

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST PAUL'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wood Green

LEA area: Haringey

Unique reference number: 102146

Headteacher: Mr Peter Keane

Lead inspector: Mrs Christine Huard

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 257924

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	190
School address:	Bradley Road Wood Green London
Postcode:	N22 7SZ
Telephone number:	(0208) 888 7081
Fax number:	(0208) 889 1397
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Gossett
Date of previous inspection:	7 <sup>th</sup> June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Paul's RC Primary School is situated close to the centre of Wood Green. It caters for pupils between the ages of four and 11 and, although most attend from the local area, the school draws children from the whole parish. Although pupils come from a range of backgrounds, many live in Noel Park which is an area of quite severe deprivation. There are 202 pupils on roll and broadly similar numbers of boys and girls. Boys and girls are fairly evenly spread amongst classes but there are considerably more boys than girls in Year 6. Children join the Reception class in the year they are five, with the eldest starting in September and the rest of the intake beginning in January. Many children have attended Nursery or pre-school and received some preparation for school. When they join the school attainment is below average. The percentage of pupils joining and leaving the school part-way through the year is just above average. A high percentage of pupils, about 70 per cent, come from ethnic minority groups, with 46 pupils receiving some support with learning English. The main ethnic groups represented in the school are black British African, black British Caribbean and Asian. The school also provides education for a small number of pupils from Traveller families. Twenty three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is just above the national average. About 26 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs which is above average. Five pupils – about two per cent - have statements of special educational need; this is above average. The statements relate to pupils with autism and moderate learning difficulties. There are a few pupils who are in public care. Extra support is provided for pupils who have difficulties with learning, behaviour and speech and communication.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27290	Mrs Christine Huard	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage, Science, Art and design, Design and technology, Music
9406	Mr Roy Cottington	Lay inspector	
8183	Ms Gill Keevill	Team inspector	Mathematics, Information and communication technology (ICT), Physical education, English as an additional language
18370	Mr Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	English, Special educational needs
20324	Prof Vera Morris	Team inspector	History, Geography

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

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

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Paul's RC Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and provides sound value for money.** The results of this summer's national assessment tests show that although standards are below average they are rising and this trend is confirmed by the work inspected. The quality of teaching and learning are sound overall and this ensures that pupils achieve satisfactorily. The leadership and management of the school are sound overall, with a strong emphasis on identifying and taking positive action on areas needing improvement.

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

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future development of the school.
- The quality of teaching is good for pupils in Years 4 to 6 and has significantly improved in Years 1 and 2.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are good and enable them to learn effectively.
- Standards in English and information and communication technology are below average.
- The provision for science and music is good.
- Although the provision by class teachers for pupils with English as an additional language is good, the management provided by the co-ordinator is unsatisfactory.
- There is good provision for special educational needs.
- Most foundation subject leaders are not sufficiently confident in their role to take their subjects forward because they have only recently been appointed.
- Assessment is not always used sufficiently well to provide for the needs for all pupils.
- The school provides a caring and safe environment for all pupils.
- Too many pupils are late for school in the morning. This disrupts their learning and that of others.

**The school has improved substantially since the last inspection.** It was last inspected in 1999. Since then it has suffered severe disruption with many changes of headteacher and class teachers. However, since the appointment of the current headteacher nearly two years ago, it has made good progress. The provision for pupils' personal development, particularly their behaviour, is now good. The quality of teaching has significantly improved for the younger pupils. Standards fell substantially in the years following the inspection, but have now begun to rise again. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is now good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

**Achievement is satisfactory overall.** Overall standards in Year 6 are below those found nationally, however they are very good in comparison with those of schools where pupils' previous attainment is similar. Results fell in 2002 but improvements were seen in the tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English are below average, but those in mathematics and science are broadly average. The children in the Reception class make a sound start to their

education, although most are unlikely to achieve the goals expected nationally<sup>1</sup> by the time they move into Year 1, except in their personal and social development. In Years 1 and 2 standards are below average in writing and average in reading and mathematics.

**Pupils' personal qualities and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils' attitudes towards their work and their behaviour in and around the school are good. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Relationships with adults and between pupils are good. Pupils are prepared well for life in an ethnically diverse society. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education.** Teaching is sound overall. Children in the Reception class learn satisfactorily because the teacher has assessed their particular needs and is taking action to ensure they are met. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good and pupils learn and achieve well because they eagerly respond to the challenges with which they are presented. Teaching in Years 4 to 6 is good. Pupils learn effectively because work is well matched to their particular needs. However, there are times when the highest attaining pupils could be challenged more. Teaching in Year 3 is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because they receive good support, as do those for whom English is not their mother tongue.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which further enrich pupils' learning. The school takes good care of its pupils. Relationships with parents and the local community are good and benefit pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with particular strengths in the leadership provided by the headteacher.** He has high expectations of what the school can achieve and a good understanding of the areas where improvement is necessary. Actions taken to bring about improvement are having a positive effect on the school, although there is still more to be done. Governors challenge the school effectively and fulfil their statutory duties. Spending is suitably focused on actions taken to raise standards. Subject co-ordinators do not currently manage their subjects satisfactorily because most are new to the role. However, the school has already recognised this and training has already been booked to help them learn what needs to be done to take their subjects forward.

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

The parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the information they receive. The pupils enjoy school. They say it is very friendly and 'No-one is ever alone in the playground'. The school's survey of pupils' attitudes reveals that pupils like school, enjoy lessons and value the support they receive from teachers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise standards in English and information and communication technology;
- strengthen the co-ordination of English as an additional language to ensure value for money is provided;
- redefine and develop the role of the foundation subject co-ordinators to make their responsibilities clear so that they understand how to take their subjects forward;

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<sup>1</sup> The Early Learning Goals refer to the six areas of learning covered in the Foundation Stage (Reception class). These are: personal, social and emotional development, language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

- make better use of assessment to plan more precisely for pupils' needs; and
- take steps to improve the punctuality of the pupils.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement overall is now satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 and 4 to 6 it is good reflecting the generally good teaching in these classes. Although standards are below average overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, they are beginning to rise because work is usually well matched to pupils' needs. Achievement in Year 3 is poor because teaching is unsatisfactory.

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

- Standards in English and information and communication technology are below average.
- Standards are rising in Years 4 to 6 because the quality of teaching is good.
- Standards in Years 1 and 2 are rising and pupils are achieving well because the quality of teaching has improved since September.
- Some higher attaining pupils are not achieving as highly as they could be because they are not always challenged sufficiently in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

#### **Commentary**

1. Since the last inspection standards declined significantly because of the severe disruption caused by many changes of headteacher and staffing. However, in 2003 the results of tests at the end of Year 6 showed significant improvement in English, mathematics and science. This is because better teaching led to pupils learning more effectively and catching up with what they had failed to learn in earlier years. In all three core subjects an average percentage of pupils attained the expected levels. However, fewer pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English and science than did nationally. The improvement reflects the efforts made by the school to match tasks more closely to the individual needs of the pupils.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.4 (24.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.2 (25.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.9 (27.2)	28.6 (28.3)

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

2. Results of tests at the end of Year 2 show that standards in reading and writing have remained well below average for the last two years. However, inspection evidence showed that standards are now rising in both Years 1 and 2 although there is still some way to go before standards are in line with those seen nationally. This improvement reflects the considerable efforts that the school has put into improving the teaching in this area, with a greater variety of writing and more attention paid to vocabulary, presentation and punctuation. Standards in mathematics, although well below average in the tests in 2003, show significant improvement since September. Pupils are achieving well because greater challenges are being presented to them. Standards in science have also risen significantly. Pupils are achieving well because they are being taught how to investigate and find out for themselves, thus improving their independent learning skills.



