

INSPECTION REPORT

SAINT PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Corsham

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126431

Headteacher: Mr K A Loftus

Lead inspector: Mrs S J M Lacey

Dates of inspection: 1st – 3rd December 2003

Inspection number: 257907

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	192
School address:	Lacock Road Corsham Wiltshire
Postcode:	SN13 9HS
Telephone number:	(01249) 713125
Fax number:	(01249) 701670
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Ferries
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is of an average size. Pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and academic backgrounds. About seven per cent are from minority ethnic families. All but one pupil have English as their mother tongue. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is below average. When children start school, their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide-ranging, but above average for their age overall in most years. Eleven per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is below average. These pupils have a range of learning and physical difficulties. Two have a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time was broadly average last year. The school has received two government school-achievement awards for improving standards in national tests.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3764	Mrs Stephanie Lacey	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, English, Art and design, Design and technology and English as an additional language
14756	Mr John Lovell	Lay inspector	
24019	Mr Ken Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics, Geography, History, and Physical education
30618	Mr Paul Story	Team inspector	Science and Information and communication technology
23235	Mr Fred Riches	Team inspector	Music and Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 10
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10 - 15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15 - 17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18 - 30
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Saint Patrick's is a good school with many strengths. The teachings of Jesus Christ underpin its work. The headteacher is enabling staff to focus effectively on school improvement, and standards are rising. Teaching is good and so pupils achieve well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average in national tests.
- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- A very positive Christian ethos underpins pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes.
- The headteacher's very clear educational vision is focused clearly on improvement.
- Work in classrooms is enriched by special events and excellent links with other schools.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Work in information and communication technology (ICT), although improved, is not sufficiently developed.
- Some subject leaders are not as effective as they could be.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection five years ago. Standards have risen in national tests and the quality of teaching has improved. A new headteacher has been appointed and parents feel that the school is more vibrant. All the issues identified for improvement by the last inspection have been tackled successfully. These were related to challenging the more able, raising standards in ICT, increasing the impact of subject leaders and developing strategic planning for improvement. The more able now do well and there is clear planning for improvement. Satisfactory progress has been made in developing ICT and the role of subject leaders, but these remain relative weaknesses. Currently, with a strong staff team, the school is in a very good position to move forward further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well. In most years, the skills, knowledge and understanding of the group of children entering the Reception class is above average. They make good progress and this year are on target to exceed the goals expected by the end of the Reception year. The table shows that standards in Year 6 tests have risen over the last three years and in 2003 were well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils made the same progress as their peers in similar schools in English and moved ahead more quickly in mathematics and science. Pupils also achieve very well in national tests at the end of Year 2. In 2003, standards were in the top five per cent of all schools in English and well above average in writing and mathematics. Pupils did very much better than in schools with a similar percentage claiming free school meals. This is a very strong picture. The school won a government achievement award in 2002 for the good progress made. The inspection found that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well. It is likely that standards will be as high in next year's national tests as they have been this year in Year 6, with

standards above average in Year 2, where there are a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils do not do as well in other subjects and reach expected standards in all but ICT, although there has been significant improvement in this area.

Pupils' personal development is very good and is supported by very good provision for their social, moral and spiritual development. Their cultural understanding is good. They are very positive about school and behave very well both in lessons and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. This includes good teaching throughout the school, which enables pupils to achieve well. Strengths in the teaching include very good relationships, which help pupils to approach learning with confidence. Lessons are planned well, particularly in English and mathematics, and this has a positive impact on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers have high expectations and so pupils work hard and do their best. There is scope to extend the good assessment of pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy to other subjects and to improve the marking of pupils' work. The curriculum is interesting, with very exciting themed weeks and a very good range of clubs. Excellent links with local secondary schools enhance the school's work. Staffing levels are good and so is the accommodation overall, except in the youngest pupils' classes. Pupils are well cared for and parents provide outstanding financial support for the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher provides a clear educational lead and is supported well by senior staff. The school is already working on developing the role of subject leaders in order to improve provision and raise standards. The school is well managed with good systems and procedures in place. The governance of the school is sound, with good contributions from individual governors. All statutory requirements related to running the school are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the work of the school and are pleased with all that it does for their children. Pupils are happy at school, like their teachers and enjoy learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to develop the provision for ICT in order to raise standards.
- Develop the work of subject leaders, especially in relation to checking how well pupils are doing.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils throughout the school achieve well. Standards in national tests were well above average in 2003. Standards are currently above average in English, mathematics and science, with pupils in Year 6 doing even better in English. In most other subjects, standards are broadly average, but pupils in Year 6 do not reach the levels expected for their age in ICT in some aspects of the subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in national tests.
- Throughout the school pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Standards are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Standards are well above average in English in Year 6.
- Pupils do not do as well in the foundation subjects, where standards are broadly as expected.
- Standards in ICT are improving, but are still below expectations in Year 6 in some aspects of the subject.

Commentary

Starting school

1. When children start school in the Reception class, the school's own assessment shows that in most years their knowledge, skills and understanding are wide-ranging, but above average overall. The current Year 2 and Year 4 pupils were broadly average groups on entry.

Standards in national tests

2. Overall standards have risen in national tests since the last inspection and in 2001 and 2002, the school received a government achievement award for the good progress made. In 2003, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science in both Years 2 and 6.
3. Standards have been well above average or higher in Year 2 tests for the last four years. Reading is the strongest area and standards have been in the top five per cent of all schools for three out of the last four years. In 2003, pupils did very much better than their peers in schools with a similar free-school-meal entitlement. The table below shows the average point score for the last two years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.7 (17.1)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	16.7 (16.2)	14.9 (14.4)
mathematics	18.5 (18.2)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. In Year 6, standards have improved at the same rate as the national trend. The table below indicates the average point score for the last two years. It shows that standards were well above average in all three subjects in 2003. In comparison with those in schools whose pupils attained similar level when they were in Year 2, pupils at St Patrick's did about the same in English and moved ahead more quickly in mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (29.8)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	29.1 (26.1)	27.0 (26.7)
science	30.4 (30.2)	28.8 (28.3)

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

- Over the last four years, English has been the strongest subject, with standards consistently well above average. In 2003, more able pupils did not do as well in writing as they had previously. The school looked into the reasons for this very carefully. It appears that the most significant factor was the nature of the test, in which more able pupils failed to reach the standards that they achieved in class, because they did not find the test challenging. Nothing in the school's provision had altered to account for the lower performance in this area. Standards in mathematics had been above average, with a dip in 2002, which the school tackled effectively. Science has also been well above average, with a slight fall back in 2001. The school sets challenging targets, which it works hard to meet.

Inspection findings

The Foundation Stage

- Children have settled very well into school. They achieve well in all areas of learning because of the good provision made for them. There is every indication that most will exceed the goals expected for their age by the end of the year in all areas of learning.

Years 1 and 2

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This particular year group has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which is why standards are a little lower this year. In all other subjects, including ICT, pupils reach the levels expected for their age.

