

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dagenham

LEA area: Barking and Dagenham

Unique reference number: 101237

Headteacher: Miss Maire Denninson
(Acting Headteacher: Mrs Maureen Lane)

Lead inspector: David G Collard

Dates of inspection: 18th - 20th November 2003

Inspection number: 257929

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	314
School address:	Goresbrook Road Dagenham
Postcode:	RM9 6UU
Telephone number:	(020) 8270 6524
Fax number:	(020) 8270 6525
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Carol Canary
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Peter's Catholic Primary school is situated in Dagenham, East London. Most pupils come from the local area, although a small number travel some distance to attend the school so that they can take advantage of the Catholic education on offer. There is a variety of housing, ranging from rented accommodation to privately owned houses. The character of the area is changing since the main employer, a major manufacturer, has reduced its workforce. There are 314 pupils on roll, which is bigger than other primary schools. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals (9.2 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. The majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds but a wide range of minority ethnic groups is also represented; pupils from a black African heritage form the biggest of these groups, accounting for about 20 per cent of the school roll. Only a small number speak English as a second language and very few are at an early stage of language acquisition. The number of pupils who have some form of special educational need (10.9 per cent) is below the national average, as is the number of statemented children (0.6 per cent). Their needs are exclusively related to learning difficulties. On entry to the nursery at three-years-old, children have attainment that is below that nationally. By the time they start Year, 1 this has risen to average levels, although there are some who have not attained as well.

At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher had been in charge of the school since January 2003 as the headteacher was on extended sick leave.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11122	David Collard	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology English as an additional language
9327	Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector	
27667	Carolyn Renault	Team inspector	English Geography History Foundation Stage
27602	Richard Perkins	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an acceptable standard of education. Standards have fluctuated but are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The majority of pupils achieve soundly but for those with higher ability, learning is not challenging enough. Teaching is satisfactory overall even though there is some variation in the juniors. Interim difficulties have been managed well by the acting headteacher but the leadership has been affected by the long-term absence of the headteacher and some planned developments for the school have faltered. Consequently, the school currently gives unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The significantly improved results in English at the end of Year 6, particularly in reading.
- Good proportions of average and below average attaining pupils who achieve satisfactorily; but results in national tests fluctuate too much in mathematics and science because higher attaining pupils underachieve.
- Higher attainers also underachieve in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Good behaviour of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, and good procedures to support and care for all pupils at the school.
- The good governance of the school and the strong commitment to improve.
- Not enough flair in the wider curriculum that would make lessons exciting.

There has not been enough overall improvement since the last inspection, although most of the key issues were addressed and developments started well. Teachers now have better subject knowledge in science and ICT. Standards have risen in ICT, although some pupils could achieve more. All subjects of the curriculum now meet statutory requirements. There is a much better range of assessment data that is used to determine the progress of pupils. Monitoring has improved but it has not had enough effect in raising the quality of teaching across all the junior years and this has led to some underachievement.

A sound education is provided for the pupils but, nevertheless, the school has serious weaknesses. These primarily relate to the quality of teaching, particularly for higher attaining pupils and uncertainties about leadership.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 through the school is unsatisfactory. A good start is made in the Foundation Stage. Children enter the school with below average attainment, achieve well and reach the nationally expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils in the infants make sound progress, which mirrors the results from national tests. Standards in reading have consistently been at average levels for a number of years and have improved in writing, although they are still below average. In mathematics, they have fallen this year because, although most pupils achieved the average level, too few achieved the higher Level 3. In the juniors, there is slower progress in Years 3 and 4 because the teaching is not so strong but it is good in Years 5 and 6. In English, standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated since 2001 but there have been very good results this year. This contrasts with mathematics, where standards are below average because, as in the infants, not

enough pupils achieve the higher levels. Results have risen in science because more attention is being given to investigative work, although they are still below average. Standards have also risen recently in ICT but are still below those expected because until this year lessons were too infrequent. In most other subjects, there is adequate, if not exciting, coverage of the curriculum, although provision is good in physical education. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress because their needs are identified clearly. Those with English as an additional language quickly learn to communicate and also make sound progress.

The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good, and their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. The overwhelming majority of pupils behave well. In the very good lessons, they show real excitement and interest. Attendance is above the national average and the school, under the careful guidance of the governing body, promotes this very well. There is good provision for the social and moral development of pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a sound quality of education because the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The majority of lessons are good except in the lower juniors, where teaching is unsatisfactory. Secure systems for planning are in place. Pupils with special educational needs and those with average ability make sound progress and learning assistants are used well to support them. The work for higher ability pupils is not always tailored well enough to their needs. When this happens, these pupils do not build upon what they already know. The curriculum has successfully concentrated on improving standards of literacy and numeracy to average levels but not enough has been done to improve the number of pupils who gain higher levels. It has also resulted in a curriculum that covers the national requirements for each subject but is not inspiring enough. Pupils are looked after well and the school is a safe environment. Good contacts have been made with a city learning centre and older pupils undertake studies in science, art and ICT, which is improving the progress that they make.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory but have been hindered by some unforeseeable circumstances. The acting headteacher has made some crucial and successful leadership decisions that have helped raise the quality of education. Day-to-day management is sound. However, with the uncertainty surrounding the return of the headteacher, there has not been a sufficiently strong and clear direction that would steer effective long-term improvement. The governing body have a good grasp of the difficulties, a clear understanding of their roles and have worked hard to obtain advice and support. There are some early signs of success through communication with the local education authority and the diocese. The governing body ensures that the school complies with statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school and have no significant concerns. They are supported well and feel that the school has been adequately managed in the absence of the headteacher. Responses from pupils indicate that they are pleased to be at school, although some find lessons uninteresting. They particularly emphasise how behaviour has improved recently during breaktimes.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Resolve the difficulties with leadership.
- Improve the provision in mathematics, science and ICT.
- Reduce the variability in teaching quality in the lower juniors, particularly for higher attaining pupils.

- Provide a more lively curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are average at the end of reception, Year 2 and Year 6. Children achieve well through the Foundation Stage because the teaching is focused well. Achievement is sound through the infants, but through the juniors, it is uneven because of the variable quality of the teaching but is more rapid in Years 5 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' good progress in reading through the school.
- The good progress made through the Foundation Stage.
- The well above average standards achieved in the Year 6 English tests this year and the improvement in both mathematics and science; although standards in these two subjects are still not high enough.
- The consistent progress made by pupils with special educational needs.
- Achievement is not good enough in Years 3 and 4 because in these years the higher attaining pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Underachievement in information and communication technology (ICT).