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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.1 (13.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.4 (12.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.1 (14.5)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. The school met the target it had set for the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in Year 6 in English in 2003, but did not quite meet its target for mathematics. However, fewer pupils attained the target for the higher level, Level 5, in English, although that for mathematics was exceeded. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for future results. The school analyses and tracks pupils' progress very carefully as they move through the school. The headteacher and deputy have made a careful and detailed analysis of test results in order to identify areas for development; from this the current emphasis on English arose. The school takes trouble to identify relevant differences in performance between ethnic groups, although none of any significance were apparent at the time of the inspection.
4. Children in the Reception class enter the school with a wide range of capabilities, although these are well below average overall. Standards are particularly low in literacy, numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world. However, children settle well and are making reasonable progress in language, literacy and communication, numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development. They achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development. Regular assessments ensure that tasks set are clearly matched to each child's capabilities and that the level of support provided is of generally sound quality. The assessments made of the current Year 1 pupils show that they made sound progress during their Reception Year, although they did not meet the expected goals for their ages in any of the areas except personal, social and emotional development. The support provided by the Reception class staff to pupils with English as an additional language is good and enables them to make progress.
5. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and achieve well. In Year 2, although most pupils attain standards that are below average in reading and writing, they have achieved well overall since entering the school. In mathematics pupils are making good progress and working well at the level expected. They show a sound grasp of number, as well as being able to name two and three dimensional shapes and construct and interpret simple graphs. In science, pupils make good progress. They are learning to investigate and experiment for themselves as well as recording the results of their findings appropriately.
6. Standards in Years 4 to 6 are improving and pupils are generally achieving well. Pupils in Years 3 are achieving unsatisfactorily, because there is insufficient challenge in the work with which they are presented. Tasks are often dull and boring, with an overemphasis on the use of worksheets. In Years 4 to 6 pupils attain standards in line with those expected in mathematics and science, although they are still below average in English. The overall improvement is because the school has now successfully addressed the issue concerning pupils' poor attitudes and behaviour and both of these are now good. The current Year 6 comprises the pupils who were so disruptive in Year 2 at the last inspection. This turn-around, a major priority of the current headteacher, means that teachers can now concentrate on their teaching and pupils on their learning. In addition, the improved use of assessment means that teachers now plan more effectively for the individual needs of their pupils. Tasks in each core subject area are well matched to pupils' capabilities. This has been particularly effective in improving the standards of work produced by higher attaining pupils who are generally well challenged in class, especially in mathematics, where pupils in Year 6 are set by ability. Standards in reading and writing are generally below average. Limitations imposed by pupils' reading deficiencies inhibit their progress in other areas. This means that pupils do not always achieve

as well as they might because some are unable to readily draw inferences from text and this adversely affects the development of their research skills in history and geography. In science, pupils are achieving well. Improvements have been made and appropriate priorities, such as the development of pupils' independent learning skills, have been identified for further development. This is having a positive effect on the achievement of pupils in class.

7. In the other subjects, pupils meet expected standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in ICT are below those expected because, until recently, the school had outdated equipment and little of it. In addition, teachers were not confident and their knowledge was insufficient. This situation has been rectified with a new ICT suite and appropriate training to enable teachers to teach confidently. Standards in music are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6, with particular strengths in composing and performing by pupils. Overall, pupils are achieving at a satisfactory level compared with their starting points.
8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in relation to their individual targets. Needs are identified when pupils start in Reception class and assessments are used appropriately to plan the best level of support. Pupils who have particular difficulties, for example with language acquisition, are given extra help and generally make sound progress.
9. The local authority analysis indicates that some black boys underachieved in the most recent tests for Year 6 pupils. The school has made this a priority area for improvement. In the work seen during the inspection the achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is similar to that of their peers. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils in Years 1 and 2 were not making satisfactory progress. These pupils now make better progress because teachers and teaching assistants are more aware of their learning needs and provide better support for them. Pupils from Traveller families make steady progress in basic skills and achieve satisfactorily overall.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their personal development is very good overall. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The behaviour of pupils has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Pupils' interest in their lessons and their positive attitudes to learning are having a positive impact on their achievement.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- The school's strategies to deal with poor attendance and punctuality are not yet fully effective.

### **Commentary**

10. There have been considerable improvements in pupils' personal development since the last inspection. They behave very well in lessons, are keen to learn and work well together in groups. Relationships with teachers are generally good and disruptive behaviour is rare. None was observed during the inspection. In this environment pupils learn well. Pupils are courteous and friendly around the school, between lessons and at lunchtime in the hall. They play well together outside in the playground. Parents think there has been a great improvement in the ethos and atmosphere of the school since the last inspection. Pupils work in a caring and supportive environment which is enriched by a wide range of clubs run by teachers and parents after school and in the lunch hour. They show genuine care and concern for each other. Pupils express an ongoing concern about the potential for bullying, saying that occurrences are extremely rare. They show a high level of vigilance and a determination to stamp it out should it happen.

11. Pupils are learning to take on more responsibilities in their lessons, classrooms and school. They have opportunities to have their voices heard through the school council. Delegates are elected by their classmates and are an articulate group of pupils who are keen to make their contributions to the development of their school. Opportunities for older pupils to assume responsibilities have improved substantially since the last inspection, although there is still room for them to play a more active role in school life. Year 6 pupils take on responsibilities to set up the hall, operate the music system and they take a leading role in assemblies. They enjoy looking after the younger pupils. Pupils from all classes are responsible for collecting and returning the class registers. Each year group has a class monitor, on a weekly rota system, who is responsible for helping in the classroom.
12. All pupils with special educational needs are integrated well in classes and learn effectively alongside their peers. Personal skills are fostered and encouraged when teachers acknowledge the contribution pupils make to lessons. This raises pupils' self-esteem and gives them the confidence to persevere with their work.
13. Pupils from travelling families are very well integrated in the school. They are happy to come to school and enjoy the activities provided. They have good attitudes towards their work, persevere and their behaviour is good.

#### Exclusions

14. There have been nine exclusions from the school in the past two years; however only three have occurred in the past year, reflecting the general improvement in behaviour in the school. None of the exclusions have been permanent.

#### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

#### Exclusions in the last school year

No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
197	3	0

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

#### Attendance.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.6
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

15. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. The attendance rate in the school year 2001 to 2002 was below the national average. However, as a result of action taken by the school, the attendance rate at the time of this inspection has improved to close to, though still slightly below, the national average. However, unauthorised absence is still above the national average. The school has introduced new strategies and incentives to address the problems of attendance. A significant proportion of the poor attendance is accounted for by parents taking pupils on extended visits abroad in school time. Any non-attendance of pupils from travelling families is followed up quickly and relationships between school and families are normally supportive. Punctuality was judged poor at the last inspection and, although this is improving, it remains unsatisfactory. Too many pupils are arriving late or very late for school.
16. The school promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well overall. Assemblies successfully establish a strong corporate ethos. Contributions of all

pupils are welcomed and valued. There is an atmosphere of respect and friendliness which sets a good tone for the day. The Christian festivals are used as an opportunity to think about the plight of others. For example, at the Harvest Festival food was given to the homeless. Pupils have a sense of being part of the local community and, as well as keeping their own playground tidy, they recently volunteered to keep the street leading to the school gates clear of rubbish too. They visit senior citizens and invite them into the school to join their Christmas Fayre. The money they collect from carol singing in Wood Green goes to Shelter. Through school clubs for drama, art, music and extra language teaching of Italian, pupils enjoy many opportunities for cultural enrichment. The very great diversity of cultural backgrounds represented in the school means that from a very early age pupils have real life experience of learning and sharing within a multicultural community. There are many whole school activities which draw on the rich background of the pupils and their parents, such as the very successful international evenings of music, costumes, dance and food.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is sound overall but good in Years 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6. The school offers a satisfactory curriculum which is supported by a good range of visits and extra-curricular activities. The very good ethos ensures that good care, support and guidance are provided for all pupils. The school has established effective links with parents, partner schools and the local community and these have a positive impact on the learning and achievement of the pupils.

