate and retain information from day to day and, therefore, their progress is slow. A good number struggle to sound out words and this has an impact on their spelling in written tasks too. Overall standards for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are well below average.
51. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average, although teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to share ideas and discuss work with others. Because children have below average levels of communication, language and literacy skills when they enter Year 1, many lack confidence in their ability to argue and reason, and have a limited range of vocabulary. This becomes an issue, for example, in Years 1 and 2, where a few boys, particularly, find it difficult to listen attentively. Occasionally, when work is too demanding or the teachers' presentations are too long, a significant number of lower-attaining pupils find it hard to sustain concentration and join in discussions confidently. Older pupils at the upper end of the school enjoy discussion activities, and many join in with their contributions when prompted by encouraging praise. However, a good number are still hesitant, despite the teachers' best efforts to offer support and guidance.
52. Pupils' writing skills are beginning to improve as a result of the recent strategies that have been introduced, but overall standards in Years 2 and 6 are well below the national average for the same reasons as outlined above. Information and communication technology is used well to develop pupils' spelling and writing skills, but opportunities are occasionally missed to make more effective use of computers in day-to-day work in lessons. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work on their independent writing, especially as they progress through the school and begin to gain confidence in their ability. Teachers' marking is generally constructive and helps pupils see how they can improve their work further. Where teaching is weak, and where expectations of pupils to work hard and behave well are not firm enough, for example in the single age classes in Years 1 and 2, a small minority of mainly boys produces little work, and often it is poorly presented and incomplete. Lower-attaining pupils are restricted in the quality and range of their work because of their poor grasp of basic skills. For example, these pupils even as late as Years 5 and 6 are insecure in their grammar and punctuation and, sometimes, even the correct use of upper- and lower-case letters.
53. Writing skills are developed satisfactorily, although teachers do not always insist on the accurate application of skills and pupils make many basic spelling and grammar errors. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional literacy programmes to support their learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have good access to information and communication technology to research and word-process their work regularly because they have literacy lessons in the suite regularly. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in other classes is limited but satisfactory. Lessons are planned well, with a good balance of teacher input and pupil activities, but sometimes, especially in Years 1 and 2, lessons lack pace and material is not always matched well to individual pupils' needs. Sometimes, for pupils in the lower-ability group in Years 3 and 4, the work is not appropriately linked to pupils' prior learning and, as a consequence, a minority find it difficult to follow the tasks set without constant support. There is an over-emphasis on teaching to the literacy strategy or

hour too rigidly, and for these lower attaining pupils, the periods of concentration are too long to help them remain on task effectively.

54. Overall teaching, learning and achievement are good. The school makes good use of the assessment and monitoring data it collects to set targets for pupils. The school has developed good procedures to set targets for pupils and, in most lessons, teachers try to ensure work is matched well to these targets. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning and analysed test results in order to set groups. She has the knowledge and understanding to lead the subject well, but currently has made few in-roads to ensure the rate of progress of all pupils is at least satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing in other subjects are satisfactory overall. They are good in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is good and good attention is given to discussion as a feature of most lessons. The pupils' limited range of vocabulary and their over-reliance on re-assurance from staff inhibit a few of the lower-attaining pupils in having the confidence to express themselves orally or in their independent writing. Higher-attaining pupils are generally articulate and mature in their use of language, especially as they progress through the school and form interesting ideas and views, for example, about characters they study in literacy, or their views on poverty. In written tasks, pupils are not always reminded to apply their skills carefully. As a consequence, work is sometimes untidy with many errors, especially in Years 1 to 4.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection at the end of Year 6.
- Standards are not high enough in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6.
- Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.
- Very good systems are in place for assessing and recording the progress pupils make.
- Provision for a significant number of the lower-attaining and less attentive boys in Years 1 and 2 is not sufficiently challenging to raise achievement.