Years 3 to 6

- Pupils achieve well in all year groups and continue to make good progress. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science in all year groups. In Year 6, standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. There is every indication that standards in these last two subjects will be well above average by the end of the year because of the good support given. In most other subjects, pupils reach the levels expected for their age. In ICT, standards are below average in Year 6. Pupils currently achieve well in this subject but are still catching up on earlier gaps in their knowledge and understanding. There was very limited evidence of work in design and technology and so it is not possible to make a judgement on standards.

Whole school issues

- Last year, as a consequence of lower standards in mathematics in Year 6, the school focused on improving provision. This was successful and standards have risen. There is a continued focus this year, with support from the local education authority, in order to consolidate the good advances made. The school is also focusing on raising standards in ICT. This has generally been successful, although standards in Year 6 remain below average.

Pupils with special educational needs

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the main. As a result of well-organised support, they play a full part in lessons. Almost all, and particularly those with statements, make good progress towards their individual learning, social and behavioural targets.

Pupils learning English as an additional language

11. Only one pupil is learning English as an additional language. She is fluent in English and in the lessons seen, achieved as well as her peers.

Higher-attaining pupils

12. Higher-attaining pupils do well at St Patrick's. They respond well to the challenges set for them, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Boys and girls

13. There was no significant difference between the overall attainment of boys and girls in the lessons seen, although boys have done slightly better in Year 6 national tests for some years. There is nothing in the school's provision to account for this.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils are very positive about all aspects of school life. They behave very well. The school fosters their spiritual, moral and social development very effectively. Attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong caring ethos of the Catholic Family permeates all activities and contributes to pupils' very good relationships, attitudes and personal development.
- Very good relationships and the positive role models of the staff help pupils to behave very well.
- Pupils work well together and are willing to help others.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are very good.
- A strong programme of activities supports pupils' cultural development effectively.

Commentary

Attitudes and behaviour

14. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good. This maintains the positive picture found by the last inspection. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations and Catholic values promoted by the school and consistently reinforced by the staff. This creates a positive and supportive climate for learning in which pupils develop increasing confidence and self-esteem as they proceed through the school. Their behaviour in lessons and as they move around the school is very good. They are polite to adults, visitors and each other. At break times and lunchtimes, they play well together and older pupils help or look after younger ones.
15. Pupils enjoy school and are very positive about it. Most pupils enter the Foundation Stage with well-developed social skills. They quickly learn the rules and routines, enjoy the wide range of activities planned and are very eager to learn. Pupils in the rest of the school have similar positive attitudes and, in conversation with inspectors, showed an eagerness to come to school and great pride in the school community. They eagerly participate in the wide range of activities on offer during and outside the school day. In lessons, they are eager to share ideas, answer questions and undertake tasks. When given opportunities to work independently, in pairs or groups, pupils co-operate and support one another well. Parents are very happy with the values the school promotes and confirm that pupils are happy to come to school. No bullying was seen during the inspection, although there have been minor incidents which the school has dealt with appropriately. Pupils report that teachers deal quickly and effectively with any inappropriate behaviour. An isolated racist incident last year was handled well, for example. As the table below indicates, no pupils have been excluded from school for inappropriate behaviour.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
161	0	0
1	0	0
11	0	0
1	0	0

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

Relationships

16. The very good relationships pupils enjoy with adults and each other have a very positive effect on their learning. The encouraging and purposeful atmosphere teachers create in lessons shows pupils that they are valued and increases their confidence. This is evident in even the youngest classes, where children respond very well to the help they receive and the good opportunities to make choices and develop independence and self-esteem. All enjoy earning rewards, working for points for their team or being a 'golden' achiever, which are all positive motivators. Pupils with special educational needs or from minority ethnic groups take a full and active part in lessons and playtime activities alongside their classmates, who readily include them.

Personal development

17. Spirituality is promoted very well through opportunities for prayer and reflection, assemblies and the celebration of art and the natural world throughout the school. Pupils have frequent opportunities to consider how Christ's teachings are relevant to them and can be followed in their daily lives. Consistent reinforcement by the staff, who are very good role models of Christian values and positive moral and social standards, are clearly reflected in pupils' appreciation of, and respect for, the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Their regular fundraising activities and charity work remind them of their responsibility to others less fortunate than themselves. Their participation in class councils, formulating class rules and circle-time discussions helps them to understand what it is to be part of a community and to develop further their appreciation and understanding of others' views

Cultural development

18. Pupils' cultural development is good and there are plenty of opportunities for them to learn about their own culture in history, art, literacy and music. This has been broadened since the last inspection to include examples of religions and cultures from around the world. The school has highlighted the need to develop a more consistent approach to multicultural aspects of life in modern Britain. Currently, provision for this area of cultural development is a relative weakness.

Attendance

19. Overall attendance is satisfactory and a drop in attendance in 2000/1 was the consequence of a liberal authorisation of holidays, of which parents took advantage. The governors recognised the problem and, with good parental support, drew up and implemented a new policy, which has significantly improved attendance in the last twelve months. Pupils are generally punctual. Occasionally pupils travelling on the school bus are held up in heavy traffic and arrive late.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	0.4

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 school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good and ensures that pupils achieve well. The curriculum is good and enhanced by interesting projects and excellent links with secondary schools. Staffing levels are good and pupils of all abilities are supported well. The accommodation is good overall, with some repairs needed to the Reception and Year 1 building. Parents work well with the school to support their children.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is good overall, and throughout the school pupils achieve well and learn effectively. Teachers assess pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy well, but the assessment of work in other subjects is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships provide a firm basis for pupils' learning.
- Work is planned well, especially in English and mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' hard work and good behaviour.
- Pupils work very hard and remain focused on learning tasks in lessons.
- Teachers explain new ideas very clearly to pupils.
- Teachers plan interesting activities that capture pupils' interest.
- Teachers' subject expertise is used well.
- Some marking does not give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve.
- Assessment of pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is patchy.

Commentary

20. The table below indicates the quality of the teaching seen in lessons during the inspection. It is quite clear that teaching is good throughout the school and this ensures that pupils achieve well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, with support provided for less effective members of staff having a positive impact on their practice. New staff have also brought strengths to the teaching team.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in thirty-two lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	4 (13%)	20 (62%)	8 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

Teaching in the Foundation Stage

21. The positive picture from the last inspection has been maintained in the work in the Reception class. The classroom is very well organised, with lively displays and a range of stimulating activities to capture children's imagination and interest. The teaching team is well established and works together very well. Children achieve well because tasks are very well matched to

their children's interests and capabilities. Staff are encouraging and supportive and this helps children to feel confident and try their best.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2

22. Overall, the teaching in these year groups is good and this helps pupils to move forward in their learning. The stronger teaching is in Year 1, which is in the same building as the Reception class. The same lively approach to planning and organising learning tasks is evident in the work in both the Reception class and Year 1. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic and approach their work with a determination to succeed. In Year 2, there is a thorough approach to planning for pupils' progress, particularly in developing literacy and numeracy skills. Lessons are very calm and most pupils tackle their work conscientiously.