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory overall**. Teaching in the Reception class is sound whilst that in Years 1,2,4,5 and 6 is good. Teaching in Year 3 is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is much improved and is now good.
- There is good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Teaching and learning in Year 3 is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and pupils from the travelling community.
- There are improved opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.
- Assessment practice has improved throughout the school.

### Commentary

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	8 (24%)	12 (36%)	11 (34%)	3 (6%)	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.*

17. In the last inspection, although teaching was satisfactory there were considerable weaknesses in behaviour management in Years 1 and 2 which meant that pupils' learning was affected adversely. In addition, work was not matched closely enough to pupils' capabilities throughout the school because the use of assessment was unsatisfactory. These situations have now been successfully addressed, although assessments are not always used carefully enough when planning work in subjects other than the core. During the inspection teaching was good overall in Years 1 and 2 and Years 4 to 6. This meant that the pupils learned effectively in these classes because they were challenged by and interested in what they were doing. As a result pupils in these classes are achieving well.

18. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are adventurous, take calculated risks and have no qualms about challenging the pupils in their classes. They know what their pupils can do because of good, clear assessment practices. Due to their inspirational approach the pupils are interested in their work, approach it with real enthusiasm and achieve well most of the time. In a very good Year 1 English lesson, the teacher used a rhyming story imaginatively to introduce pupils to the use and effect of rhyming words. As well as reinforcing literacy skills, the teacher took the opportunity to improve speaking and listening skills by encouraging pupils to discuss the task with a partner. The challenge for higher attaining pupils in Year 2 was apparent in an English lesson when, having experienced making an advent wreath, this was then used as a stimulus for their writing. The teacher's expectations were high. She made them clear to the pupils before they started so they knew exactly what was required in terms of quality of writing, spelling and punctuation. As a result the pupils worked and concentrated hard and achieved well.
19. Teaching in Years 4 to 6 is good. Since the last inspection the quality of assessment has improved and, consequently, teachers' planning is much better. This has resulted in them preparing tasks which are more closely matched to pupils' abilities and challenge them more. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson the challenge for all pupils was very good; they were expected to plan, carry out and record the findings of an investigation into solubility during the 90 minutes allocated. Appropriate support was available for lower attaining pupils to enable them to achieve well and an appropriate framework with key questions provided for them. Higher attaining pupils were expected to work independently, measure accurately and record their results in a range of ways. Some even found time to enter their data into the computer in order to create an appropriate graph of results. This approach meant that all pupils worked co-operatively, developing their investigative skills and achieving well. The use of quick-fire discussions with learning partners and in small groups was as evident in Years 4 to 6 as it was in Years 1 and 2. However, occasionally there is room for greater challenge, particularly in the subjects other than the core.
20. The teaching in Year 3 was unsatisfactory during the inspection. The work examined in pupils' books confirms that this is also so over time. In lessons observed, the pace was too slow, the pupils were left sitting too long on the carpet and too little was demanded of them. Tasks set were often dull and uninspiring and the children were given far too long in which to complete them which meant that they lost concentration, became bored and chattered too much.
21. Special needs pupils benefit from carefully planned provision that is well differentiated to meet their needs. Individual educational plans are well matched to pupils' needs and identify the small steps needed for them to make good progress and achieve well. These are assessed termly. Pupils are well managed both by teachers and support staff. The support staff are well deployed both in the whole-class teaching led by the teacher and in group work. Pupils with special educational needs are normally taught within groups in the classroom. Extra support is provided when the class teacher or classroom assistant sits with the group. This ensures that pupils sustain concentration and make good progress. Carefully planned work means that pupils achieve their targets. Occasionally individuals or groups are taught separately for more focused work on specific skills.
22. Class teachers are providing well for pupils with English as an additional language, mainly through the effective additional support of teaching assistants. Most classrooms display numbers in the main languages represented in the class, but generally teachers are not making good use of display to support pupils' first languages and there are very limited dual language books in most classrooms. Sometimes pupils are encouraged to use their first language in appropriate situations. For example, in a Year 1 class, each day the register is taken in one of the first languages represented in the class. This activity is reinforced by a good display of greetings in these languages.

23. Staff have had training to help them understand the specific needs of pupils' from Traveller families. This has been helpful in enabling teachers provide the best kind of support so that pupils work confidently alongside others and contribute their best to lessons.
24. The quality of assessment is sound. The quality of marking is satisfactory. The best tells pupils how they can improve their work and pupils' responses are usually positive and take account of this, but other marking is superficial. Teachers track pupils' achievement carefully over time, they know what their pupils understand and this is used to help them plan future lessons. However, teachers do not always incorporate into lessons sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Sound assessments are made in all subjects and teachers' record keeping is useful and of a satisfactory standard overall.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum provided is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is enriched well to enhance pupils' learning.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- The inclusion of all groups of pupils is good.
- Provision for the teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory overall.
- Opportunities to promote literacy and mathematical skills across the whole curriculum are not planned well enough.

### **Commentary**

25. The school provides a relevant and worthwhile curriculum which suits the needs of its pupils and is a great improvement since the last inspection. All statutory requirements are met, including provision for personal, social and health education. A strength of the curriculum is the provision of Italian lessons for pupils in all infant and junior classes which makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Recent action taken has improved the use of time during the school day. This action has been monitored for its effectiveness and further refinements are being considered. Since the previous inspection planning has improved because of the use of nationally approved guidance. Resources for history, geography and design and technology are now satisfactory. Although planning for ICT is now in place and the opening of an ICT suite has improved the school's capacity for better provision, these improvements have not yet had sufficient influence on learning throughout the school because they are very recent and have not yet had sufficient time to become embedded. Consequently, standards in ICT at the end of Year 6 are too low and pupils in all classes do not explore sufficiently the possibilities of ICT as an aid to learning.
26. Provision for children in the Reception class is satisfactory. Children make steady progress in developing the skills and knowledge they need in all recommended areas of learning. Pupils who have specific difficulties are well provided for so that they achieve as well as expected.
27. Pupils who are on the school's register for special educational needs are supported well. Individual learning plans have clear and concise targets to help pupils' step-by-step progress. Teachers plan work which is matched well to different abilities and personal skills are clearly monitored and fostered by staff. Support staff keep good records of progress in basic skills. They make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Provision has improved since the previous inspection. All pupils have access to a relevant and thoughtfully planned curriculum. Clear targets in their individual plans help them to build up knowledge and skills systematically. Pupils have full access to the range of activities the school provides.

28. The school's ethos of providing appropriate opportunities for all pupils ensures full access to the curriculum for pupils from different backgrounds and of different abilities. Special classes run outside of school time during the Easter holidays and summer term, sometimes in co-operation with a secondary school, provide opportunities for gifted and talented pupils' learning to be extended. Appropriate action has been taken to deal with the different achievement in reading between girls and boys. Children from Traveller communities as well as those from all minority ethnic backgrounds are integrated well and provided with the support they need. The school has established strong links with all families to ensure pupils' needs are understood and met.
29. There is a good range of activities to enrich pupils' learning. In order to boost speaking and listening experiences, theatre visits and visiting puppeteers are arranged. Book weeks, which include visiting authors and performances by drummers and instrumental ensembles, enliven pupils' responses to the arts. Pupils in Year 6 go on a residential visit to Pendarren in Wales. This provides beneficial experiences of outdoor adventurous activities and helps pupils develop good social and personal skills. Links with local schools enhance opportunities for sporting and musical activities. After school clubs, as well as Saturday morning and 'Easter clubs', enable pupils to further their skills in mathematics, science, physical education, art and ICT.
30. New appointments to the teaching staff have brought about a level of stability which the school has not enjoyed for some time. Teachers are supported well by a team of classroom assistants. Resources have improved overall, but the dedicated library space has given way to the new ICT suite. Books for literacy lessons and reading are adequate but there are insufficient fiction and reference books which hinders the development of pupils' comprehension and reference skills.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The measures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good overall. Pupils are well supported, especially with their personal development and in the provision for special needs. Pupils' views are valued and systematically sought. There are good procedures for helping new pupils settle in quickly.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The health and safety of pupils are rigorously safeguarded.
- Pupils' academic and personal development are monitored well.
- New pupils are made to feel welcome and settle in quickly.
- Pupils' views are valued and systematically sought.
- Changing procedures for older pupils are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