Commentary

56. The school has successfully addressed the key issue identified in the last inspection where standards at the end of Year 6 were well below average. Improvement has been very good in Years 3 to 6. This is due to the overall good teaching in Years 3 to 6 and often very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, and the effective management of the subject across these classes. Consequently, pupils achieve well and attainment at the end of Year 6 is in line with the national average. The subject leader has worked hard to bring about this improvement through providing good training and support for all teachers and other staff. Lessons are challenging and lively, with a great deal of good emphasis on applying mental strategies to solve problems. Teachers present work at a lively pace and introduce good resources to help pupils learn well. Support staff are deployed effectively to work with those pupils who need additional help so that they too

make at least satisfactory progress. The very good assessment procedures established enable teachers to address any areas of weakness in the teaching and learning and ensure all pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6. The information also allows teachers to monitor pupils' progress and share targets with them and their parents as to what to do next to improve further. In addition, the organisation of pupils by ability into three teaching groups provides good opportunities for them to work with pupils of similar attainment. This strategy also helps teachers prepare work that is more accurately matched to pupils' needs.

57. However, the school's focus to raise standards at the upper end of the school has resulted in a decline in provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2, where a small minority of the boys are now underachieving. Because of this, standards have slipped and pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is now below the national average. The attainment of girls is better than that of the boys and they generally attain at least average standards. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Whilst assessment procedures in these classes are good, and pupils have targets they have been set to achieve, the work is not always challenging enough to engage the interest and attention of a minority of boys, who are capable of more than they actually achieve. Although an example of good teaching was seen in the mixed-age class for pupils in Years 1 and 2, teaching overall is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with activities and tasks that are well resourced to engage pupils' interest, but when the behaviour of a few of the boys is not managed firmly, or where teachers' presentations are too long, a few pupils struggle to remain on task. The school has recognised this underachievement, but as yet has not identified the best strategies to address the situation.
58. Overall leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a good system for the regular monitoring of teaching throughout the school, although less attention has been given to Years 1 and 2 in the last year. The good practice that exists in the school has not been fully shared with and adopted by all staff.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The school is making good provision for the development of numeracy across the curriculum, in particular, through the use of information and communication technology, where there is a good range of software designed to develop numeracy skills. Teachers encourage pupils to think about why they need to understand number skills, and opportunities are exploited wherever possible to reinforce learning and develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. Pupils produce tables, graphs and charts on the computer in order to support their learning in other lessons. For example, the collation of geographical data and the recording of scientific experiments often require pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding of mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6, where achievement is good and assessment information is used well to set targets.
- Opportunities for investigative activities are good in these classes.
- Boys are underachieving in Years 1 and 2.

- There is a weakness in the management of boys in the single age classes in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

60. At the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are well below average. This is a less favourable picture than at the last inspection, when standards were average. At the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are below average. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were very low, and is due to good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and an improvement in the overall curriculum. Overall achievement is satisfactory.
61. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The school has concentrated its efforts on raising standards in Year 6, and has been successful in this aim. The school has identified scientific enquiry as an area of development, and pupils have regular opportunities to practise recording results and interpreting information from tables and graphs. This is helping to raise achievement, but there has not been sufficient time for the outcomes of this practice to be reflected in improved results. Monitoring of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 has been limited. As a result the underachievement amongst a small group of boys has not been addressed quickly enough to raise standards at the end of Year 2. In addition, the weak literacy skills of a significant number of pupils prevent them from recording work accurately or expressing their ideas clearly in discussions.
62. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in Years 3 to 6 because of good teaching, the provision of booster classes for older pupils in the spring term, and a good emphasis on pupils applying their skills in scientific enquiry. Teachers present pupils with challenging investigations and because they enjoy such practical opportunities they respond well and learn effectively. In the best lessons in Years 5 and 6, the very good pace and interesting teaching engages pupils' attention and enables them to learn well. They have satisfactory opportunities to research material using the Internet. Good use of questions challenges pupils to think and use what they already know to work out solutions. For example, in a lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils understood that insects were attracted to brightly coloured flowers and helped in the distribution of the pollen. They then worked out that a different method of pollination was needed for grasses.
63. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. Boys in Years 1 and 2 do not achieve as well as the girls, thus overall learning is satisfactory. This is because a small minority of boys in the two single-age classes are unable to concentrate for sustained periods of time. Teachers' planning does not take account of this need, and so these boys become restless and this disrupts their learning. Expectations of pupils to work hard and behave well are not high enough, and this restricts the progress some boys make. While these classes enjoy practical activities, they do not always behave well enough to carry out investigations unless managed well, and this does not always happen. This impacts on the overall achievement of all pupils in the class. Recorded work is minimal, and some pupils complete little without additional help. The proportion of boys has increased in recent times, and this increasing number of underachieving boys is starting to have a negative impact on progress. The school has not yet devised strategies for engaging these pupils more fully through more active tasks and firmer control. In the mixed-age class, where numbers are more even and the pace of lessons is sharper, the difference in achievement between boys and girls is less marked.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been recent improvement in resources and staff expertise.
- Direct teaching of information and communication technology skills is good but application of these skills is not embedded in some classes.
- Pupils enjoy using computers, and older pupils have opportunities to use machines independently.
- Management of the subject is satisfactory.