Teaching in Years 3 to 6

23. Teaching is good in the older pupils' classes and pupils achieve well. Two of the four teachers in this part of the school have been appointed since the last inspection and this team is now strong. Homework is used effectively to help pupils consolidate what they have learnt in class.

Common strengths

24. There are some common strengths underpinning all the teaching. These include:

- Very good relationships between staff and children, which foster pupils' self-esteem.
- Good planning for the development of literacy and numeracy skills.
- Good support from teaching assistants, particularly for pupils with special educational needs.
- High expectations of pupils' hard work and good behaviour.

Particular strengths

26. In the better lessons particular strengths included:

- Very clear explanations of new work, so that pupils understood easily.
- A lively pace, so that pupils moved ahead quickly.
- Interesting activities that involved pupils very effectively in learning.
- Very good subject knowledge. This was especially evident in PE, where one teacher took several different classes.

Areas for development

26. Within the context of strong teaching overall, there are some areas for development. These were features of some of the satisfactory lessons:

- Insufficient attention to the development of skills in art and design and history.
- Too much teacher talk and not enough opportunities for pupils to contribute.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual Education Plans, drawn up by class teachers in liaison with the SENCO, have well-focused targets which teachers and teaching assistants use effectively, checking and recording progress fortnightly, in order to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should. One or two pupils learn satisfactorily, rather than well, as strategies used to develop their literacy skills do not fully address their needs. Pupils with statements are very well supported, enabling them to learn successfully by playing a full part in lessons.

Teaching of the pupil learning English as an additional language

28. The pupil learning English as an additional language speaks it fluently and does not need any additional support. Staff are sensitive to her learning needs.

Day-to-day assessment

29. Staff successfully evaluate how well pupils are learning in lessons and provide them with good verbal feedback. Teachers use these assessments to refine their plans for subsequent lessons so that pupils are set appropriate tasks. Most staff, but not all, mark pupils' work regularly. In some classes, teachers provide pupils with clear pointers for improvement but in others, the marking consists of ticks or notes or spelling errors. This is not so helpful for pupils. In their written comments teachers do not routinely let pupils know whether they have learnt what was expected during the lesson.

Assessment of pupils' progress over time

30. In the Foundation Stage, staff undertake weekly assessment tasks to feed into individual children's assessment profile documents. In Years 1 to 6 there are good systems in place for assessing pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. These are used effectively to set objectives for the future. At the moment, there are no clear procedures for assessing the development of pupils' skills in other subjects and teachers make brief notes on what they have covered over the year.

The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. A range of exciting projects and clubs outside of lessons capture pupils' interest and enrich their learning. Staffing levels and the accommodation are good overall and there are satisfactory learning resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-balanced curriculum for pupils of all ages and abilities.
 - There is good emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
 - The school has addressed the weaknesses in ICT found at the time of the previous inspection.
 - Excellent links with other schools enhance the curriculum.
 - There is very good extra-curricular provision.
 - There is very good use of special theme weeks to enrich pupils' learning.
 - There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
 - Some subjects, particularly design and technology and geography, are not covered in sufficient depth.
 - The building housing the Foundation Stage and Year 1 is in need of repair.
31. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6 is broad and well balanced. It meets all statutory requirements. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Planning in the Foundation Stage

32. The curriculum for Reception children covers all areas of learning well, offering a very good balance of opportunities for chosen and directed activities in all six areas of learning. The focus on personal, social and emotional development has a positive effect on children's learning in all areas. The improved outdoor facilities are used very well.

Planning in Years 1 to 6

33. Most subjects are well planned, with a good emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school allocates time well to ensure the successful implementation of the full National Curriculum. It has made good improvements in provision for ICT, which was a key issue for attention at the last inspection. The new suite is used effectively. Design and technology and geography are not covered in as much depth as other foundation subjects and so pupils' skills, understanding and knowledge are not so well developed in these subjects.

Planning for pupils with special educational needs

34. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and this helps pupils to make good progress. The school deploys assistants effectively to ensure that pupils have access to the full curriculum. Where appropriate, the school uses additional support facilities, such as the nearby language centre.

Clubs and activities

35. The school offers a very good range of activities at lunchtimes and after school, which enrich the timetabled provision and give pupils many opportunities to develop their particular interests and skills. Pupils become involved in musical and sporting events in particular, which contribute positively to their personal development.

Links with secondary schools

36. Two particularly strong features of the school's curriculum are its links with other schools and its use of focused activity weeks. The links with Catholic secondary schools have provided particularly helpful support in several aspects of the curriculum, including the arts and technology. As a result, pupils' learning experiences have been enhanced significantly. These links have been initiated by St Patrick's. The school also belongs to the West Wiltshire Sports Partnership, giving pupils access to a range of competitive sporting opportunities.

Activity weeks

37. The specific weeks focusing on African art in 2002 and technology in 2003, together with the celebration of events such as the 'European Day of Modern Languages', add a stimulating element to the school's formal timetabled curriculum. They foster pupils' enjoyment of learning and enrich their understanding.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

38. There is a good match of staff to the curriculum. Teachers are suitably qualified and there is a good balance of experienced and more recently qualified teachers. Teaching assistants' roles are well defined, ensuring good support for pupils with special educational needs. Resources meet the demands of the curriculum. They are good in English, mathematics and ICT, and satisfactory in other subjects. The Foundation Stage is well equipped. The accommodation is mainly good, following a sequence of successful projects to upgrade the buildings. Improvements to the outdoor area for Reception children have not yet been matched by improvements in the building housing Reception and Year 1, which is not linked to the main building and which is rightly the next priority for improvement in the school's otherwise good accommodation. Currently, the youngest children in the school have to cross the playground in all weathers to reach the main building for assemblies and hall times. Their classroom roofs leak, the boys' urinals are in public view and there have been difficulties with the overhead cables carrying power and telephone connections. The school is working with the local authority and the diocese to improve the situation.

Care, guidance and support

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with staff, which make them confident about seeking support when they have any concerns or wish to share their news. The extent to which the school involves pupils in its work and development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good induction arrangements for children starting school.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff effectively underpin the support and guidance provided.
- Provision for first aid is good.
- Staff know pupils well and monitor their development effectively.
- Pupils' views are valued and the school council is effective in putting them forward and influencing decisions.

- The school recognises that more training is needed for lunchtime supervisors.

Commentary

Care and welfare

39. Pupils are cared for well. There are good procedures in place for the protection of pupils in line with the locally-agreed arrangements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities.

Health and safety

40. Pupils are safe at school. There are a number of staff trained in first aid and this provides very good support for dealing with any minor accidents. There are sound procedures for dealing with the administration of any medicines, such as inhalers for pupils with asthma. Procedures for making sure that the school is a safe and healthy environment for pupils are also sound overall.