#### *Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety*

31. The health and safety of pupils is seen as a priority by school management. As a result of the effective leadership of the chair of the premises committee and the good support provided by the premises manager, the health and safety policies and procedures are well implemented. A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out annually against a checklist covering the whole school environment. Areas of potential risk, as well as areas for development, are identified and effective action taken. The well-being of pupils is also well catered for. Pupils who suffer minor injuries are quickly attended to, reassured and, when necessary, given first aid. Staff treat pupils well and show good levels of respect and care. However, the arrangements for pupils to change for physical education do not provide sufficient privacy and cause embarrassment to some older pupils. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and meet legal requirements. Staff have a good knowledge of the issues and are vigilant for warning signs.

### *Support and advice*

32. The support and guidance for pupils have improved considerably since the unsatisfactory findings in the previous inspection report. Staff know all pupils well and are sensitive to changes in attitude or behaviour. The monitoring of those pupils with special needs is now satisfactory and the management of pupils with challenging behaviour has also significantly improved. There is effective use of other agencies, for example the education psychology service, to meet the particular needs of pupils. The school has recently introduced a system for tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress. Early results indicate that teachers have a better understanding about pupils' achievements and are matching work to their abilities. The introduction of a gifted and talented register is another improvement since the last inspection. Teachers provide good support to individual pupils during lessons. The pupils who were interviewed during the inspection said that they were given good support and help from teachers and nearly all parents expressed the same positive views.
33. Induction arrangements are good. Children join the school from a large number of pre-school providers. This causes some difficulty in maintaining close liaison between staff. Despite this the school has in place effective procedures for ensuring it has good background information and for helping pupils settle down quickly.

### *Pupils' involvement*

34. The school places a strong emphasis on the importance of finding out what the pupils think about the school and involving them in the life of the school. To this end pupils' views are systematically sought through a questionnaire each year and the School Council is seen as an important forum for involving all pupils in decisions about school development.
35. The weaknesses identified in the last report regarding the care and support of pupils have been successfully addressed by the school. Personal skills and academic progress of pupils with special educational needs are monitored closely by teachers and support staff. All adults know pupils well and are sensitive to their particular needs.

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

The partnership between school and home is good. The links and work with other schools and the community are good overall and contribute effectively to pupils' academic and personal development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Communication with parents is good.
- Links with the community give pupils a wider understanding of it and make a good contribution to their lessons and personal development.
- There are some inconsistencies in annual progress reports to parents.

### **Commentary**

36. Parents are given good opportunities to discuss progress and staff are willing to deal with any concerns parents may have. The school has recently introduced a new system for compiling annual progress reports with the aim of making these reports clearer. The system needs some further development as there are inconsistencies across the school in the format and content of the reports. For example, some reports do not show targets for improvement.
37. Nearly all parents show an interest in their children's education and a majority are able to provide good support at home by helping with reading and homework. Parents give very active support to the school. For example, the parents supplied the food for an international evening



during which parents, pupils and staff were able to sample food from across the world. A project involving The National Portrait Gallery included mothers with their children, from different cultural backgrounds, displaying national dress. The high quality portraits produced by pupils are prominently displayed in the school and serve as an example of the rich cultural diversity in the school. Parents' evenings and whole school events are very well supported. Parents are benefiting from a range of accredited courses that enable them to help with learning at home.

38. The Friends of St Paul's is a very active and successful parent/teachers' association. Fund raising events are very well supported and the results enable pupils to benefit from additional resources. The work of the association makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning and staff and pupils alike appreciate their hard work.

#### *Links with the community*

39. Links with the community continue to be a positive feature of the school. Pupils benefit from involvement in a range of community events, such as local festivals. There is a very strong association with the activities of St Paul's Church, including support for senior citizens and raising money for local and international charities. Pupils also benefit from a range of educational visits and visitors to the school. These include trips to a local supermarket and visits to the school by fire service representatives. All these links provide enrichment of the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development.

#### *Links with other schools*

40. Links with other schools are good. Close working relationships with local secondary schools have resulted in effective procedures for preparing pupils to transfer smoothly and quickly to their new schools. The school has also developed curriculum links with other secondary schools in the area. For example, a specialist teacher visits the school to teach physical education to the older pupils. Another good link provides extended learning for gifted and talented pupils.
41. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully informed of their children's progress. They are invited to review meetings and have the opportunity to share concerns with staff. Parents' views are taken into account when setting targets and individual plans are sent home so that they are aware of the particular support their children need.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are sound overall. There are significant strengths in the leadership of the headteacher. Management is sound. Governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The competent and committed leadership of the headteacher and strong support of the deputy headteacher.
- The role of the governors in monitoring the performance of the school is improving.
- There is a good team spirit and all staff are committed to raising achievement.
- The role of the foundation subject co-ordinators is not sufficiently well developed.
- The finances of the school are well managed.

### **Commentary**

42. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The aims and values of the school place a high priority on the provision of a stimulating and inspiring education for all within the ethos of a Roman Catholic school which respects the tenets and beliefs of other faiths. All that the school does closely reflects these ideals. Since his appointment just under two years ago the

headteacher has proved himself to be a highly competent and committed leader. He has been successful in identifying the considerable problems with behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning and taken appropriate action to address these. He has a clear vision for empowering both staff and pupils to give of their best and is focused upon improving teaching and learning in order to raise standards of achievement. He aims to improve the school further. For example, even though there have been improvements in results in the national tests in 2003, the headteacher aims to increase standards to at least match and hopefully exceed, the local authority average. Staff, pupils, governors and parents respect these expectations. Since his appointment relationships between the school and parents have improved. The deputy headteacher has equally high expectations of what the school can achieve. She works alongside the head and gives much useful feedback, advice and support.

43. The governing body provides clear direction and good support. Since the last inspection the governors have become more confident and understand their roles and responsibilities better. Many governors are new and have been supported well by training given by the local education authority. In order to gain a greater awareness of standards and achievement some governors visit the school to monitor various aspects of the curriculum. This builds good relationships between staff and governors and gives a greater insight into how the school is organised. Most governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and some have taken part in training days organised for the teachers to improve different aspects of the curriculum. This is a useful means of evaluating how well the school is tackling weaker areas. The governors are beginning to play a stronger role in the development planning of the school and are not so heavily reliant on the headteacher for guidance in this area. They receive good information on the curriculum through reports from the headteacher and operate effectively in committees, which deal with issues relating to staffing, curriculum, finance and premises. They are gaining a good understanding of their monitoring role and carefully review progress made towards targets.
44. The headteacher has a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and uses monitoring effectively to target action plans for development. There is a shared desire for pupils to achieve high standards, but this does not compromise the broad curriculum and wide range of learning opportunities provided by the school and the development of all children as individuals. A highly positive environment has now been developed and maintained. This, combined with pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, makes a significant contribution to their learning. The headteacher receives sound support from the newly formed senior management team. In order to further increase their expertise the staff involved have been enrolled onto a management and leadership course run by the local authority. The school, quite rightly, has concentrated its initial efforts on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. These areas have been monitored particularly well by the school, consultants and the local authority. This includes examining teachers' planning, regular lesson observations and the systematic examination of pupils' written work. These activities have contributed to the on-going improvements in the curriculum and quality of teaching and learning, as well as enabling the school to identify priorities for future development. Teachers receive good quality feedback on their work and are able to develop their practice through a well-structured programme of staff development. However, because they are new and inexperienced, the role of subject leaders in other areas has not yet been fully developed and is unsatisfactory. They have not yet had the chance to carry out lesson observations although they have monitored planning and examined the quality of pupils' work. Training has already been arranged for them in order to develop their knowledge and understanding of the role.
45. Provision for special educational needs is managed effectively. Time is allocated for the co-ordinator to monitor pupils' progress and deal with essential communication with relevant agencies. Annual reviews of the provision for pupils with special statements are up to date. The special needs co-ordinator's role does not yet embrace the monitoring of provision in classrooms to ensure that the quality of teaching and support is maintained consistently. The provision for pupils from Traveller families is managed well. A recent local authority report highlights the good work done by the school to improve provision for Travellers' children.