Commentary

1. Results in national tests have fluctuated widely for some time and the evidence from tracking suggests that this will continue. In Year 2 national tests, there is no pattern of improvement, although the figures year on year have not shown an overall decline. This is even more marked in national tests at the end of Year 6, where the school's scores have ranged from well above average to well below average in successive years. Equally, the performance of boys and girls has no significant pattern.
2. The good achievement in the Foundation Stage is linked to the way that teachers are able to develop creative ways to encourage language and numeracy development through play. Children interact well, they can talk about their experiences, although they find writing more difficult. Good reinforcement of counting and number skills ensures that all children, including those with above average ability, are suitably challenged. Similarly, their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development progress well. As with all other pupils in the school, there is not enough opportunity to develop computer skills.
3. In the national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils have consistently achieved average standards in reading over the last four years compared with all schools and with similar schools. This represents good progress from a low base. Reading standards have shown consistent improvement because the school has well-established procedures that are understood by the staff, pupils and parents. This approach has also had an effect on the progress made in writing, where standards improved between 1999 and 2001, although they fell to below average in 2003. Standards in mathematics rose in 2003 but are still below average. The planning for this subject concentrates on raising standards up to the nationally expected average Level 2 and in this it is very effective and has been consistently achieved for a number of years. However, there has been a fluctuation when measured against other schools because of the variable number of pupils that achieve the higher Level 3.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (25.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.4 (26.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (27.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Results in the national tests for 11-year-olds in English have improved from well below average in 2002 to well above average in 2003. Those in the present Year 6 have average standards. The good systems in place develop the progress of average and lower attaining pupils well and so the number working at the nationally average level is above that in other schools. However, the number achieving higher levels fluctuates. In mathematics and science, standards have risen since 2002 at a better rate than that nationally, although they are still below average. This is because there has been an improvement in the number of pupils achieving the average Level 4 but not a similar increase in the number achieving higher levels. After a period of decline following the last inspection, the school has maintained an overall improvement in standards broadly in line with that nationally over the last three years.
- The use of a locally developed literacy strategy has had positive benefits and, with training, has enabled teachers to plan more confidently over the longer term. Its success can be seen in improving results. A similar scheme for mathematics has also been introduced. This has been extremely beneficial in raising all pupils to an average standard, although weaknesses exist in Years 3 and 4. This contrasts with the consistently better teaching in Years 5 and 6, where the progress of all levels of ability is catered for well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are monitored well. Their individual education plans are carefully thought out and work is linked to each small step that they need to make. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is monitored to ensure that their progress is not hindered and they all achieve at satisfactory levels. Younger children who are at an early stage of learning spoken language pick it up quickly and are able to talk confidently in lessons. The wide proportion of different ethnic groups integrate well with each other and the school through the direction of the special needs co-ordinator, who monitors their personal development. As a result, there are no issues that hinder progress.
- Until recently, the provision for ICT has suffered from a lack of resources and the inability of the school to teach all the strands of the subject. Only in the last year have the majority of these problems been remedied. Pupils are now making better progress but older pupils have not had these experiences for long enough and so the more able pupils in particular have not yet attained suitable standards. The use of another local school to provide specialist ICT lessons means that pupils in the present Year 6 are now making faster progress and are likely to reach standards at least in line with those expected nationally by the end of this academic year.
- The high concentration on the core subjects of English and mathematics has weakened the coverage of other subjects. So, while the curriculum for each subject is planned for as required by the National Curriculum, it is not as lively as one would expect and pupils have not developed a high level of excitement about learning. There is better provision for physical education, which encompasses a sufficiently broad range of experiences. The use of literacy, numeracy and ICT is built into the weekly planning. Some of these links are good, such as those for developing posters and cards using computers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes to their work and behave **well**. Attendance is **above** the national average. Overall the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Continuing to promote good attendance.
- Positive attitudes to lessons and good behaviour of most pupils.
- Good personal development.
- Weakness in what the school does to promote spiritual and cultural development.

Commentary

9. As at the time of the last inspection, most pupils have positive attitudes to work and behave well. In lessons, most pupils want to please their teachers. They work sensibly together, are orderly and concentrate well. However, this is not always the case. Some pupils, often boys, find it more difficult to settle and concentrate, have less well-developed social skills and do not always become involved in the lesson. This happens most particularly when the lessons are unchallenging and when the teaching is not matched to the different speeds at which different pupils learn. In their questionnaires, a number of pupils said that they did not find lessons interesting and fun.
10. Standards of behaviour in the playground are mostly good. Pupils play together in a friendly, if boisterous, manner and say that behaviour has improved recently since there is more to do. If there are occasional incidents of bullying, the pupils say that it is dealt with quickly. Nevertheless, the playground environment is still one which needs improvement and this is a view held strongly by pupils. There are few lunchtime clubs and activities to interest pupils. Relationships between pupils are good and there is no feeling of racial tension or harassment of any kind. There is particularly good personal development in the Foundation Stage. As pupils grow older, personal and social skills continue to develop well for most children. They are increasingly able to work together and enjoy doing practical work. At lunchtime, the dining room is friendly, relaxed and very civilised.
11. There continues to be some weaknesses in the way the school promotes pupils' spiritual and cultural development, although provision is satisfactory overall. There is no policy for this aspect of the curriculum and no organised responsibility to ensure that it is part of the planning of topics and individual lessons. Spiritual development is confined largely to collective worship and religious education lessons. Opportunities for pupils to experience awe and wonder in all aspects of learning need to more carefully thought out. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is generally successful, but not enough is done to give meaningful responsibilities around the school, as there are no formal channels for pupils to voice their ideas. Provision for pupils' cultural development is sound but limited. There is a basic provision through poetry, art and music and the study of other faiths through religious education. Opportunities to learn about and enjoy the multi-cultural nature of society are limited. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to understand and celebrate the music, art, dress, food, lifestyle, beliefs and cultures of the school's own population.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	School data	0.9
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.

12. Attendance has improved steadily in recent years and is now well above the national average. Pupils come to school willingly and arrive punctually.
13. There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory, although more variable in the juniors; the curriculum fulfils statutory requirements but is not as interesting as it could be. Pupils are cared for well and looked after carefully in a safe environment, and parents value the school. Links with other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 but there is unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4.
- Good use of teaching assistants to support special educational needs.
- Good examples of teaching in English.
- Variable marking and a lack of its use when planning subsequent lessons.

Commentary

14. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall because in most classes a suitable range of methods and organisation are used. The proportions of good and weaker teaching are similar to that at the time of the last inspection. There is consistently good teaching through the Foundation Stage. In the infants, teaching is always satisfactory and often better. Through the junior years, over half the lessons are good or better but a quarter are less than satisfactory. Year 5 and 6 pupils are consistently taught well, with high proportions of good and, more significantly, very good lessons. This contrasts with the weakest teaching in Years 3 and 4. Where teaching is not so strong, it is because the methods used only interpret the planning for the middle ability range and so higher attaining pupils do not make the progress they should. This variability is the main reason why standards have not improved further and is supported by an analysis of results in national and internal tests.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	2 (6%)	19 (54%)	9 (26%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	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.

15. Teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and can plan lessons that fulfil the requirements of the programmes of study. It has improved in literacy and numeracy because local guidelines have been adopted and improved in ICT as a result of a national training programme. This has started to improve the contribution made by ICT to other areas of teaching and learning. Despite this, not enough has been done to tailor the schemes of work to the specific circumstances of the pupils at St Peter's. In literacy, the more consistent planning has had a positive effect on the achievement that pupils are making, and the higher levels achieved this year are evidence of its success. While there has been an improvement in numeracy, the success is not so marked because the higher attainers are not able to build upon what they already know. So, for instance, in one lower junior class mathematics lesson, the teacher had

to keep referring back to the planning to find out what would happen next. The lesson did not flow well, the introduction took too long and some pupils became bored and restless. When teachers plan confidently and link this to the pupils' individual abilities then the class is clear about what they will learn. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils became excited and motivated in what they were doing. The teacher enthusiastically introduced the investigation, explained why they had to try the experiment again and all levels of ability were given a challenge that suited their need.

16. The methods used in lessons are, in most cases, thought out carefully and there is a balance between whole class activity and individual work. In the Foundation Stage, this is a major contributory reason for the successful learning by children. However, the evidence in books suggests that the work given to stimulate and excite learning could be improved further. Topics and themes are not always used as triggers for work in other subjects such as literacy, so the methods used lack excitement. Creative and aesthetic aspects are not used enough to help pupils develop a thirst for learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers control children well and pupils respond to the relationships that are formed between themselves and adults. Where teaching is not so strong, then there are some behavioural issues that take time to deal with and learning falters. Where there is strong teaching, such as in Years 1 and 5, pupils are able to share ideas with each other and use interesting methods such as role-play. In these cases, the whole class becomes actively involved and pupils shows a real enthusiasm to learn.
17. Marking is variable in quality. It is sound in all years but very good in Year 6 specifically because the higher attaining pupils are challenged to think and understand how to improve. It is better in English than mathematics and science. Constructive criticism is given when stories or poems are written and these are combined with praise and suggestions for improvement. A new marking policy is underway to provide a more consistent approach across the school. Homework is set regularly and is valued by both the pupils and by teachers. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection but are not yet used as well as they could be. Comprehensive records are kept of the younger children and these are used to help planning for future lessons. The acting headteacher has made a good start in using the various forms of information to aid better planning. From a statistical analysis of performance through different years, teachers are able to form different groups linked to ability. Targets for each year have also been set and these are now much more realistic since there is a better use of more accurate data. This has meant that teachers are better informed about the success of their lessons. After each unit of work, pupil or teacher assessment takes place that can direct where lessons should move to next. However, much of this work is recent and the use of the information by all teachers is not incisive enough to raise the number of pupils achieving higher levels.
18. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well by clearly defined individual education plans that are monitored and rewritten in light of improvement. Teaching assistants are used suitably, especially when they are working with lower ability pupils, although they also make a valuable contribution to work in small groups. The number of pupils with English as an additional language has fallen recently, although it is higher than at the time of the last inspection. There are few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English and they are mostly in the nursery or reception classes. These pupils are monitored carefully and quickly pick up spoken language. Where it is necessary, these pupils are then given further support in their written work.
19. In the majority of year groups through the school, teaching in lessons is good and pupils acquire new knowledge quickly. They show enthusiasm, a lot of work is completed and pupils are clear what they have learnt. They are given an opportunity to use this knowledge in unfamiliar situations and relish trying to work out new ideas. However, in Years 3 and 4, where teaching methods or behaviour management are not secure, then higher attaining pupils in particular are unable to work independently or in small groups, relationships become strained and pupils do not learn enough. This level of variability in the quality of teaching is evident in pupils' own views of their school. Four in ten said that lessons were only interesting

sometimes. Discussions indicated that they showed little interest in design and technology because they do not find the work interesting enough. In contrast, three pupils in Year 6 said they would recommend the school to others and felt that the work had been harder this year. This supports the view that the level of challenge has been more successful for older pupils.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **unsatisfactory** overall. There are **not enough opportunities** for enriching the work in lessons. The accommodation is **sufficient**, although resources are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good development of the English curriculum and particularly reading.
- The provision for development of personal and social skills in the Foundation Stage is good.
- The curriculum in Years 3 to 6 does not extend the creative and aesthetic aspects well enough.
- Provision for mathematics and ICT is unsatisfactory because the needs of more able pupils are not met.

Commentary

20. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements but, except in the Foundation Stage, has weaknesses in how it is interpreted. There are some big time gaps between units of study, for instance, in design and technology, and not enough is done to make sure that the planning brings topics and themes to life. English work is balanced well and has shown significant improvement. Experimental work in science is used more extensively and pupils now find lessons more exciting. There are too few practical experiences in geography and history. The workbooks in mathematics are relied upon too heavily, restricting the amount of practical investigation. These conflicting judgements mean that while the curriculum is balanced, in that it ensures coverage of all strands, it does not have enough added extras that would capture the imagination of all pupils.
21. There has been satisfactory improvement in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Pupils in the nursery and reception classes have a well-planned curriculum that provides for each of the six areas of learning. Time allocation for each area of the Foundation curriculum is appropriate.
22. In Years 1 to 6, planning is satisfactory to ensure all areas of the National Curriculum are taught. However, curriculum content is sometimes dull because there is not enough practical or investigative work. The use of generic schemes of work and lesson plans has limited the learning of the pupils when teachers lack the confidence to adapt the schemes to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils. In addition, the two-year planning cycle means that there can be long periods between units of work, such as in geography, where there is a gap of three consecutive terms. While teachers try to plan interim extensions to the subjects, it has led to a lack of continuity in developing skills and understanding. These weaknesses have not been identified quickly enough. For example, weekly timetables suggest an imbalance in the time allocated to some subjects, with English being given a high priority. There is satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education, including sex and relationships education, and anti-substance abuse education, including tobacco and alcohol.
23. There is satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. Early identification of needs and regular review of pupils' targets in their individual education plans means that pupils with special educational needs often make good progress. There is, however, no identification of gifted and talented pupils who may require different activities during lessons in order to challenge and motivate them to achieve their full potential. Those from different ethnic minority

groups and those with English as an additional language have suitable systems for the identification and monitoring of their needs. This restricts the progress of those who have the potential for higher ability.