Support and guidance

41. Staff know the pupils well and provide very good personal support for them in all areas of school life. Very good relationships between staff and pupils effectively underpin the support provided. There are good arrangements for children when they start school, with visits to school in the term before they start so that they can get to know the staff and other children. Pupils are very happy with the advice that they are given by staff and all that were spoken to felt that they had an adult to turn to if they needed help. Lunchtime supervisors are sensitive to pupils' needs, but the school recognises that they need more training. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and care from staff and agencies outside the school. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully and they are challenged effectively. The only aspect needing improvement in this area is the marking of pupils' work.

Pupils' impact on the work of the school

42. Pupils have a good sense of ownership of the school. Older pupils particularly feel that they are listened to and that their suggestions are taken seriously. The School Council has been effective in putting forward pupils' views and having an influence on decisions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

This is a strength of the school's work. The school's partnership with parents supports pupils' learning very effectively. Links with the community are good and those with secondary schools are excellent. These both enhance and enrich the curriculum well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with local secondary schools are excellent, enrich pupils' learning and ease the transfer to their next school.
- Links with the community are good and enhance the learning opportunities available to pupils.
- Parents provide significant practical and financial support through the hard work of the parent-teacher and friends association (PTFA).
- Parents give very good support to their children's learning at home.
- Parents' views are sought and valued by the school.
- There is no formal complaints policy.
- Reports on pupils' progress do not provide sufficient information about what pupils need to do to improve.

Commentary

Links with parents

43. Links with parents are very good and parents are very pleased with all that the school does for their children. They find staff very approachable and helpful. The school keeps parents well informed through regular newsletters and special curriculum evenings. They are provided with two formal opportunities to discuss their children's progress as well as having a written report. This is detailed but does not provide sufficient detail about what pupils need to do to improve. Six-monthly reviews update the work undertaken by pupils with special educational needs, offering satisfactory arrangements for them and their parents to contribute to the review process and share in the identification of future targets. This contributes to these pupils' good progress. Through the PTA, parents raise considerable amounts for school funds, considering the size of the school. The PTA also organises social events which provide good opportunities for families and staff to develop good relationships in a more informal setting. Parents provide very good support for their children's learning at home. They share books with them regularly and encourage them with other homework tasks. This all contributes to pupils' good progress.

Links with the local community

44. Links with the local community are good overall and enrich pupils' learning. There are good links with the local church of St Patrick's in Corsham and the priest is a regular visitor to the school. Links are not so strong with the parish church of St Anthony of Padua in Melksham, where some of the pupils worship. The school participates in a range of community events, such as the Corsham music festival.

Links with other schools and early years providers

45. The school has good links with the pre-school playgroups and nurseries in the area and strong links with the local playgroup, which many of the children attend. These help children to settle into school easily. It has developed excellent links with two local Catholic secondary schools. These have been particularly beneficial in providing curriculum enrichment and in ensuring effective transfer arrangements for all pupils. The school has good links with local colleges and universities and provides good opportunities for students to experience life in a primary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is good and the school is managed well. Governance is satisfactory overall with some strong features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a very clear and purposeful lead.
- The staff work well together and provide very good support for new colleagues.
- Financial planning and management support the school's educational priorities very well.
- The expertise of key governors is used well.
- The role of some subject leaders is underdeveloped.
- Governors do not sufficiently monitor the work of the school by finding out for themselves how things are going.

Commentary

Leadership of the headteacher and key staff

46. The headteacher provides a good lead for staff and governors. Spells as deputy headteacher and then acting headteacher prior to his permanent appointment helped to give him a clear insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school. These have been confirmed in the past year through his full involvement in day-to-day events that gives him a very clear understanding of the particular needs and circumstances of pupils. His thoughtful approach provides a focused direction for the work of the school.

47. He is a very good role model for staff and pupils. A significant strength is the way that he has established an effective team of staff who work well together. They share his resolve to enable pupils to achieve as highly as possible. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the teamwork and to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.
48. The headteacher is strongly supported and effectively complemented by the recently appointed deputy headteacher. She has been very well briefed, reflecting the school's very good procedures for the induction of new staff, and this has helped her to settle quickly into her new role. She is already beginning to have an impact on the quality of education, for example, in her leadership of information and communication technology. Now that a senior management team has been established, there is every indication that the leadership of the school will move from strength to strength.
49. Subject leaders are hardworking and enthusiastic, although their roles are still developing. They do not all have a sufficient overview of work in classrooms and standards achieved by pupils. They are not as effective, therefore, as they might be, particularly in helping to raise standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The school is beginning to tackle this and has highlighted this as an area for development.

An inclusive school

50. St Patrick's is a highly inclusive school and all pupils are valued. This is evident in the way that staff respond to their particular needs, including the large proportion of pupils that reach above average levels in the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are also well provided for and fully integrated into lessons and after-school clubs and activities. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school follows the Code of Practice guidance fully and is successfully improving procedures for identifying pupils' learning needs earlier. The SENCO manages and monitors provision efficiently. Leadership is sound.

Planning for improvement

51. Based on his vision of collaborative leadership, the headteacher consults widely on the school's priorities for development. These have included a training day in which governors and staff worked together in the early stages of formulating the school improvement plan. Building on recent improvements in ICT and continuing to raise standards in writing and mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 6, are quite rightly among the current priorities and good progress is being made in these areas. In addition, the plan shows that the school is already aware of the need to develop the roles of subject leaders. Clear links have been established with the performance management cycle and the school priorities are reflected in the headteacher's and teachers' performance objectives.

Recent challenges

52. Good improvement has been made in the school's provision, and standards have improved in the face of staff upheaval. Over the last few years, a well-respected teacher died, several staff have had serious illnesses, and there were initial difficulties and delay in recruiting a deputy headteacher. Staff and governors coped with these challenges admirably and made sure that good provision for the pupils was maintained.

Management

53. The school is managed well. Good procedures enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Roles have been clarified, and tasks and responsibilities have been carefully delegated to match staff expertise as far as possible. The headteacher supports staff well and encourages their professional development. This helps to ensure that they are happy to remain at St Patrick's. The experienced secretary provides efficient administrative and financial support.

Monitoring and evaluating how well the school is doing

54. The monitoring of how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science is good. Test results are carefully analysed to provide a clear picture of standards for staff and

governors. This includes good use of national and local data to compare its performance with that of other schools. In addition, lesson observations identify areas for improvement. These have been key factors in the improvements to teaching and learning since the last inspection. In other subjects these procedures are not so well developed and subject leaders do not have a clear overview of what is happening. This means that staff are not alerted to the strengths and areas for development in these subjects.

Financial management

55. Management of the school's finances is very good. The headteacher and governors have developed well-structured procedures that support the school's educational priorities very well. Their success in bidding for additional funding to support planned projects such as the ongoing improvements to the building demonstrates their determination to ensure the best possible learning environment for pupils. The information in the table below indicates a carry forward that is significantly bigger than the recommended level. This is a sensible measure to cushion the school against staff cutbacks.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	474,306	Balance from previous year	81,479
Total expenditure	479,350	Balance carried forward to the next	76,435
Expenditure per pupil	2,471		

56. The school carefully applies the principles of best value for money. Full consideration is given to alternative providers for services and resources in order to acquire cost effectiveness and spend money efficiently. The school's day-to-day financial controls and procedures are good, enabling the headteacher and governors to closely monitor and evaluate spending decisions. The most recent financial audit took place a year ago and acknowledged well-managed financial controls. The school provides good value for money.