46. The leadership and management of English as an additional language are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is not tracking and analysing the achievement of ethnic minority pupils sufficiently well. Consequently learning needs are having to be identified by class teachers alone and allocation of support is left up to them. Although the quality of teaching and support from teaching assistants in the classroom has improved in line with the improvements in teaching in the school, the co-ordinator has not monitored to ensure this is so. During the inspection the co-ordinator was allocated to one class only in which she mainly undertook the role of a teaching assistant. This is not an effective use of the grant that the school receives to raise the achievement of ethnic minority pupils.
47. There are good induction procedures for newly qualified teachers and all teachers new to the school to ensure they settle quickly and soon learn how things work. They are supported well in their professional development to enable them to achieve their full potential.
48. The school improvement plan is linked closely to the school's finances. This ensures that evaluations are made on the extent to which all pupils benefit from targeted spending in the curriculum. Finances are managed well. The school has recently employed the services of a professional schools accountancy service which is proving to be beneficial. The headteacher and governing body apply the principles of best value well. The school administrator plays a key role in this process, ensuring materials are bought at the best price and keeping everyone informed about the state of the school's finances. Governors have recently had to make some hard decisions to ensure the school has remained financially secure and they have carried these out well. Although there is an apparently large surplus carried over from last year, this represents a one-off payment from the government for this year only, as well as refunds of monies from local services for ICT, special educational needs and insurance.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	653,268	Balance from previous year	11,331
Total expenditure	622,782	Balance carried forward to the next	40,439
Expenditure per pupil	3,083		

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

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

49. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class with attainment well below average in all areas of learning, although there is a minority of pupils who are close to average in language, literacy and communication, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Assessments show that by the time they leave to join Year 1, children have achieved satisfactorily, although most will not reach the standards expected, except in personal, social and emotional development. The children make satisfactory progress and the curriculum is planned to ensure that all areas of learning are adequately covered. The teaching is satisfactory overall and there is sound support from the learning assistant in the classroom. Sound leadership from the class teacher ensures that teaching time is appropriately organised. A satisfactory range of resources has been built up over time to stimulate children's learning and effective use is made of these. Action has been taken since the last inspection to provide the children with a secure outdoor play area. Although this is far from perfect, the school only has very little space available and is doing the best it can and there are plans to improve this facility further. Effective systems are in place to record children's achievements so that overall progress can be monitored and individual learning carefully tracked.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

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

- Children achieve well and become more self-confident because of the good organisation and daily routines which are quickly established as soon as they enter the class.
- Adults provide good role models.

#### **Commentary**

50. Most children enter the class having had some form of pre-school experience. Standards on entry are below those expected, although a significant minority are achieving at the level expected for their age. Children are learning to relate well to one another and daily routines have been quickly established. There is a good variety of activities which ensure children are purposefully employed and enable them to move confidently from task to task. During the inspection adults worked constructively with the children, helping them to take turns and encouraging sharing. The class Advent calendar reinforced the caring and concern children should feel for each other, with each door opening with an appropriate aim for the day. For example, 'find a way to help somebody today'. The way in which adults talk with and show respect for the children sets a good example. Children make good progress and by the time they move into Year 1 most pupils will have achieved the standards expected for their age. They are well-behaved, show appropriate levels of concentration and happily share toys and equipment.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is sound.

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

- Staff work hard to improve the speaking and listening skills of children.
- Children appreciate books and enjoy stories.

- Insufficient guidance has been given by the co-ordinator for English as an additional language to help staff develop the language skills of non-English speaking children

### **Commentary**

51. Teaching is generally sound overall and children achieve satisfactorily. Children pay close attention to their teacher, listening with interest and concentration to stories, poems and instructions. They are encouraged to provide detailed spoken comments when asked, although many are still only able to respond to questions with one or two words. However, staff persevere in their questioning at all times in order to build up children's speaking and listening skills. Children show a keen interest in books and handle them with care. Many of the class know and understand some letter sounds and higher attaining children can distinguish and identify the start and end letters of short words. A few children write their names with good control and many write competently over the teacher's own writing. A few pupils are starting to write short phrases and sentences, especially about themselves. The teacher provides an interesting range of books to read to the children and uses puppet characters effectively to bring the stories to life for the pupils. There are appropriate opportunities to develop their speaking skills, both in front of the class and in the role-play area. They are also encouraged to develop their writing skills through the provision of suitable activities, with particular attention being paid to careful letter formation. Children for whom English is not their home language receive sufficient help from their teacher and other staff to help them develop some vocabulary skills. However, staff have received little specific guidance to enable them to do this fully effectively.

### **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is sound.

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

- Strong emphasis is placed on developing children's mathematical language and is included as an integral part of many other activities.
- The teacher uses assessment well to ensure tasks are appropriately matched to children's abilities and provide challenge.

### **Commentary**

52. Adults working with the children reinforce counting skills whenever possible and number rhymes are frequently used, making mathematical development fun. Children are encouraged to use a variety of equipment, including number lines, to reinforce learning. Appropriately planned whole-class and group activities ensure that the breadth of mathematical development is covered. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily and move into Year 1 having not quite reached the expected standard for their age. Adults reinforce learning well by questioning the children whilst engaged in a variety of tasks, constantly encouraging mathematical language and understanding.

53. The teaching in this area is satisfactory and the children make satisfactory progress. This is because the class teacher carefully plans activities based on the accurate assessments she makes of where the children are in their learning. Good reinforcement of language was encouraged in the lesson seen as the children discussed with the teacher what *smallest* and *largest* actually meant. Tasks set were well matched to children's capabilities, with the higher attaining children sorting and arranging various objects in size order whilst others were matching teddies of the same size.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teachers' planning and organisation ensures that this area of learning is appropriately covered.
- Opportunities are missed to develop pupils understanding of the world around them through sand and water play.

### **Commentary**

54. Appropriate planning by the teacher, based on half-termly topics, ensures that children enjoy a sound range of experiences, which help them discover and understand simple science, technology, ICT and history. On starting in Reception, the majority of children have had very limited experiences and overall their knowledge and understanding is well below expectations. The soundly planned curriculum means that by the time children move into Year 1 they have made satisfactory progress, but overall are still not achieving the expected learning goals. Provision for information and communication technology is sound and children are taught 'mouse' skills and how to use simple menus. Children have opportunities to learn about themselves and learn to identify similarities and differences between children in the class. They can identify how they change over time and paint pictures of themselves then and now to illustrate this. Walks and visits around the local area are an integral part of the reception programme, helping the children begin to experience aspects of history and geography.
55. Children have regular access to sand and water play. However many opportunities are missed to extend their learning as no tasks or suggestions for play are made to the children. For example, on one occasion the children had access to sponges but no suggestions were made as to observations they might make. On most occasions there is no adult stationed by the sand and water play in order to stimulate children's imagination through good use of questioning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is sound.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children have sufficient opportunities to make satisfactory progress in this area.
- Restricted outside space and resources mean pupils have a limited amount of freedom to develop their coordination.