24. The provision for enrichment, including extra-curricular provision, is unsatisfactory. Activities include booster groups for Year 6 pupils preparing for tests in English and mathematics. There are good opportunities to participate in a satisfactory number of sporting activities such as football, cricket, rounders and netball, and the school provides an annual residential visit for Year 6 pupils. Good links with a local secondary school are helping to raise standards in science, ICT and art and design. There is insufficient involvement in the arts and other creative interests and few off-site activities in relation to geography or history. This contributes to an uninspiring curriculum. There are only informal structures about issues such as improving playground facilities where pupils' views can be listened to and acted upon.
25. The quantity of accommodation is satisfactory. The current refurbishment programme is improving the decor and storage in classrooms. The playground space is difficult to use and the provision of a secure and stimulating outdoor play space for all Foundation Stage children is not well sheltered. A pleasant grassed area surrounds the hard playgrounds but there is no seating or other playground furniture or markings to encourage creative or imaginative play for older pupils. In the written responses from pupils, this was an area that they rightly felt needed attention.
26. There are sufficient teachers and support staff to teach the curriculum. The resources in some subjects such as ICT and design and technology, are unsatisfactory. For example, the computer to pupil ratio (16:1) is well below the national average (9:1) and there are no suitable facilities for food technology. There is a limited range of practical equipment available in mathematics lessons and the range and quantity of percussion instruments in music is low. The large indoor equipment in PE is becoming worn and the condition of small equipment such as balls and ropes is poor. These limit the opportunities for a curriculum that inspires learning.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for **well**. The provision of support based on monitoring is **sound** but pupils' own views are **not gathered and valued well enough** in the process.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well organised health and safety, child protection and general welfare.
- Good pastoral care and support.
- Lack of meaningful responsibilities for pupils and a lack of opportunities to make their views known.

Commentary

27. As at the last inspection, health and safety arrangements are well organised. Staff responsibilities are properly set out and include regular site inspections and risk assessments. Fire drills, first aid, classroom safety and equipment testing are all planned and carried out carefully. Procedures for child protection follow the local guidelines and are led by the acting headteacher. Staff are properly trained to ensure that if any member of staff has any concern about any child, they understand how to react.
28. There are sound systems in place for children to become familiar with school before beginning full time education and for transfer to Year 1. Each teacher has a detailed file of information about the pupils in their class. As well as academic data, it contains pertinent information about family background, any medical concerns and special needs, as well as the teacher's own observations and comments on personal and social skills. This picture builds up as pupils move through the school and, as a result, teachers know their pupils well. This understanding,

together with the good relationships that exist between adults and pupils, ensures they receive good pastoral support but it is not so well used for incorporating individual academic progress. As a result, pupils' needs are not always met and this is one reason why those with higher ability are not challenged so well.

29. Teachers know their class well. They have built up good relationships and the pupils are keen to please. Any concerns are talked through and parents commented on how well any problems are dealt with. There are well known procedures if children do not feel well or if they are worried. The use of target setting by teachers is limited and this inhibits pupils from developing an understanding of how they can help themselves and take more personal responsibility. Pupils have little opportunity to make their views known and to contribute to the way the school works. Meaningful responsibilities are limited to only the oldest pupils; there is no school council or similar vehicle for pupils' views to be heard and the school does not canvas their views in any other way.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **satisfactory** links with parents and with the local community. **Good** links have been made with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The positive views and support of parents.
- The beneficial links with other schools.
- There is not enough formal consultation with parents.
- Annual reports do not focus well enough on what pupils can do to improve.
- Links with the wider community are limited.

Commentary

30. The majority of parents are happy with most aspects of the school's work and the way their children are educated. This is a similar finding to the last inspection. As a result, they support the teachers by helping with school trips, in the library, and in organising social and fundraising events through the 'Friends of St. Peter's'. Parents approve of the homework given to their children and they do their best to help them succeed. Almost all parents talk to teachers at the termly meetings and are keen to help their children improve. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in their child's review meetings. Those who have difficulty with spoken English are given the support of translators if and when it is necessary. Attendance has been improved steadily and parents have played their part in this achievement. A few parents are less happy with the information they receive about progress, pupils' behaviour, and the school's approachability and response to their views. There is some justification for all of these concerns.
31. Staff and parents have many opportunities to talk formally, as well as informally, every day, but the school has not collected evidence about what parents think, their preferences and priorities. Parents are given a report of their child's progress at the end of each year. It contains a reasonable summary of what the child knows and can do, but there is insufficient specific information for parents to know whether their children are doing as well as they should be. In particular, parents need to know more precisely what their child needs to do next and how they might help them.
32. Teachers from the Roman Catholic schools in the diocese meet regularly and the links with All Saints Secondary School are particularly beneficial. Pupils from Year 6 work there each week on science, ICT and art and design. They gain a great deal from the expertise of the teachers and the use of a wider range of equipment. Furthermore, by the time most of them move to the school, they are already familiar with it and settle quickly; the staff know them and their transition is managed more smoothly.

33. Rightly, the school's principal contacts are with its family church. Pupils serve in Masses, both in the church and in the school, and there are regular social events around church and school. However, links with the wider community are limited.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall, but there are a number a contrasting strengths and weaknesses which contribute to this judgement. As an interim measure, there is **sound** leadership provided by the acting headteacher, **sound** day to day management and **sound but improving** governance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The willingness of the governing body and the acting headteacher to succeed, although there continues to be uncertainty about long-term developments as a result of the temporary leadership structures.
- Strong level of challenge to the school's leadership by the good governing body.
- Good commitment to the promotion of equality and concern for the needs of children and staff.

Commentary

34. The long-term absence of the headteacher due to ill health, has affected the school adversely and so, while having made improvements, it has not moved forward as fast as it should have done. The governors are fully aware of how the long-term vision and direction for the school has faltered and momentum has slowed. Despite high levels of support and representations to outside agencies, they have not been able to resolve these problems as quickly as they would have liked and this has meant that the school has not made enough progress.
35. The acting headteacher, while not expecting to find herself in the role of headteacher, has familiarised herself with long-term aspects of school improvement and has managed these well. Problems in the past, created by large class sizes and unsatisfactory teaching, have required the acting headteacher to take successful key decisions following consultation. In addition, much extensive work has been undertaken to improve the whole-school environment and opportunities for learning. There is clearly a strong commitment to equality and a good level of care for the needs of children and staff. A race equality policy is in place, there is an effective strategy to monitor its implementation and the governors are fully aware of its implications. Results of both national and internal tests have been analysed and the special needs co-ordinator, along with other subject co-ordinators, has recently become more involved in this process. Armed with this information, the senior management team can now take a more active and informed leadership role. A secondary middle management team provides another forum for discussion so that the views of all can be encouraged. This has enabled a better understanding of what is working well and how, in general terms, to overcome weaknesses. It has also ensured that the school has remained an orderly community. Inevitably, the uncertainties regarding the return of the headteacher are preventing the development of a longer-term strategic plan for sustainable improvement. This has limited the range of whole-school monitoring of teaching and learning.
36. There is a strong commitment to the professional development of teachers and support staff but the transition from headteacher to acting headteacher has meant that performance management has not had the maximum effect. Despite this, there is evidence that improvements overall have been made in the quality of teaching but opportunities have sometimes been missed for improving it still further. A start has been made in developing more stringent procedures and a new cycle has been set up that is much better timed to provide a match with the school year. Another appropriate recent initiative has been the school's participation, at the local authority's prompting, in the Primary Leadership Strategy, aimed at improving the quality of co-ordination and management across the whole school.