Governance

57. Overall, the governance of the school is satisfactory with some very good features. The most significant are the contributions made by individual governors with particular expertise. For example, the chair's wide professional experience is evident in the recent streamlining of the governors' committee structure. It ensures that both financial and educational matters are handled by governors with specialist knowledge. Discussions with governors show that they are wholly committed to the school and very supportive of the headteacher and staff. Their monitoring of the work of the school by finding out for themselves how things are going and providing an appropriate challenge for the headteacher are not so well developed. All statutory requirements are met.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall provision for work in the Foundation Stage is **good**, with some very good features. This strong picture has been maintained successfully since the last inspection. Children begin school in the September after their fourth birthday, some on a part-time basis initially. Most have had some pre-school experience in nurseries or playgroups. There are particularly good links with the local playgroup. When they start school, children's skills, knowledge and understanding are more advanced than many children of their age. They make good progress in the Reception class. Most children are on line to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of the year, with many exceeding them. Children work in a well-equipped classroom, with an attached, enclosed outside area. They share a building, detached from the main school, with Year 1 pupils. It is in need of repair, but staff work hard to make the environment stimulating and welcoming for the children. The staff team is very experienced and the teacher and full-time assistant have worked together for many years. They provide particularly good support for children as they settle into school life.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between children and staff are very good, and help children to feel secure.
- Staff are calm and patient, and provide very good role models for the children.
- Clear expectations are set for children's behaviour.
- There are very good opportunities for children to play independently and interact with others.

Commentary

58. Very good teaching in this area helps children to achieve very well. The staff are welcoming and encouraging, and as a result, children trust them and have settled into school very well. Staff are very positive in their approach, clearly enjoy the children's company and join with them to celebrate their successes. Consequently, children have high self-esteem, are proud of their achievements and work hard. They know what is expected of them because the staff set clear expectations of good behaviour and hard work. Children know the difference between right and wrong. Very good routines have been established and children need little reminding of school conventions, such as lining up for assembly and tidying up at the end of sessions. There are good opportunities for them to work independently and make their own choices about their work. At these times, they also play and work collaboratively, and in the sessions seen got on very well with each other, sharing equipment and taking turns.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Sessions are carefully planned.
- The classroom is stimulating with an attractive book area.
- There is good focused teaching of phonic and writing skills through purposeful activities.

Commentary

59. Children achieve very well in this area because the teaching is very good. Planning is very thorough and very good care is taken to prepare interesting and relevant activities. In one session seen, for example, children were excitedly preparing their Father Christmas lists. There was a good deal of interesting talk about possible gifts for them and their families before they turned to writing. They achieved well, with most forming recognisable letters and some writing simple words. They are clear about how they should approach learning tasks and this helps them to succeed. At 'circle time', for example, one child talked about the key skills that they needed to use. He mentioned listening, thinking, behaving, concentrating, speaking and listening. Very good attention is paid to developing the communication, language and literacy skills of all children, and the good levels of adult support are a significant factor in children's good achievement, particularly in developing their speaking and listening skills. Staff make sure that children enjoy stories, and a key factor in their good progress is the very good support that they have at home. Parents and carers take time to share books with their children on a regular basis. The classroom is a stimulating environment, with a cosy book area where children can browse. There are alphabets and labels on displays to help children appreciate that print carries meaning, and their written work is valued and displayed well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-chosen activities capture children's interest.
- Staff place a good emphasis on developing children's mathematical vocabulary.

Commentary

60. Again, interesting activities are planned to involve children fully in learning tasks and they achieve well because of good quality teaching. In one session, for example, children were fixing together two-dimensional plastic shapes to make 'parcels' for small toys. They were confident in naming triangles and squares, but were not so sure what a pentagon was. In another session, children looked at three-dimensional shapes with the teachers and several named a cube. In this session, staff constantly reinforced and developed children's mathematical language, and most children understood the concepts of 'more than' and 'less than'. The room is well organised, with a designated mathematical area and a good range of equipment and resources. Interesting displays, such as the one on the 'number of the week', remind children of new learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are securely based on children's experiences.
- Interesting activities and visits grasp children's imagination.

Commentary

61. Children achieve well in this area because the teaching is good. Work is based on their experiences, with every opportunity taken to extend and enhance their understanding. This term, for example, children are learning about the post office. This study included a trip to the Corsham sorting office, which was the basis for activities in all areas of learning. Children

made a map, for example, of the postman's journey, wrote letters and acted as postmen themselves in the role-play area. Staff take care to enrich and extend children's language in this area. An interesting display on metal and silver objects, for example, shows that children have been taught a variety of appropriate adjectives to describe metal objects. Children have daily opportunities to use the computer, although this was not functioning for part of the inspection.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the school hall and playground.
- There is a good balance between whole-class physical education sessions and opportunities for independent work.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to work with tools, small equipment and construction toys.

Commentary

62. Pupils achieve well in this area because of the good provision made for them. Staff make good use of both the school hall and the Foundation Stage enclosed area to develop children's physical skills. In a hall session seen, for example, children used the space well to move backwards, forwards and sideways and to hold a shape and balance. They were involved in this effectively through the good links made with their earlier work on road maps. In an outside session, children selected from a range of equipment and activities and developed their skills through free play. Activities included stilt-walking and the use of wheeled toys. Children also have good opportunities to work with tools and construction toys, which helps them to develop their fine motor skills. In sessions seen, children built models dexterously, manipulating the component parts of the construction materials well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to experiment with art materials and equipment.
- The role-play area is well equipped and used well by the children.

Commentary

63. The lively and vibrant displays in the Reception classroom, together with the materials and equipment available and good teaching, foster children's creativity. There is a designated practical area in the classroom, where children experiment with paint and other art materials. During the inspection, children were working with adult support to make nativity figures. This level of support for focused activities helps them develop their skills, in this case gluing and sticking. Work on display shows that they have worked with a range of media to produce good work such as the sketched self-portraits at the entrance to the room. During the inspection, children were also observed working and playing in the role-play area. Currently, this is designed as a sorting office and post office to enhance the work that children undertook on their recent trip to a local sorting office. The children use the area very well and enjoy taking on the role of post office staff. They showed imagination and creativity in their play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been well above average in national tests for many years.
- Teaching is good and so children achieve well.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in reading.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
- There are good links made with other subjects, especially history.
- The subject leader is enthusiastic and provides good support for staff.
- Parents support their children very well at home, particularly by sharing books with them.
- Marking does not always give pupils a clear picture of what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