Commentary

64. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with expectations and overall achievement is satisfactory. All classes have a regular teaching session in the suite, where good emphasis is placed on developing skills and encouraging pupils to apply a range of tools to improve their work. Since the last inspection, national funding has enabled the school to improve resources, and staff confidence and expertise have improved as a result of training. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to apply these skills regularly in all classes other than Years 5 and 6 where, because of the setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy, every set has access to the information and communication technology suite more than once a week. In these sessions they practise using the Internet to research information and hence improve their skills in literacy, and carry out data handling and spreadsheet activities to support their work in mathematics.
65. The direct teaching sessions are well structured and enable pupils to make rapid gains in acquiring information and communication technology skills. Teachers encourage pupils to try out their ideas and challenge them with questions that make them apply previous learning in addition to new skills. Achievement is good in these directed lessons as a consequence. Pupils are enthusiastic about the use of information and communication technology, enjoy their lessons and work well with partners or groups. Throughout the school, a good range of graphics activities are developed, where pupils create designs and artistic images including repeating patterns, portraits and illustrations, and the final work is eye-catching and attractive. Older pupils have regular opportunities to carry out independent research to support their projects in history or geography, for example.
66. The co-ordinator is aware of the areas for development, for example, to ensure the skills that pupils gain in the suite are practised regularly. His expertise in the subject is satisfactory. He monitors planning and ensures that planning is based on the national guidance to ensure that all pupils experience the required range of skills by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place to ensure skills are developed step by step to meet requirements. Overall management is satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet been established to ensure that the best use is made of resources and teachers are given the support they need to do this.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Overall use of information and communication technology is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have daily access to the information and communication technology

suite because one set in each year has their literacy or numeracy lesson based in the suite. In this way, they apply their information and communication technology skills well in these subjects and others including history and art and design. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use computer programs to consolidate learning in literacy and numeracy on a regular basis. Pupils with special educational needs gain extra practice for example, in their word building skills and comprehension tasks because they have regular access to good basic skills programs. Older pupils use information and communication technology to research topics that they are following in history or art for example. There was a good range of pupils' work in art on displays around the school where they have used information and communication technology programs to explore drawing portraits and producing computer generated images for designs for T-shirts for example.

HUMANITIES

It is not possible to make a judgement on provision in **geography** because only one lesson was observed during the inspection. This lesson, in a Year 5/ 6 class, was very good and engaged the pupils' interest extremely well because the map pupils explored was of their local area so pupils could relate to it from first-hand experience. Pupils enjoyed exploring the map to see how their locality had altered over time and what more could be done to make further improvements.

History

Three lessons were observed as well as looking at pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with pupils

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6.
- Effective displays celebrate pupils' achievement.
- Learning is enhanced by visits to places of historical interest.

Commentary

68. Standards across the school are in line with national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress. Teaching is satisfactory. In Years 5 and 6, it is very good, because lessons are made exciting. Teachers provide many interesting experiences to fuel pupils' imaginations, resulting in effective learning and good achievement. Examples include a visit to a local heritage site, and very well managed debates and discussions where pupils are encouraged to explain their ideas and views. Such activities enable pupils to evaluate, for example, the positive or detrimental effect of industrial change upon the lives of the local population in the nineteenth century. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, learning and achievement are unsatisfactory. For example in Year 1, there are weaknesses in planning that result in lessons where pupils' interest is not fully engaged. In these lessons, a minority of younger pupils do not pay attention or behave well.
69. Good examples of pupils' work are displayed effectively around the school. They celebrate achievement and consolidate learning well. The curriculum is broad and appropriately covered through suitably planned topics, and pupils' progress is

assessed and recorded as they move through the school. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No judgements are made for **design and technology**, **music** and **physical education** because these subjects were only sampled.