37. There has been some success in addressing action points from the last inspection. The monitoring of teaching and learning within phase teams has been undertaken. This has led to more focused planning in lessons. The curriculum now fully meets statutory requirements and has helped improve attainment for many pupils. It still lacks an emphasis on work for more able pupils to develop a sufficiently rich knowledge and a depth of understanding. The environment for the under-fives is more stimulating and opportunities within spiritual and moral aspects of the curriculum are now satisfactory.
38. The governing body is supportive and is strongly led. Governors make regular visits to the classrooms and to meetings of the senior management team. All statutory requirements and responsibilities are met. They have developed a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors hold the headteacher to good account over spending and budget proposals have to be carefully justified. This ensures that the principles of best value are realised. They share the acting headteacher's concern over the fluctuation in standards in recent years and want the school to improve. They have been very active in trying to resolve the school's difficulties and have made a number of representations, both to the local education authority and to the diocese. In association with the acting headteacher, they have ensured that the school's provision does not deteriorate and, despite the difficulties, have been able, in general terms, to maintain an acceptable standard of education. Despite this, they recognise there are a number of serious weaknesses that need addressing urgently.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	872,898	Balance from previous year	12,825
Total expenditure	900,118	Balance carried forward to the next	-14,395
Expenditure per pupil	2,885		

39. Office administration procedures are sound. No urgent improvements were identified during a recent local authority audit. The temporary secretary has worked hard to become familiar with procedures, although regular financial monitoring is proving possible only with the local authority's help, prior to the provision of training and the familiarisation with new software. The governing body has identified the deficit carry forward caused by high staffing budgets, and they are actively engaged in resolving it with the help of the local education authority and the diocese. It will not have a significant impact upon resources as the deficit is by scheduled payments over a number of years.
40. There is evidence of some improved standards in 2003 and a strong level of support for the acting headteacher. However, when combined with other factors, such as the failure to fully address certain key items from the last inspection and the variability in standards over time, the school presently provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory** overall.

Most children attend the nursery before moving into the reception class in September with attainment below the national expectations. The number of children with special educational needs fluctuates but they are identified well when they start school. The small number of children who are non-English speakers are integrated and supported so that they quickly acquire sufficient spoken English to contribute to lessons. The majority of children move into Year 1 with standards in line with national expectations, which represents good progress. This is because of the good teaching in all areas of learning. Provision is similar to that seen during the last inspection.

Leadership and management are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage; nursery and reception class teachers and support staff work well as a team under the leadership of the newly-appointed coordinator. There have been some good improvements this term in planning to ensure that all staff are aware of what children are supposed to learn. The new national Foundation Stage Profile has been introduced to record the achievement of individual pupils. As these assessments build up, there will be enough information to help teachers plan to meet the particular needs of individual children. Assessment procedures are particularly effective in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs.

Classrooms are well organised and resources are adequate to enable children to access all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, the accommodation is unsatisfactory overall because of the unsatisfactory provision for outdoor learning. There is a small, designated secure area for the nursery class but it is not conveniently situated as the reception staff have to carry equipment onto a playground some distance from the classrooms to provide outdoor learning through guided play.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning through play encourages good interaction and co-operation.
- Nursery gives children a good start to school and they move on to the reception class with ease.
- Good relationships between staff and between staff and children provide a friendly and secure environment for children.

Commentary

41. The teachers provide a good range of fun activities and children can play with minimal supervision. This encourages good self-confidence and independence, for example, when they move with confidence between outdoor activities. Children become confident in trying new ideas and initiating ideas in small groups, for example, in their "Car Wash", queuing in turn to allow the car washers to clean wheels and frames of pedal cars and tricycles. Other children co-operate well, building bridges, playing with musical instruments, skipping and using sand and water trays. They work well as members of a group and form good relationships with each other. At the end of sessions, the teachers set high expectations for children to become independent in dressing and undressing. Good routines have been established to encourage good personal hygiene, such as washing hands before eating. A social time each morning encourages children to learn respect for others and their needs. The good achievement is

ensuring that most children are in line to attain national expectations in this area at the end of the reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are designed by teachers to provide good opportunities for speaking and listening and children achieve well in this area.
- Writing is below national expectations.

Commentary

42. Children enter school with below average standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing. They make good progress because in both the nursery and reception classes there is good planning for children to develop their skills through play. They are encouraged to develop speaking and listening skills through discussion in small groups and whole-class situations when teachers use good questioning to address the needs of individual children.
43. Teachers also plan direct teaching of reading and writing. For example, the children in the nursery class listened with rapt attention to the teacher reading the story of the three bears from a “big” book. Her good use of vocal expression ensured they listened well and good questioning helped children extend their vocabulary and their understanding of “hard” and “soft”. In nursery and reception classes, the children know and enjoy a good range of rhymes and stories and show enjoyment in books, choosing readily to look at books and listen to accompanying story tapes.
44. Planning shows appropriate teaching of letter sounds and writing skills and children can readily access paper and pencils and crayons during free choice activities, as well as practise letter shapes in playdough or fuzzy felt. However, the more able children do not have enough opportunities for small group teaching of reading and writing skills to enable them to make faster progress. The standard of writing in their workbooks shows that they are generally below average expectations with only the most able children attaining national expectations at this stage. The average and above average ability pupils are in line to attain the expected standard for writing at the end of the reception year. Pupils of average ability are able to trace, showing increasing pencil control and some recognisable letters are beginning to emerge. The most able pupils are able to write their own names and are beginning to form recognisable letters, words and sentences. This represents sound achievement.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities are taken to reinforce counting and number skills throughout all areas of the Foundation Curriculum.

Commentary

45. Most mathematics teaching is oral at this stage and there is very little formal recording. The teachers ensure that children are encouraged to learn through play and by good questioning at every opportunity. For example, at morning registration children will be asked to say how many are away or how many are having hot lunches. Teachers and support staff encourage counting

of plastic toys in the sand tray, and an activity was included in outdoor play where children had to hang laminated cards on the fence in order from one to ten. The cost of the car wash was discussed with children, helping them become familiar with counting money, although an opportunity to use play coins was missed. Activities such as making spiders with paper and card reinforced teaching the number eight in reception classes. Children use shapes to make models and pictures, and language such as 'greater' and 'smaller' is used to compare size and quantity. Achievement, teaching and learning are sound and enables average and above average ability children to attain the nationally expected standard at the end of the reception year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good learning through play.
- Good questioning by teachers to develop children's knowledge.