### **Commentary**

56. When children start in the Reception class their physical skills are generally below those expected for their age. During their time in the Reception class they make satisfactory progress because of the range of indoor resources available and good opportunities to use them. Every day children have the opportunity to practise using small apparatus, such as paintbrushes, scissors, jig-saws and construction toys. These help them develop fine control and hand/eye co-ordination. Sound opportunities are provided to enable them to develop control of their limbs. Daily supervised outdoor sessions for all the children provide them with the chance to run, climb and operate a range of wheeled toys such as tricycles, cars and scooters. However, the restricted space available means that children only have a limited amount of space in which to play. They also have a weekly session in the hall, for which they undress and dress themselves competently.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is sound.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan a sound range of activities, which enable the children to make satisfactory progress.
- There are too few resources which children can explore and use imaginatively.

### **Commentary**

57. Children have access to a satisfactory range of activities, some of which provide appropriate opportunities for them to use their imagination. Play equipment, such as roadways, construction toys and farm and zoo animals are available and the role play area is popular with the children. Teaching is generally satisfactory. However, specifically planned activities are not always very imaginative. For instance, when painting, children receive little direction, there is little adult intervention and children often paint what they like. Although there are some examples of guided painting, such as some sound self-portraits, these are few. More structure is provided when pupils are preparing for a major event, such as Christmas. Making paper chains provided practice in cutting and sticking while the making of figures for the class nativity scene allowed more scope for the imagination. Singing sessions are planned as a regular feature in Reception. Children really enjoy these sessions and join in enthusiastically.

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

Provision for English is satisfactory and improving.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6.
- Although standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 they are steadily improving because the quality of teaching has improved and is now good.
- Assessment data is not used effectively enough.
- There are weaknesses in the co-ordinator's leadership.

### **Commentary**

58. Standards at the end of Year 6 showed a significant improvement in the 2003 national tests. This was due to the positive action taken by the school to boost writing skills. Extra classes in school, Saturday morning lessons and Easter school, combined with improved teaching, have done much to raise pupils' achievements. Standards in Year 2 remained much the same as in previous years. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing was well below average. However, recent changes in staffing have strengthened teaching considerably in Year 2. There is also a very strong focus on developing basic reading and writing skills. As a result of these changes standards are beginning to improve.

59. Given pupils' attainment levels when they start school, achievement by the end of Year 6 is good. When compared with similar schools, pupils do very well. The school has recognised the difference in reading levels between girls and boys and has taken measures, such as more considered selection of books, to help rectify this. Pupils who have additional learning needs make steady progress and achieve as well as expected because of the good support they receive. This includes those who learn English as an additional language who often receive specially targeted support to help them boost language skills. Pupils from different cultural backgrounds make similar progress and achieve well by the time they leave the school. Pupils in Year 3 do not progress as well as those in other classes because teaching is not

challenging enough. Much of the writing seen consisted of word lists, with little evidence in books that pupils are expected to express ideas at length. Consequently pupils in that class do not achieve as well as they should.

60. When pupils speak informally they are confident and articulate. They readily engage in conversation about things which interest them. However, insufficient attention is given to teaching formal skills, such as reading aloud or choosing the most appropriate vocabulary. In some classes pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to consider their answers. They do not listen to others' views or reflect on them. In some lessons this results in the teacher having to repeat questions more than once and it slows down the pace of learning.
61. Pupils become enthusiastic readers and most are fluent at their own level. Younger pupils have secure knowledge of letter sounds and use these and pictures well to gain meaning from books. Most, however, are not familiar with contents or index pages in non-fiction and are not able to find information in books. By Year 6 pupils demonstrate a growing interest in authors, such as Jacqueline Wilson and often borrow from the public library to supplement their reading. All select books independently and approach new texts with confidence to read accurately. However, pupils do not always gain the full meaning of what they read because they do not always understand unfamiliar words or show an ability to 'read between the lines'.
62. Writing is improving in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils recognise that sentences begin with capital letters and end with full stops. The quality of handwriting is satisfactory. It is generally legible and pupils achieve some consistency in the size of letters. Narrative is beginning to show some structure. Skills are practised in other subjects, for example, when pupils sequence the events of the gunpowder plot in order to build up the story. There is a wider range and purpose to writing in Years 4 to 6. Pupils write poetry, play scripts, narrative and instructional texts to extend formal and informal writing skills. Some well constructed and lively letters from 'evacuees' to their parents clearly demonstrate Year 6 pupils' increasing potential as writers.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers' subject knowledge and their knowledge of the literacy strategy is sound and this helps them to plan and prepare lessons well. Relationships in classes are very good. Teachers know pupils well and understand their specific difficulties. They value the contribution which pupils make to lessons. As a result pupils feel confident and willing to try their best. Teachers take care to match work to pupils' different needs and abilities. Consequently, they make steady progress in lessons. Classroom assistants work effectively with pupils and carefully record their progress. Sometimes, however, they could be more effective during the teachers' input by monitoring pupils' responses, particularly in the light of the significant proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Teachers manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations. They are polite and respectful and generally work hard. Where ICT is used in lessons it has a good effect on learning. In one lesson, for example, the teacher used a computer presentation package to highlight features of a text. This immediately raised the level of interest and some pupils were chosen to use the interactive mouse to help strengthen their ICT skills. In most lessons expectations are high and pupils' skills are challenged. This was evident in Year 6 when pupils had to draw out the features of an explanatory text. Pupils learned about the use of technical language and the impersonal style of such writing. The subject was weather and so provided a good link with geography studies. The pace and challenge of the lesson was in contrast to teaching in Year 3 where pupils were not engaged well because they had to sit on the carpet for too long. The writing topic did not interest pupils and almost all of the vocabulary for writing was supplied by the teacher, with little account taken of the pupils' own language experiences. As a result pupils were not motivated and did not achieve well in that lesson.
64. Management of the subject is unsatisfactory. Systems for assessment are sound and data analysis is used to predict pupils' future attainment levels. However, assessment is not used sufficiently to monitor the progress of different groups and individuals to ensure they stay on



track to achieve their targets. The subject co-ordinator does not monitor or evaluate teaching quality effectively or provide a clear role model for improved teaching.

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

65. There is growing evidence of increased cross-curricular links in different areas of the curriculum and of the effective implementation of key literacy and language skills. Presentation and handwriting are strong features across subjects and in all work displayed. Appropriate non-fiction writing skills are applied in other subjects, for example, the use of the appropriate style when writing up science experiments.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

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

- Standards are in line with the national average and are rising.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Year 6 pupils are well provided for in small teaching groups.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in the teaching of mathematics.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they have to do to improve.

#### **Commentary**

66. In the 2003 national tests for Year 6 average numbers of pupils reached and exceeded the expected standards. In the tests for Year 2 pupils, significantly fewer than average proportions of pupils reached or exceeded the expected level. In the work seen during the inspection there is clear evidence that standards are rising by Year 2 and many younger pupils are now achieving average standards. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 they have made good progress and their achievement is well above that of pupils in schools with similar intakes. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils from ethnic minority groups are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants, achieving as well as their peers. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress. The allocation of an additional teacher to Year 6 to create smaller teaching groups provides well for different abilities and extends more able pupils.
67. The school has worked hard to raise standards in mathematics and results have improved significantly over the last two years. Improvements have been slower in Years 1 and 2 but the present standards are much higher due to improved teaching in these classes. Most pupils enter the school with well below average mathematical understanding; pupils in the present Years 1 and 2 are achieving well and working within the expected range for their age. In Year 1 pupils have a good grasp of the value of coins up to five pence and can use simple addition to solve number problems. Some can use money in everyday situations, for example, to 'make purchases' from the 'class shop'. By Year 2 they are solving mathematical problems using addition and subtraction and they understand place value and number facts up to ten. They can use simple bar graphs to present information and use a simple grid to categorise odd and even numbers. They can name most common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. As pupils move through Years 3 to 6 their rate of progress increases and they are achieving well. By Year 6 they are presenting information and results clearly using different types of graphs. They can measure and weigh using standard measures. They are beginning to use words to express simple formulae. Some pupils are already exceeding the national expectation. For example, a few can use co-ordinates in all four quadrants and in algebra they can construct simple formulae in symbolic form.