64. Standards are currently above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. They are a little lower in Year 2 this year because there is a larger group than usual with special educational needs. Standards have improved since the last inspection and have been well above average for many years in national tests as a consequence of the attention paid to developing pupils' literacy skills and the good teaching and learning in this subject.
65. Throughout the school, pupils speak confidently and reach well above average standards in speaking and listening by the time that they reach Year 6. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, most particularly in the question-and-answer sessions at the beginning of lessons. Their contributions are valued and so they achieve well. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other, showing by nodding and smiling that they have understood. Particularly good attention is paid to the development of drama in Year 1, where there is a creative role-play area in the classroom.
66. The school has worked hard this year to improve standards in writing even further by making sure that all pupils, especially the more able, are sufficiently challenged. Throughout the school, there is good attention to the mechanics of writing and consequently, work is well presented, with good standards of spelling. Teachers give pupils the freedom and encouragement to express themselves well. In one piece about 'Night', for example, an older pupil wrote:

*'She comes when the sun goes
Throwing her billowing, star-spangled cloak over the earth
She lives in the shadows, shrouded in mystery
Depriving the sun of its light'.*

Teachers take care to show pupils that their work is valued by displaying it well in the classrooms and public areas. Good use is made of draft books for pupils to plan their work. They develop their writing skills in other subjects, especially history. In most classes, work is marked thoroughly but comments do not always give pupils a clear picture of whether they have grasped the point of the lesson. Occasionally they are told what they need to do to improve, but this is not a regular feature of marking practice.

67. For many years pupils have done very well in reading and reached high standards throughout the school. The reasons for this are:

- A systematic approach to the teaching of basis skills.
- Good opportunities for pupils to enjoy books and stories.
- A good range of books, both 'scheme' books and books by a range of authors.
- Good classroom libraries.
- Very good support from parents at home.
- Special events like 'Book Weeks' and visits from authors.

Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and are developing clear preferences. Older pupils, for example, are caught up by 'classic' novels at the moment and talked with enthusiasm about books they had enjoyed.

68. Teaching is good overall, with some very good features. This ensures that pupils move forward well. In most classes, teachers strike a good balance between teaching about the mechanics of reading and writing and helping pupils to enjoy reading and writing for meaning and purpose. Planning is thorough and based on the National Literacy Strategy. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly from teaching assistants in literacy sessions. This enables them to achieve well and make good progress.

69. The subject leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has a very clear view of standards and provision through the school and is constantly working with staff to raise standards even higher. She is imaginative and thoughtful in her approach. At the moment, for example, she is trialling a 'writing week' with her class to see whether a more concentrated period of writing will raise standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

70. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use and extend their language and literacy skills in other parts of the curriculum, especially the humanities. At the moment, this is on an ad hoc basis and the school is mindful of the need to plan for the development of speaking and listening skills and outline writing opportunities in a systematic way across subjects and year groups.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 have been high for several years, and have improved significantly in Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well because of consistently good teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- There are good systems for checking pupils' progress.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.
- Opportunities to use mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects are not systematically planned.

Commentary

71. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve well and currently attain standards that are above average. Standards are likely to be well above average by the end of the year. The school's internal half-termly and annual tests contribute effectively to teachers' tracking of pupils' good progress and their assessment data and targets confirm these judgements. Higher-attaining, average- and

lower-attaining pupils are all suitably challenged by teachers to enable them to achieve their full potential. Teachers' methods and strategies are effective in stimulating pupils and ensuring that they enjoy their lessons. Boys and girls respond and achieve equally well.

72. Standards in Year 2 have been consistently high for several years. In Year 6, they improved significantly in 2003 as a result of training for staff, which led to better teaching and the provision of extra support for borderline pupils. In addition there was more focused teaching of higher-attaining pupils, resulting in almost half of the age group reaching above average levels. The subject leader reports that pupils' hard work and enthusiasm and the very good support of parents were also important contributory factors.
73. Most pupils enter the school with above average mathematical understanding. Structured teaching of number skills in particular leads to the well above average results by the end of Year 2. Most pupils develop a good knowledge of place value and use a variety of strategies to solve number problems. In Years 3 to 6, teachers introduce increasing challenges to extend pupils' learning. In Year 6, all pupils continue to achieve well and most of them calculate equivalent fractions, including decimals and percentages, and use formulae to deal with the area of compound shapes. Most lower-attaining pupils are working at levels expected for their age, showing a sound understanding of simple percentages and the area of regular shapes.
74. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy as a basis for planning, and the use of the published Unit Plans in Years 4, 5 and 6, ensure that there is a clear focus on the teaching of number skills. It also ensures that pupils build successfully on their earlier learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 confidently tell the time to the half-hour and the quarter-hour. In Year 3 they calculate time intervals in units of five minutes, while in Year 4 they use 'a.m.' and 'p.m.' and tell the time accurately using analogue and digital clocks. These are typical examples of the ways that teachers ensure pupils' learning develops systematically as they move up through the school.
75. Teaching and learning are consistently good. The main strengths include:
- Careful planning that takes account of the different capabilities of pupils.
 - High expectations of work and behaviour so that pupils are realistically challenged.
 - Positive relationships so that pupils feel secure and are willing to 'have a go'.
 - Teaching that captures pupils' interest and sustains their concentration well.

Day-to-day assessment, including teachers' marking and pupils' involvement in self-assessment to help them improve further, is not so well developed.

76. The subject leader provides good leadership and management and this has contributed to the good standards achieved. Her detailed analyses of pupils' performance in regular testing, highlights specific areas for development and provides clear guidance for colleagues. Not enough use is made currently of the expertise that exists within the school by sharing good practice and providing opportunities to observe colleagues in the classroom.

Mathematics across the curriculum

77. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. Although teachers take advantage of these opportunities as they crop up, for example, in science, geography, and design and technology, they are not yet identified systematically in the planning frameworks for these subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning lead to improved standards.
- There is an emphasis on the development of pupils' scientific knowledge and vocabulary.
- Subject leadership is knowledgeable.
- There is a need to develop enquiry skills and provide sufficient resources for investigative work.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- ICT is insufficiently used in science.