Commentary

46. Good whole-class teaching observed in the nursery class capitalised on an interesting collection of photos brought to school by the children to discuss families. The teacher showed good sensitivity in discussing different sizes and composition of families. The children were able to increase their understanding of relationships, for example, between a grandmother and a mother.
47. The theme of "Weather" was being used to plan cross-curricular activities in reception classes during the inspection. In one class, the teacher enabled the children to make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of the order of the days of the week. There was good involvement of individual children in role-playing the part of the "weather girl/ boy" to put appropriate weather symbols on a map of the British Isles.
48. Children are gaining an appropriate sense of place through activities such as drawing simple maps of their route from home and are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals for this area. A range of materials and tools are provided to encourage the children to explore and experiment when they choose their own activity. They can join construction pieces together and join materials such as paper and card using glue. They have insufficient opportunity to use ICT as part of the range of choice activities because of inadequate resources. Overall achievement is sound with some good examples of children making good progress.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The restricted space available for a sheltered designated outdoor area for the reception classes.

Commentary

49. Standards are broadly average. By the end of the reception year, the children achieve in line with national expectations in this area. Planned physical education (PE) lessons and music and movement in the hall give children the opportunity to develop skills in movement, together with a sense of space and body awareness. During planned outdoor play, they are able to use

skipping ropes, balls and other small equipment to develop their co-ordination skills but restrictions on space limits the range of activities for the development of movement and physical co-ordination. The school has identified the need to provide better facilities and is starting to address the problem.

50. Within the classroom there are satisfactory opportunities provided for children to develop a sense of space, as children are encouraged to move carefully and show respect for other children's personal space. There are lots of toys and games and simple tools, which help children develop manipulative skills. Most children handle tools, pencils, crayons and small construction toys with good control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music teaching is good, with children demonstrating good knowledge of the names of percussion instruments.
- Children are given opportunities to experiment with a range of materials during free choice activities.

Commentary

51. During the inspection, a good music and movement lesson was observed where the teacher made good links with the current "Weather" theme in reception classes. The children responded through good rhythmic movement and demonstrated good appreciation of different qualities of sound, achieving above average knowledge about the names and sounds of percussion instruments.
52. Classroom displays and portfolios of children's work demonstrate a satisfactory range of activities using coloured paper, tissue, paint and other media to create patterns, pictures and collage. Children are given the opportunity to experiment with mixing colours and paint as one of the regular choice activities available each day. They are also able to choose materials to experiment with different textures and shapes. Children achieve soundly and, because of the sound teaching, are on course to reach the requirements of the Early Learning Goals for this area.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall.
- The overall performance of pupils in the 2003 Year 6 national tests, which were well above the national average.
- The number of pupils attaining above average levels is below national averages in speaking and listening and writing at the end of Year 2.
- Assessment is not used to target the next step in learning for groups of pupils with different abilities, other than those with special educational needs.
- Marking does not always help pupils know what they have to do to improve the standard of their work.

Commentary

53. Most children enter school with standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing below national averages. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the standards in English are in line with national averages, as they are at the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils attained standards well above national averages and this represented very good progress, particularly for those with special educational needs. Standards are now at average levels for those in the present Year 6 and are now returning to a similar level as at the time of the last inspection.
54. Standards of reading are generally good from Year 1 to Year 6 and the pupils achieve well. Good teaching is characterised by the use of a range of teaching strategies to teach reading, which include whole-class reading and small group work, as well as regular planned opportunities for individual reading in class.
55. Writing standards are below those of similar schools at the end of Year 2 and the number of pupils attaining above average levels is well below similar schools. Standards of writing seen in pupils' workbooks in Years 3 and 4 were below average. However, good teaching on the structure and style of writing in Years 5 and 6 enables pupils to achieve well and attain standards above national expectations by the end of Year 6.
56. There is appropriate teaching of literacy skills in Years 1 and 2, which follows Local Education Authority planning. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to speak to each other and to adults and improve their vocabulary and understanding. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on playground rhymes, the pupils enjoyed sharing their own rhymes with the teacher. They were helped to develop confidence to speak aloud to the class and also given the opportunity to discuss in smaller groups. In a follow-up lesson, the teacher then encouraged the children to add new actions for the "Teddy Bear" rhyme in teaching about verbs.
57. In lessons, the quality of teaching is sound overall but variable, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6, teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, good teaching helped pupils appreciate that changing the sequence of words in a sentence can help or destroy the meaning. In a Year 6 lesson, there was very good questioning to help pupils recall previous learning and there was good instruction on the features of report writing. The pupils were encouraged to work well together and to achieve high standards by using well-chosen vocabulary. In Years 3 and 4, some unsatisfactory teaching occurs. The lessons lacked pace and activities did not engage the interest of the more able pupils. These pupils therefore made unsatisfactory progress in skills and knowledge in those lessons.

58. Teachers across the school use a consistent teaching strategy in lessons, combining whole-class instruction with small group or individual work. There is sometimes over-reliance on the generic lesson plans, with teachers not matching the pace and content of the lesson to the needs of the class, particularly the needs of the more able pupils. During group or individual work, the teachers offer individuals support by moving around the classroom and monitoring work. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to offer guided support for a sustained period of time during literacy lessons. As a result, small groups of pupils with different abilities are not sufficiently challenged and so not enough more able pupils attain higher than average standards.
59. In contrast, pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress because teachers and support staff have a clear idea of the target described on the individual education plans for these pupils. The quiet rooms between classrooms are often effectively used to withdraw pupils for extra support for some part of the lesson. This enables pupils who are easily distracted to concentrate more readily. During lessons, the teaching assistants often provide good support to individuals, who are encouraged to raise their hands and participate fully in lessons. Those with English as an additional language are given specific support when they are at early stage of spoken language and quickly learn to communicate. Older, more able pupils are not given enough direction to acquire the written nuances of language, such as those written in an unfamiliar style of English.
60. The teachers maintain satisfactory records of pupils' progress but assessment is not used to provide different and more challenging activities for higher attainers. Therefore, those pupils of above average ability are not sufficiently challenged and do not achieve as well as they might.
61. The literacy co-ordinator has a good understanding and knowledge of the subject. She has carried out some monitoring through lesson observation and scrutiny of teachers' planning, which has given her good awareness of the priorities for development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Pupils use their literacy skills across the curriculum, for example, reading for information in science, history and geography. They are able to apply writing skills such as note making and they are able to develop speaking and listening skills through class and group discussions. The links between subjects would improve if writing was linked to a real purpose in current topics rather than specially created themes.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to lessons in the infants, and positive attitudes in the juniors.
- Teachers care for pupils and want them to improve.
- Good progress by pupils with learning difficulties where classroom support is present.
- Unsatisfactory levels of achievement by the more able pupils because their needs are not always met.
- Inconsistent marking and a lack of constructive written feedback.
- The scheme of work has not been adapted well enough to meet the needs of individuals or to allow mathematical work across a range of other subjects.