68. Insufficient use is made of computers in mathematics and this is an important area for improvement. Literacy is well used in mathematics and pupils use and understand the correct technical language.
69. Teaching and learning are good. Most teachers are making very good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to plan interesting and stimulating mathematical tasks so that pupils make good progress. A good example of this was in Year 1 where pupils worked enthusiastically to find different ways of making amounts of money to 'buy' items using different combinations of coins. However, the analysis of pupils' work showed a few teachers make too much use of worksheets at the expense more interesting work. Another strength is the way different tasks are planned to meet the wide range of ability in some classes. These different tasks are often well supported by teaching assistants. In a Year 6 lesson the teaching assistant was particularly effective in supporting the whole class teaching. She sat with a small group of lower attaining pupils and duplicated the overhead projector work of the class teacher onto a large whiteboard, reinforcing the explanations for the group. This enabled these pupils to access the whole class teaching effectively.
70. The leadership and management are satisfactory as are the improvements since the last inspection. There remain some important areas for improvement. The tracking and analysis of pupils' progress is not rigorous enough to provide clear targets for pupils to know what they need to do to improve or to plan teaching. There has been some monitoring of teaching and learning by the co-ordinator but this is another area for further improvement so that she has a more rigorous analysis of areas of strength and weakness in order to plan improvements.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

71. There are some sound opportunities for pupils to use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects. There were many examples in science where pupils used graphs and tables to record data. In addition pupils are beginning to realise the importance of correct measuring in subjects such as design and technology.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is good.

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

- The leadership of the subject is good and appropriate actions are being taken to improve standards.
- Test results, although still below average, improved significantly in 2003.
- There is a sharp focus on investigative and experimental skills.
- Teachers question pupils effectively enabling them to think around problems and make sensible predictions.
- The use of ICT is not yet fully integrated into the science curriculum.

#### **Commentary**

72. The 2003 test results taken at the end of Year 6 showed a significant improvement compared with those in 2002. This is largely due to the actions taken by the subject leader. She has carefully monitored teaching and learning and meticulously analysed and evaluated test results identifying actions which needed to be taken to improve standards in the subject. She has identified where weaknesses occurred and ensured that these have been addressed. For example, she noted that pupils had difficulty in creating and interpreting graphs so an emphasis has been put on this during this year. As a result, the confidence of pupils is growing, learning has improved and pupils are being challenged more effectively in class. This is particularly evident in Year 6 where pupils are expected to devise and complete an investigation within a given time limit. Pupils with special educational needs receive good

support and expectations for higher attaining pupils are usually appropriate. The achievement of both these groups is satisfactory.

73. Throughout the school pupils are taught the principles of fair testing. In Year 2 pupils investigated forces and what happened when a range of materials were pulled, pushed or twisted. They discussing amongst themselves which forces they were using and how best to word their results. In Year 6 pupils were given very good opportunities to work independently when investigating the solubility of different grades of sugar. They discussed effectively in their groups how to organise the investigation, what conditions would make their testing fair and how best to record their result. In most classes there is an emphasis on discussion which is enabling pupils to gain a greater understanding of what they are learning. It is showing positive benefit and pupils are better able to express their ideas and conclusions when writing. However, these good opportunities to develop independent learning skills are not consistently seized throughout the school.
74. The quality of teaching overall is good. During the inspection, lesson planning ensured a clear structure to lessons with emphasis on the development of scientific vocabulary. A particular strength was the quality of teachers' questioning. They asked for ideas and valued pupils' responses. They helped take pupils on a step further through the use of more probing questions and made useful suggestions to help them. For example, the teacher in Year 5 in a lesson investigating solids, liquids and gases asked what would happen to a puddle in the play ground when the sun came out. The pupils quickly responded that it would dry up. Pupils were made to reason further when the teacher asked why it would dry up and what would happen to the water. In this lesson there was good interaction between the class and the teacher leading to the task which was to investigate whether the shape of a container would make any difference to the rate at which water would evaporate. Teachers review previous lessons well to ensure that pupils are clear before moving on to the next stage. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were investigating forces. The teacher established that the pupils understood what forces were. In a minority of cases pupils are not challenged sufficiently. This was particularly evident in Year 3 where, although appropriate tasks were set, far too much time was allowed for pupils to complete them, with the result that they became bored and lost concentration.
75. There is generally broad coverage of the curriculum as pupils move through the school. During the inspection there was little evidence of ICT being used during science lessons. However, it was used successfully in Year 6 where pupils used a data-handling programme in order to create graphs of their results.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject leader is enthusiastic and has a clear understanding of what needs to be improved.
- Standards in ICT are below those expected.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in ICT are not yet established.

### **Commentary**

76. Only one example of direct teaching was observed as there were no other lessons timetabled to take place during the period of the inspection. In this Year 1 lesson the teacher taught well in spite of having only one computer for the class. Pupils were given a good grounding in understanding the use of the keyboard to delete and use capitals and the purpose of the space bar. The school has until recently had very outdated and limited resources for ICT. A small

computer suite with Internet access which will allow whole-class teaching will be fully functional from January. This, with the acquisition of laptops and data projectors, means that the school is well placed to move forward.

77. There was little pupils' work for inspectors to analyse and what was available indicated a knowledge of basic skills, but limited coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum. Therefore pupils' standards of attainment in ICT are below average across the school. By Year 2 pupils have been taught to use the computer to create pictures and these pictures show that they can use the software effectively and that their mouse control is sound. In Year 3 pupils have been taught the key features of a database but there are few examples of spreadsheets or appropriate database software being used. In Year 4 pupils have used the computer to present graphs showing how they spend their time at home. Year 6 pupils have recently been given the opportunity to create a multi media presentation for homework. This showed that some pupils can word process to an acceptable standard for their age using different fonts, creating a title and using bold, bullet point and underline features. They can import pictures into their work from the Internet or from a CD-ROM. There are some areas they have not yet been taught. For example, they are not using ICT to exchange information or control events using ICT models or simulations.
78. Prior to this year it is clear that ICT has been underdeveloped. However the subject leader, who has only recently taken on the responsibility, is very aware of the weaknesses in the provision for ICT, is enthusiastic to develop the subject and has the subject expertise to ensure this occurs. The improvement plan recognises what needs to be done and has set out appropriate actions to achieve them. The subject leader has worked hard, with the support of the local authority adviser, to ensure the school is now fully equipped to deliver the National Curriculum, both in discrete lessons and across the curriculum. In order to improve the confidence of all teachers they have undertaken training and considerably more training is planned for next term. There is no formal assessment of pupils' progress in ICT, although a useful pupil self-assessment has been developed and this is being trialled with some success in Year 4. This self-assessment confirms the below-average standards. The school has not maintained the standards seen at the last inspection and, therefore, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

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

79. ICT is not used extensively across the curriculum but there are some examples of its useful application. For instance, it was used to good effect in an English lesson where pupils used the computer to build sentences using a word bank. In science, pupils in Year 6 produced a graph showing the results of their investigation. Some teachers are making very effective use of ICT in whole class teaching, using appropriate interactive programmes through a data projector, for example, in Year 1 mathematics.