Commentary

78. Since the last inspection, standards have been steadily improving and in the 2003 teacher assessments and national tests, pupils' results in Years 2 and 6 were well above average. Standards are above average in the current Years 2 and 6. An analysis of pupils' work shows a significant proportion in Year 2 and an even greater one in Year 6 working at well above the expected level for their age. These results reflect the strong emphasis placed on raising standards and developing pupils' scientific knowledge, which by Year 6 is at a higher level than their enquiry and observational skills. The school has identified the need to ensure that pupils' investigative skills develop at the same rate as their knowledge and understanding.
79. Under the careful guidance and encouragement of their teachers, pupils develop a good depth of scientific knowledge, often in advance of that expected for their age, and recall and correctly use scientific vocabulary. By Year 5, they understand why seeds are dispersed in different ways and recall the common features of living things, using terms such as 'nutrition' and 'excretion'. Good links are often made with other areas of learning. In Year 3, when pupils discussed the purpose of incisor, canine and molar teeth, they also recalled the importance of oral hygiene and the role of vitamins in a healthy diet.
80. Opportunities for practical activities and scientific enquiry are being used to reinforce and extend pupils' understanding, but current resource levels, although sufficient for whole-class demonstration, often limit opportunities for refining and extending enquiry skills. This has a negative impact on standards in the investigational aspect of science. Year 6 pupils carefully measured to one decimal place the amount their yeast mixture rose, but a lack of weighing and timing equipment meant that other factors in the investigation lacked similar precision. By Year 6, pupils' scientific knowledge is well developed and they understand, for example, that yeast is a beneficial micro-organism whereas bacteria can occasionally be harmful. However, they have not had sufficient experience of scientific enquiry to be able to design and carry out their own investigations and are not, therefore, working at the same level as in scientific knowledge.
81. Good teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls, and pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as others. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their teachers and the well-briefed teaching assistants, achieving as well as their classmates.
82. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection and teaching was good in the three lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 - an improvement since the last inspection. Features of these lessons were:
- Careful planning and preparation.
 - Clear, in-depth explanation of scientific principles and knowledge.
 - Good use of questioning to extend thinking and reinforce scientific terms.
 - Brisk pace and interesting activities to capture pupils' interest.

83. However, marking is generally inconsistent and does not often tell pupils how they are doing or how to improve. Insufficient use is made of ICT within the subject, although the school has plans to develop its use for scientific monitoring. Internet research by Year 6 was the only example seen during the inspection.
84. Good, knowledgeable leadership by the subject leader has supported improvement well. The recent purchase of a commercial scheme and adoption of the latest local authority guidance provide good support for non-specialists. A regular pattern of assessment and careful analysis of test results have helped to identify weaknesses and been used well to inform the subject Action Plan. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been largely confined to sampling pupils' work, assessment analysis and viewing teachers' planning and this has had a positive impact on raising standards. Opportunities are now planned for lesson observations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement in resources, staff confidence and expertise.
- Direct teaching of ICT skills and increasing opportunities for pupils to practise and develop them are good.
- Technical problems slow the pace of some lessons.
- Older pupils have not developed their skills in all aspects of the subject.
- The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is not yet consistently developed.

Commentary

85. Limited examples of pupils' previous ICT work and the few lessons seen during the inspection mean that it is not possible reach secure judgements about standards in the subject or the quality of teaching and learning. It is evident from talking to pupils and teachers and viewing planning that the subject is now receiving the focus required. In the lessons seen, pupils made rapid gains in their ICT skills when given opportunities to practise and employ them and consequently, standards are rising. Older pupils, particularly those in Year 6, have not benefited from continuous use of the new facilities or experienced all aspects of the subject in the expected depth. They therefore have more limited experience of data handling, monitoring and control than expected. Good use has been made of links with local secondary schools to improve coverage of data handling and more is planned to support work in control and monitoring. Opportunities last year for Year 6 to take part in web conferencing and electronic music composition have helped to improve subject coverage and alert staff and pupils to ICT capability.
86. In whole-class sessions good support from teachers, learning-support assistants and, on one occasion, a parent helper, enabled pupils to make rapid progress in developing specific skills as they worked individually or in pairs at the computers. All pupils, including the more able, those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, make good progress and achieve well because of the good support provided during these hands-on opportunities.
87. Teachers' brisk, well-focused introductions made good use of the digital projector to demonstrate techniques or processes. This ensured that pupils were able to begin tasks quickly and develop their ICT skills as they worked. Year 1 pupils quickly learnt to draw a continuous outline before they filled it with colour so that it did not bleed and spoil the face they were creating. Teachers made good use of pupils' existing skills when introducing and developing more complex tasks. Following revision of how to copy and paste, Year 3 pupils downloaded an image of a Tudor house and combined it with their own text. However, when

Year 6 pupils completed a similar task, although they searched the Web themselves and edited the downloaded text, some needed support and reminders of how to cut, paste and copy.

88. Since the last inspection, the creation of the ICT suite and its linkage with the classroom computers in Years 4, 5 and 6 has enabled whole-class teaching sessions as well as opportunities for individual pupils to retrieve and complete work outside the suite. National funding and training have been used well to develop resources and improve teachers' confidence and subject expertise. This was evident in the good quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen and the effective way irritating technical glitches were resolved or overcome. In some lessons, these frustrating interruptions inevitably diverted teaching and slowed the pace of the learning.
89. The deputy headteacher, who is now leading the subject, has already benefited from in-service training. Good use has been made of local authority advice and guidance in drawing up a detailed subject Action Plan and the school is about to adopt their updated scheme of work as the basis for planning. This, together with the newly-introduced assessment arrangements and planned development of a portfolio of pupils' work, will provide a good basis for improvement. Plans to monitor teaching and learning are in place.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

90. Pupils report that they make regular use of the class computers to support work in other subjects, although only one example was seen during the inspection. All classes are now timetabled for sessions in the suite for literacy and numeracy as well as ICT skills. Examples were seen of ICT being used to support work in art in Year 1, history in Year 3, numeracy in Year 5 and science in Year 6. However, these are relatively recent initiatives and the wider use of ICT to support learning by allowing demonstration, investigation or understanding of more complex ideas is at an early stage of development.

HUMANITIES

91. No lessons were seen in **geography**. It is not possible, therefore, to make a firm judgement about provision, although the limited evidence indicates that it is satisfactory. Inspectors spoke to the subject leader about her work, looked at teachers' plans, spoke to pupils about what they had learned and looked at samples of their earlier work. These show that standards are broadly average.
92. In Year 1 pupils begin to develop a sense of place and direction by drawing maps of their routes to school. In Year 2, this is developed through the use of maps and photographs as part of a successful link with a family on Aranmore, an island off the west coast of Ireland.
93. In Year 4, pupils' work on choosing a suitable site for a settlement links effectively with their work in history on the Vikings. In Year 5, pupils use their scientific knowledge of filtration to support their work on water supply. This learning is extended in Year 6 when they investigate rivers. These examples show a suitable emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of different places and themes such as rivers and settlements. However, there is not enough emphasis on the particular skills of geography and enquiry to ensure more rapid progress. There are not enough opportunities for fieldwork and so pupils do not develop their practical skills sufficiently.
94. A review of resources is necessary to ensure that planned topics are adequately supported. The subject is currently being managed satisfactorily.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning extend pupils' literacy and creative skills.
 - Teachers plan lessons and tasks that capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
 - There are no arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning and assessing pupils' progress.
95. Standards throughout the school meet expectations, as they did at the time of the last inspection. All groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily. Visits to places of historical interest enrich pupils' learning, although work on local studies is underdeveloped.
96. Pupils' work shows coverage of all the key elements of historical study. In Year 1, they begin to acquire an awareness of differences and similarities between the past and the present, by looking at an interesting range of toys, for example. In Year 2, pupils sequence events and learn about the lives of people such as Florence Nightingale, which helps them to develop a sound understanding of the passing of time. In all classes, pupils respond well, writing reports in many forms and letters in the roles of people in the past. In Year 3, they make good use of their literacy skills, carefully studying information sheets and confidently sharing their observations of a Tudor feast. These research skills are extended in Year 4 where pupils show very good recall of facts from an earlier lesson when working on the story of Alfred. They made good use of the Internet to download information about the Vikings. In Year 5, pupils were completely engrossed in a dramatic video presentation showing the harsh side of Victorian schooling.
97. Pupils' work indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although in the lessons seen they were mostly good. Teachers set the scene well, creating interesting situations so that pupils felt part of the event or experience. This supported pupils' learning very effectively in one lesson when they responded enthusiastically and were able to suggest thoughtful reasons for why Alfred should be known as 'the Great'. On another occasion, skilful questioning, well-chosen artefacts and pupils' active involvement in the discussion ensured that they gained a clear impression of life for the rich in Tudor times. More sustained progress is hindered by the lack of systems for checking how well pupils are doing. As a result, teachers cannot be certain about the level of work needed to provide a suitable challenge for all pupils.
98. Leadership and management of history are satisfactory. The subject leader is enthusiastic but has a limited view of what goes on in classrooms through teachers' planning and her informal discussions with colleagues. However, she has not yet gained an overview of teaching, learning and standards of attainment by sampling pupils' work and carrying out classroom observations. This means that staff are not aware of strengths and areas for development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