70. In **design and technology** no lessons were observed during the inspection and there was little evidence of work to be sampled, so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision. Display material was very limited, a feature commented on in the last report. Pupils have regular opportunities to design and plan what to do next, choosing from materials available to them. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have taken the 'Fire of London' theme and firework night in order to design and make a moving 'rocket' using card, paper and pins. The final models are colourful and work effectively. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 talk about work they have done to design and make containers, for example, and how they modified their designs to make sure items they wanted to put in the box fitted. Pupils have explored food technology, for example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made bread and linked this to their work in science and literacy activities effectively.
71. Only one lesson was observed in **music**. In this good lesson in the mixed-age class for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher used her skill in playing the guitar to promote pupils' singing skills and an enjoyment of music. The quality of singing was satisfactory in assembly. Pupils have good opportunities to perform in school productions, and the after-school choir is well attended. Visits and visitors to school enhance the curriculum, a good example being a visit to the opera and the subsequent opera workshop in school. Pupils benefit from instrumental tuition from specialist music teachers who visit the school. A good feature in school is the way background music is played in lessons and at lunchtimes. This helps to calm pupils and many find it helps them to concentrate in addition to creating a pleasant working atmosphere.
72. Only two lessons were observed in **physical education**. In the lively lesson seen in Years 5 and 6, there was a good emphasis on the direct teaching of hockey skills. Pupils demonstrated that they had learnt well as they applied their newly acquired skills in a short practice game. In the unsatisfactory lesson in Year 1, the teacher had planned a good dance routine to depict scenes related to the Great Fire of London, but lack of pace in the lesson and ineffective discipline meant that some pupils became silly and learning was unsatisfactory. There is a good range of activities on offer after school, and teaching is enhanced by the expertise of specialist coaches in football, for example.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy the subject and as a result make satisfactory and sometimes good progress.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to support teaching and learning.
- Good use is made of displays to celebrate pupils' work.

Commentary

73. From the wide range of work around the school, the lessons observed and from pupils' work samples in their folders and sketchbooks, standards are broadly in line with expectations. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although enhanced well when visiting artists work in the school on specific projects. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress.
74. There is a good emphasis on display, and pupils see, from the work around the school, the range of skills and techniques practised in different classes and learn from these. Because pupils enjoy practical activities and especially tasks where they can explore their ideas, they learn well. For example, pupils in the Year 1 and 2 classes responded well to the weaving activity, even though some of the younger ones found it difficult to recognise how to make the repeating patterns and to manipulate the materials they had to select from. In these lessons, the small group of boys, who in other lessons found it hard to sustain concentration, worked well and showed a keenness to succeed. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have designed striking, good quality logos and images using a graphics program in order to print their creations onto T-shirts. The carefully crafted clay models of faces, made by pupils in Years 3 and 4, show pupils' careful handling of tools to embellish their models with fine features and shapes.
75. The subject benefits from events such as 'Arts Week', and visiting artists who fire up pupils' interest and imagination. Such activities result in some vibrant pieces of work, including the fabric art around the school and murals in the playground, which brighten up the environment. In addition, the subject enriches pupils' experiences of other cultures, and teachers plan for this aspect well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

76. No lessons were observed during the inspection and so no judgements can be made about the overall provision in this aspect of education. The school has recently established a new programme of study, which is carefully structured to meet curricular requirements and support the needs of pupils. Sensitive consideration is given to the teaching of sex education and to the raising of pupils' awareness to the dangers of drugs and to their personal safety. Outside agencies, such as the school nurse, the police, fire officers and other visiting speakers, are involved wherever appropriate to offer their expertise and support learning. Regular lessons, in addition to learning opportunities that arise during assemblies, are provided across the school. School initiatives outside the classroom, such as the 'Buddy' system, give pupils an opportunity to support one another and develop a good understanding of citizenship and relationships within the school community, and why it is important to care for others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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