Commentary

63. The standards reached by pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6 are average overall. However, the achievement of pupils through the school is unsatisfactory because significant proportions of higher attaining pupils are not challenged well enough and standards have fallen since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress against their agreed targets. Those with English as an additional language make similar progress to others of the same ability.
64. Attainment for average and above average pupils is in line with national expectations on entry to Year 1. Throughout the infants, below average pupils make good progress. In 2003, almost all pupils attained the national standard. In contrast, the progress of the more able pupils is slower. Well below average numbers of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in the 2003 national tests. A similar pattern is found in the juniors. Below average and average pupils attain standards in line with similar schools whereas the proportion of pupils reaching above average standards fell well below average when compared with similar schools. Pupils of average ability demonstrate satisfactory achievement by Year 6, as do pupils with learning difficulties.
65. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in mathematics are usually very good. Year 6 pupils speak confidently about their work. In lessons, pupils respond well to teaching that is either satisfactory or better and even during some lessons that are unsatisfactory. Discipline deteriorates where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor. Most pupils are ready to learn but there is a lack of excitement in classes as a result of the routine and mechanical presentation of many of the lessons and the lack of challenge for the more able.
66. Teaching is satisfactory overall but in a small number of lessons it is unsatisfactory and even poor. Use of the local authority's scheme has been adopted without being developed to meet the particular needs of the school. The scheme provides a satisfactory breadth of work but teachers have failed to develop the scheme with their own ideas, particularly for the more able, and many lessons tend to be mundane and dull. Although teachers keep pupil records, they are not used well to adjust plans because of the need to follow a detailed day-by-day lesson progression. Marking is variable. The workbooks do not easily allow for constructive marking and pupils do not always receive sufficient feedback on the quality of their performance. Computers cannot be used in classrooms and this limits the pupils' abilities to apply their skills.
67. Whole-school leadership in the subject has concentrated on following the scheme of work but this has not allowed for a more imaginative and challenging curriculum. A new system of monitoring lessons within year groups has been introduced but the co-ordinator has not been able to assimilate the information so that teaching and learning can be improved. Consequently, the reasons for the lack of higher achievement and standards have not been fully addressed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. There is little evidence of planned and systematic application of mathematical skills to other areas of the curriculum or in any of the lessons seen. In ICT, there are some links connected with the use of spreadsheets and in geography some simple graphs and charts are used to explain data.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over the last four years, standards in national tests have improved from well below average to below average.
- By the end of Year 6, standards fluctuate too much year on year.
- Good use is being made of specialist facilities to help improve the provision.
- Teachers are beginning to recognise the shortcomings and are addressing this through a better understanding of pupils' capabilities.

Commentary

69. Standards are at average levels for pupils in the present Year 2 and below average for pupils in Year 6. This is similar to the test results for 2003, although standards have dropped since the last inspection, when they were above average for pupils in Year 6. In the interim, attainment has fluctuated widely between average and well below average because the teaching has been variable in different classes and because insufficient emphasis has been placed on ensuring that work is challenging for pupils of all levels of ability. This is particularly the case for higher attaining pupils. Evidence of this can be seen in the below average numbers who achieved the higher Level 5 in the national tests in 2003 and when results in Year 6 are measured against those achieved by the same pupils when they were in Year 2. In contrast, there are some reasons to suggest that there has been progress, The general rise in results over the last five years has been steadily upwards, albeit not as fast as those nationally, and results in 2003 rose from those in 2002.
70. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is sound. The day-to-day lessons are conducted regularly and in these, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good control of the classes and use a suitable range of resources to stimulate ideas. Pupils relate their ideas to their own experiences, such as when they talked about the different lengths of sounds. The majority of pupils progress suitably and the majority are able to reach average levels. Concentration during lessons is mixed. Some pupils are able to give their full attention while others take more interest in what is going on around them. Teachers work hard to ensure the whole class is kept on task and change the activities if individuals become bored. Different methods are used to heighten interest, such as pupils discussing their thoughts with each other and by demonstration. In this way the class as a whole gains better understanding. However, when independent work starts then this is usually a single activity for all levels of ability. Some pupils have to work hard to complete it while others become bored because the exercise is too easy. This is a good example of why too few pupils achieve the higher levels but can reach the average level.
71. In Years 3 to 6, there is a similar pattern to the lessons and again day-to-day teaching is sound. Most work seen in the books from last year showed little variation in the work in order to meet individual needs, although there was a good range of simple experiments and investigations. However, overall, teaching and achievement through the juniors is unsatisfactory over the longer term because not enough is done to enable pupils to use the knowledge that they have already gained and by doing so raise their attainment from average levels. Teachers plan pupils' work in line with the various requirements of the subject and there is a suitable balance between investigating and experimenting. In a Year 5/6 lesson, for instance, the teacher ensured that an experiment looking at the length of shadows was completed successfully and did give different levels of ability more appropriately challenging exercises. In the books from this, year more attention has been placed on making sure this happens regularly. Pupils are not able to use their learning from other subjects well. For instance, some Year 6 pupils did not understand that 10 cm and 9 mm could be written as 10.9cms because they have not got a grasp of the use of decimals. In science, there are few

examples of the analysis of data using spreadsheets or research using the Internet. Pupils with special educational needs are better supported and a number go on to achieve the national average level.

72. The curriculum for science is covered adequately and the statutory requirements are met. However, the depth of this coverage is too reliant on the skill of individual teachers and is reflected in good daily planning which is not always translated into stimulating and exciting work. Some lessons, such as those for older pupils, are well constructed and good use is made on one half day per week of a local City Learning Centre (CLC). This is enabling pupils to experience new resources and the expertise of a specialist teacher. There is temporary co-ordination of the subject and this means that further work on professional development and detailed analysis of standards has been halted. However, a start is being made on analysing the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' performance in national tests. This is intended to help inform where teachers should focus their support more closely.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been an improvement since the last inspection but from a low base; standards are slowly improving, although they are still not high enough.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving satisfactorily; higher attaining pupils in the juniors are not doing as well.
- There are too few computers in the school and not all areas of the curriculum can be provided; but outside agencies are being used well to provide those opportunities that are missing.

Commentary

73. Standards are at those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 but are below those expected by the end of Year 6 because not enough pupils are achieving the higher Level 5. Achievement through the school is unsatisfactory because the pupils are not able to build up their skills year on year. While standards are still too low, there has been some improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below those expected by Year 2 and well below by Year 6. The school has recognised the need to improve the provision for the subject and after the last inspection addressed some of the issues quickly. The quality of hardware has been improved, a better range of software is used to introduce pupils to the various strands of the curriculum and teachers have received training. However, the school's ratio of computers to pupils is well below that nationally at 16:1 and there are no facilities to enable pupils to practise what they have learnt outside of their designated ICT lessons.
74. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 quickly pick up the rudiments of the keyboard, mouse and software. They are able to open an appropriate program, use it confidently, save their work and print out the results. They understand how technology can be useful, and those with higher attainment are beginning to think about how useful technology can be. There are examples of drawing, typing and some minor presentations. The majority of those in Year 2 are attaining standards in line with those nationally; a few have standards better than this and all are achieving soundly through Years 1 and 2.
75. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have a good understanding about word-processing, how to make simple presentations and can use simple forms of Internet research. However, few pupils have experienced any control technology, such as by making toys move or using sensing equipment, for instance, to test temperatures. The early gains made in the infants are, therefore, not fully exploited through the juniors and so progress is unsatisfactory. Some work is connected to other subjects such as mathematics and history, and progress has improved in Year 6 through the use of one afternoon per week at a specialist centre. Pupils enjoy these

lessons and feel that they make real progress. However, many pupils are not sufficiently challenged across all areas of the ICT curriculum through each year and as a result achievement fluctuates. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. They are given some support by assistants and also by being paired with more able children during their time on the computers. This has been identified well and both ability levels gain from the experience. Those with English as an additional language are equally well supported when it is needed, although the majority of pupils have no practical language problems related to using the equipment.

76. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved and is now sound. A national training programme has been used to good effect and teachers have a better understanding about what needs to be taught and how to go about it. They are restricted by the lack of equipment, particularly in classrooms, and by the range of peripherals that would enable them to provide more challenge across all strands of the subject. The time spent on ICT is much better now and meets that which is nationally recommended. However, some lessons, especially in the juniors, are too low key. They develop simple skills but do not give enough opportunity for pupils to use what they have learnt across a range of subjects.
77. A start has been made on developing an assessment format in conjunction with the Local Education Authority but this is at an early stage of development and, as yet, the school is not able to identify fully the strengths and weaknesses within the provision. The funding for the subject is well below that nationally. External grants have been used to buy new equipment and all computers have been upgraded or replaced. However, this process has been slow and, while it shows an improvement since the last inspection, has not kept up with the national trend. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve the resources and has a suitable plan for refurbishment. He has spent time ensuring that the hardware is reliable and, with the support of a technician, is endeavouring to raise the quality of provision. His yearly budget is low and without further funding the provision will not keep pace with the needs of the subject nationally.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. Computers and other forms of technology are not used well enough across other areas of the curriculum. There are few examples of work in science, geography, history and mathematics. It is better in English, where pupils have been able to undertake word processing as part of their story writing or poetry and in developing posters, cards and very simple presentations. However, this is not at a high enough level. There is little multimedia work using music or animations, or analysis of how different presentations are affected by the way they are used. Additionally, the work in lessons tends to be in isolation and so older and higher attaining pupils in particular do not fully recognise the intrinsic use of computers as a tool in learning.

HUMANITIES

79. No lessons were observed in **geography** and few in **history**. Because of this, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in the **humanities**. The scheme of work used by the school provides for satisfactory coverage of the programme of studies. Scrutiny of planning showing infrequent coverage and discussions with pupils about previous work would indicate that there is a weakness in provision. There is no subject co-ordinator, although one is to be appointed next term. There is a need to consider more frequent teaching of study units so that pupils have continuity in learning.
80. In **history**, the 'Toys and Games' topic in the infants provides pupils with an interesting and relevant context to study life in the past. The recent Victorian topic was highly motivating for pupils, who enjoyed the role-play involved in the Victorian Day and could recall many facts about Victorian life following this experience. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates good development of skills in history, such as considering similarities and differences between the

Victorian schoolroom and today's classrooms. Standards in pupils' books are in line with national expectations by Year 2.

81. By Year 6, pupils have acquired appropriate skills and knowledge, and standards in **history** are in line with national expectations. Good teaching observed in a Year 5 lesson was characterised by an imaginative format, using four pupils to answer questions in the role of Tudor monarchs. This engaged the attention of all the pupils and provided them with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of some complex political questions concerning war, religion and execution. The pupils demonstrated well-developed ideas about what is fair. The teacher's very good supplementary questioning extended the pupils' thinking and learning. The work in pupils' books in Years 5 and 6 demonstrates that pupils acquire satisfactory knowledge and skills overall. Open-ended work enables the more able pupils to develop synthesis and analytical skills.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82. Very few lessons were seen in **art and design, music, physical education** and **design and technology**; therefore, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision. A limited amount of work from this term was analysed, as well as teachers' planning. There were discussions with pupils and teachers. This evidence indicates that standards are variable but best in physical education. A few clubs exist for pupils to pursue these subjects in their own time.
83. Standards of work in **art and design** are in line with those expected nationally by the age of 11. A Year 6 class enjoyed the precision and methods of pointillism. There are some gaps in understanding in the infants and a group of seven-year-olds could not explain how to colour mix green from primary colours. Curriculum breadth is satisfactory with an average range of experiences. Pupils study artists such as Lowry and Seurat and have the opportunity to replicate techniques used, but some of the written work by 11-year-olds was identical and copied. Resources are satisfactory but some infants had not heard of charcoal. Good use is made in Year 6 of a local city learning centre to provide a better range of opportunities than the school can offer.
84. The curriculum breadth in **design and technology** is satisfactory but the planning methods criticised in the last report are still present. The co-ordinator has finally acted and is in the process of presenting a scheme of work where lessons would be spread over the year to commence from September 2004. In pupils' work seen, there is limited recorded evidence of the design and make process. There are no suitable facilities for food technology. The accurate use of scissors in cutting is under-developed by age seven. The infants are muted in their enthusiasm for design and technology lessons, in direct contrast with the enjoyment expressed by 11-year-olds.
85. In **music**, pupils reported experience of a basic range of singing, playing and listening experiences, with average levels of interest. A good lesson was seen in Year 4 where pupils were encouraged to learn well. The infants sang with enthusiasm together in hymn practice but the lack of pitched accompaniment made the leading of accurate singing more difficult. Percussion resources are limited in quantity and range, with limited opportunity taken to introduce instruments from different cultures. A small number of pupils participate in instrumental lessons such as the flute, with peripatetic music teachers.
86. There is a good range of activities in **physical education** that includes swimming, gymnastics and games. Two halls provide good indoor accommodation for PE and there is an adequate field and playground for outdoor lessons. Pupils of all ages speak with great enthusiasm about the subject. In two good lessons seen at Years 1/2 and Year 5/6, pupils made good progress in developing passing and balance skills respectively. The large indoor gymnastics equipment is beginning to look its age and is becoming worn. Storage of small equipment such as balls and

ropes is untidy and their condition is often poor. A touch rugby club for boys and girls, led at lunchtime by a parent who is also vice chair of governors, is well organised and coached. The school's team has a long history of success in competitions, the most recent being this term when they won the borough event.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

87. The limited evidence means that an overall judgement on provision cannot be made. The school provides some specific opportunities to develop a better understanding of the role of the pupils in their society. Circle Time, a form of discussion, is used as a forum for pupils to share their views about others, their feelings, worries and anxieties. The various aspects of health and relationships education, such as drugs awareness, is promoted through science and religious education lessons. Not enough is done to promote independent thought. There is no school council or other formal avenues to express ideas about improvements. Excellence is promoted through annual headteacher's awards and weekly achievements.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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