### **HUMANITIES**

No overall judgement can be made on the provision of geography in the school because of the way the curriculum is planned. At the time of this inspection the subject was being taught only in Year 3. However, evidence from pupils' work, especially the good written work of Years 4 and 5, as well as discussions with Year 6 pupils about their geographic knowledge and skills, suggests that standards are broadly average.

#### **History**

Provision for history is satisfactory.

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

- Pupils learn effectively and are enthusiastic about the subject.

- The quality of teaching in some lessons is very good, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills is not systematic and records are not kept of pupils' work.

## Commentary

80. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected. All areas of the curriculum are covered. Achievement overall is satisfactory and most pupils make the progress expected of them. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well as a result of the effective support they receive in lessons. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive appropriate support where necessary and achieve as well as their peers.
81. Throughout the school pupils are developing a good understanding of historical events and how these have affected people's lives. They have good knowledge and recollection of different historical periods. This was especially well exemplified during a discussion with Year 6 pupils who were able to recount, often with great enthusiasm, what they had learnt in each year of the school, starting in Year 1, with old and modern homes and toys. Then they recalled Year 2 with great excitement and the Fire of London. The fate of Henry VIII and his wives was well remembered from Year 4, but a great favourite was the Victorians in Year 5, "because they were interesting and we learnt about the differences between rich and poor people". Their most recent studies, of life in Britain during the Second World War, are clearly very alive in their minds now and they talk knowledgeably about the trauma of evacuation and the importance of farming.
82. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory and learning is sound. There is much good teaching in Years 1 and 2 which is reflected in the good standards of pupils' written work. For example, in Year 1, the pupils have collected pictures and made appropriate comments and comparisons between old and modern homes and toys. A very good well-planned Year 2 lesson based on the Great Fire of London, provided pupils with a stimulating lesson. The teacher used a good video and asked well focused and pertinent questions to ensure pupils' understanding. Following this the pupils produced some very good realistic, carefully observed and very well written accounts of the fire.
83. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is satisfactory, though sometimes too reliant on completing worksheets with insufficient opportunities for independent learning, investigation and discussion of pupils' own ideas or opinions. Pupils in Year 6 are completing their study of World War 2. They show evident ability and interest but, although some written work is of a high standard, particularly the imaginary letters home from an evacuee, it is sometimes constrained by the use of worksheets. Teachers' marking too frequently amounts to no more than red ticks without comments. Teacher subject knowledge is sound, lesson planning is satisfactory, but expectations of older, abler pupils are not sufficiently high.
84. A new subject co-ordinator who is well qualified and capable is in post. As yet she has not received training for the role but this is planned for next term. The curriculum is well covered, but opportunities to exploit the wide multicultural nature of the school are not yet fully integrated into schemes of work.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were seen in **art** and only one of **design and technology** during the inspection. As a result it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision. However, pupils' work was examined carefully and there were discussions with them about what they had learned in both these subjects.

## Commentary

85. From the work observed around the school standards in **art** are broadly in line with what is expected at the end of both key stages and pupils experience an appropriate range of materials and media. The samples of work show that pupils have access to and experience with a good range of media. It is clear that pupils experiment enthusiastically. Pupils in Year 5 had studied the work of a range of artists before assembling, sketching and painting their own still life pictures. Those in Year 6 had observed how people moved in a range of situations before creating pictures using a range of techniques to give the feeling of movement. From studying planning it is clear that pupils have access to an appropriate range of media during the year and the opportunities to develop a range of techniques, including printing.
86. Standards in **design and technology** are in line with those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. There is good coverage of the curriculum, with all classes learning from an early stage the full design process. This was particularly evident in the one lesson observed where pupils in Year 4 were designing and making electrical circuits for a specific purpose. As well as reinforcing their scientific knowledge, this showed how they could use electricity for a practical purpose in their own models. The quality of teaching was good in this lesson and demonstrated well the thoroughness with which the project had been planned. It is clear from planning and the evidence of pupils' work that appropriate skills, such as measuring, sawing and joining wood are carefully taught and used.

## Music

Provision in music is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The full curriculum is well covered.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic, talented and clearly enjoy their music lessons.

## Commentary

87. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in music exceed those expected. Pupils make good progress. They enjoy music, listen and concentrate well in games and activities. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to appraise and perform music.
88. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed learning and participating in a version of 'Music Macbeth'. The teacher used a tape effectively as a resource to provide musical backing to the pupils' work. Pupils listened carefully to a relatively complicated 'rap' with a counter melody. Having discussed the way the music was constructed, the pupils practised each part, finally putting the two together successfully. The pupils showed they had an excellent sense of rhythm, good clear intonation and a very good sense of pitch and tone. When untuned percussion instruments were distributed pupils were sensible, they devised a musical accompaniment to go with their rap, practised it and by the end of the lesson could sing and play simultaneously to a good standard.
89. The quality of the teaching and learning in music seen during the inspection was good. The lessons were well structured. Pupils listened to pieces of music and everyone had an instrument to play. Pupils take part enthusiastically and make good progress. Pupils in Year 2 responded very well to the story of 'Anansi'. They discussed which instruments would most appropriately represent the different animals in the story. The teacher ensured that as many pupils as possible had a turn at playing the instruments. The teacher introduced the idea of using body parts as additional percussion instruments and pupils used effects such as finger clicking, clapping and tongue clicking well to enrich their compositions. There was good

learning in this lesson because pupils remained strongly focused on what they were doing. The quality of singing by this class was high and pupils showed they had an excellent sense of rhythm.

90. Teachers are supported by an appropriate scheme of work. The music programme has appropriate cross-curricular links and the programme is providing pupils with a rich diet of musical opportunities.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's use of a specialist teacher from a local secondary school is effectively raising standards in Years 5 and 6.
  - The school makes good use of outside providers to teach cricket and football.
  - There are insufficient assessment systems.
91. The provision for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is very good. A teacher from a local secondary sports college plans and delivers the programme for these two classes. Two dance lessons were observed and the quality of teaching was very good and enabled pupils to achieve well. They are achieving well because, while their previous experience of dance has been limited, they are now making good progress and reach average standards for their age. Pupils learn and develop dance movements, they show a good understanding of rhythm and phrasing and they link movements well. They maintain a high level of physical activity and work enthusiastically throughout the lessons.
92. In Year 2 pupils are achieving a satisfactory standard in gymnastics. They perform very basic skills, link them together and they can observe and copy a partner. Standards in a Year 5 swimming lesson were below those expected for their age; nearly two thirds of the class are unable to swim five metres. However, they are confident in the water and are making sound progress. Good use is made of local authority provision at a local pool, although the session observed was a 'test day' which was unrepresentative of the teaching being provided. There was little direct teaching on this occasion.
93. A commercial scheme of work is available for teachers. There are insufficient assessment procedures in physical education and limited monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The support from the secondary school for Years 5 and 6 is an excellent resource. These pupils are well taught and their achievement systematically assessed. Use is made of outside providers to give specialist teaching in cricket in the summer term. Pupils are also given the opportunity to attend soccer sessions after school with a coach from a local professional club. The school makes the best use of its limited on-site facilities.

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

94. No judgement could be made about provision in **personal, social and health education** because only one lesson was seen during the inspection.
95. An appropriate policy is in place to provide sound guidance for teachers. Many of the issues linked to forming good relationships with others are dealt with within the school religious education syllabus. Sufficient time is allocated so that class discussions can take place. Pupils from Years 1 to 6 learn about possible hazards of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, by following a programme which is designed and delivered by a local authority team.
96. The school nurse talks to Year 6 pupils about the changes which take place during growth. Governors recognise that this arrangement is unsatisfactory and are discussing a more

appropriate form of provision for sex education whilst awaiting new guidance from the diocese. There are sound opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of responsibility within a community. The school council gives pupils a chance to represent others' views and negotiate on their behalf. Charity fund-raising helps pupils understand the needs of others and a strong sense of community is forged through links with the parish.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).*