99. Few lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology and music. It is therefore not possible to make a firm judgement about provision. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to teachers about the work, spoke to pupils about what they had learned, and looked at examples of past work.
100. Two lessons were seen in **art and design**, and based on these, and the quality and range of work displayed in the school, it is clear that teaching and learning are good overall. Standards are broadly average, but with some examples of high-quality work produced during the recent Arts Week. This very exciting project was based on 'The Stonemason's Yard' by Canaletto. It involved work in the National Gallery as well as the use of Corsham Court as a basis for observational studies. Pupils also took part in dance and drama activities to enhance their understanding. All classes were required to create two- and three-dimensional pieces of work.

They also designed and made silk painted flags and masks. The work produced is currently celebrated in displays around the school, with pupils justifiably proud of the good results.

101. Work in class is based on national guidelines and shows good coverage of the use of different media. In the lessons seen, pupils made steady progress in one and achieved well in the other. In the stronger lesson, good attention to the teaching of skills helped pupils to move forward more quickly.
102. The subject leader is well qualified and enthusiastic. She has a clear vision for developing work in this subject. Currently, simple procedures for assessing how well pupils are progressing are not in place. This means that there is no overview of how well pupils are doing.
103. **Design and technology** was not being taught during the inspection. Work planned in this area is often linked to other subjects, which enhances pupils' work in areas like history. In Year 4, for example, pupils designed and made Viking houses.
104. An annual design and technology week is also organised so that pupils have the opportunity to work on a project for an extended period. Last summer, for example, the whole school engaged in work related to food technology. Some interesting activities were undertaken and pupils obviously enjoyed the week.
105. Planning shows coverage of the National Curriculum, with appropriate time allocated to the subject. The school bases much of its work on national guidance. However, this is not always transferred into practice, and the amount of work undertaken varies from class to class. Long periods of time between units of work on design and technology mean that pupils' skills development slows.
106. At the moment, there are no secure assessment procedures to track the development of pupils' skills and the subject leader does not have a sufficient overview of provision or standards from class to class and so is not clear about what needs to be improved. This is because she has only very recently resumed responsibility for the subject. Overall there is little evidence of any significant progress in the development of this subject since the last inspection, when it was also found to be a weaker area.
107. On the basis of the evidence seen, provision for **music** appears satisfactory. The curriculum is well planned. Standards were broadly average in the lessons seen in Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieved satisfactorily overall. In lessons observed, teaching and learning were sound. Pupils in Year 2 selected percussion instruments effectively to compose a piece to suit a firework picture. Most Year 6 pupils recognised the regular pulse in music extracts after clapping two, three and four beats in a bar. Some written recording by pupils in Years 3 to 6 shows formal knowledge of musical notation and terminology getting ahead of pupils' practical musical skills and understanding.
108. The school offers a good range of additional opportunities for pupils to develop their musical talents through choir, recorder groups and instrumental tuition. Pupils attending these have good opportunities to perform in school and at church and community events. The quality of pupils' singing is good. They sing tunefully and expressively during collective worship. The use of music and singing in collective worship and concerts contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the ethos of the school. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Resources are satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good variety of experiences.
 - There is good use of specialist teaching.
 - Pupils show very good levels of interest and enthusiasm.
109. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils achieve satisfactorily and that standards overall are average, with particular strengths in some areas. In swimming, standards are above average, with almost all pupils meeting or exceeding the required 25 metres by the end of Year 6.
110. In three-quarters of the lessons seen there was specialist teaching. These included dance lessons in Years 1 and 2 taken by the subject leader and a swimming lesson in Year 4 with the input of two qualified instructors. These resulted in pupils achieving well and attaining above average standards. Whilst these are not representative of the overall picture, they do present a very clear indication of the strong potential for further improvement. In Year 6, standards in gymnastics are average.
111. A broad and balanced curriculum provides a good variety of experiences, including extra-curricular activities for older pupils. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully and actively involved in lessons. Often this is with the valuable support of teaching assistants, who ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated. Both boys and girls respond with great enthusiasm and there is no difference between the standards they attain.
112. In Years 1 and 2, pupils rehearsed a sequence of dance movements, with a good awareness of available space. They shared and developed ideas successfully to improve their own performances. In Year 4, they demonstrated very positive attitudes to swimming, practising enthusiastically to improve their strokes, breathing and confidence. Older pupils showed the same determination in gymnastics, exploring a variety of pathways as they moved around the floor and over the apparatus. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6, mainly girls, showed consistent precision and fluency in their imaginative response to the music of Atomic Kitten.
113. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen, they varied from satisfactory to very good, largely dependent upon teachers' particular expertise. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour and set very clear routines to promote safety. They are very good role models and this helps them to establish very good relationships. Pupils are given every encouragement to plan and perform their movements, but only in the most successful lessons do they also have opportunities to discuss and evaluate their performances to help them improve. On these occasions, they speak confidently when assessing each other's work and readily accept helpful criticisms.
114. The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and, since her recent appointment, has accomplished a great deal in raising the profile of physical education within the school. There has been insufficient time to develop the role further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

115. No lessons were seen during the inspection in this area of the school's work, so judgements are not made about overall provision.

Commentary

116. Within its supportive and caring ethos, the school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. The development of a programme of activities that includes work on health, diet, sex, drugs and personal safety helps pupils develop a safe and healthy lifestyle, gain confidence and interact with others. Visits from outside agencies, residential visits for older pupils and the recent visit of the Life Bus support this well. Regular circle-time sessions in all classes provide opportunities for pupils to discuss and resolve topics of concern. The

development of the School Council and class councils provides good opportunities for pupils to be directly involved in the life of their school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3

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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).