

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stalybridge

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106241

Headteacher: Mrs B Harrold

Lead inspector: Mrs J Barnes

Dates of inspection: 20 – 22 October 2003

Inspection number: 257930

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:	240
School address:	Hough Hill Road Stalybridge Cheshire
Postcode:	SK15 2HB
Telephone number:	(0161) 338 3303
Fax number:	(0161) 303 2073
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Merrylees
Date of previous inspection:	2 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Peter's Catholic Primary School has a nursery with 25 part-time places and is situated in a pleasant environment close to the centre of the small town of Stalybridge in Tameside. There are 240 pupils on roll aged from three to eleven years, and the school is often oversubscribed. The school population is stable, with only a small proportion of pupils leaving and arriving. The locality is mixed, mostly privately owned housing, with most families having at least one parent in employment. Entitlement to free school meals is about eight per cent, which is well below the national average. There is a very small number of pupils with backgrounds other than white British, almost all of whom speak English as their first language. Most pupils enter the nursery with at least the levels of achievement expected for their age. About one in ten pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs. There are strong links with the church which is adjacent to the school, and most parents and governors are from the faith community. The school has received national achievement awards for each of the last three years for improvements in standards. Several changes of staff have taken place since the last inspection in 1998, including the headteacher, who has been in post for almost three years.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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17736	P Dennison	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs
3108	E Jackson	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Modern foreign languages Music English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which has improved considerably since the last inspection. Standards are high in English, mathematics and science; teaching is good and in most subjects pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities. Children are given a very good start in the nursery and reception classes by caring staff who provide challenging activities which are planned in detail and skilfully taught. This good start is built on effectively through the school. Pupils' behaviour is good and by Year 6 they are confident learners who achieve well in tests and in class work. The school is well led by a capable headteacher, who is effectively supported by key staff and governors. The staff provide a supportive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Relationships with parents and the community are strong, particularly with the faith community, and support the school in its very effective provision for pupils' social, moral and spiritual development. From this good overall position there is room for further improvement, particularly in aiming for higher standards in some of the non-core subjects, and in developing the pupils' independence and leadership skills. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- very good standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science
- very good achievement by pupils with special educational needs
- very challenging teaching by specialist staff, especially in music, enables pupils to achieve well
- the very good quality of teaching in the nursery and reception years
- supportive and caring staff who effectively encourage pupils to learn and succeed
- pupils' very positive attitudes to school, good behaviour and improved attendance
- firm leadership by the headteacher and good management leading to school improvement
- standards should be higher for many pupils in art and design, geography, history and physical education
- assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses is not yet used effectively in all subjects
- pupils have too few opportunities to develop further their skills of independence and leadership.

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection, especially in the quality of teaching, the standards achieved by the more able pupils in English, mathematics and science, and in the quality and use of assessment in these subjects. Leadership and management, including governance, are more effective at ensuring improvements. Equality of opportunity is now secure. The school has used the time effectively, especially since the appointment of the new headteacher, to consolidate these key areas as a priority. There remains work to be done in promoting higher standards in the non-core subjects, in the provision for design and technology, and in developing the pupils' appreciation of the contribution of other cultures to contemporary British culture. The school has already recognised most of these areas and has suitable improvement plans in hand.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' standards of attainment are very good and pupils of all abilities achieve well for their age and ability.

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

*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.*

In the Foundation Stage, pupils' achievement is very good and most are progressing well towards the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. This is mainly due to challenging teaching with activities suitable for the age group. Good achievement and standards are evident by Year 2. By Year 6, standards are high in the core subjects. In 2002 national tests, the results in mathematics and science were amongst the highest nationally, and scores in English were compared very favourably with similar schools. Overall, standards and achievement in non-core subjects vary a little, although all are at least satisfactory with good progress in ICT and very good standards in music in the juniors. Pupils with special educational needs attain similar standards to other pupils and achieve very well because of the teaching and other support they receive. **Pupils' personal qualities develop very well, and their positive attitudes and behaviour are major assets to the school. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has a committed staff team and **the teaching is good overall** with regular examples of very good teaching, mainly in the nursery, reception and junior year groups. The staff are particularly skilful at planning stimulating activities that capture the pupils' interest and also maintain a suitably high level of challenge. Pupils respond well to this, concentrate and make good progress. Good development of their basic skills, such as reading and writing, owes much to the systematic teaching of these aspects, and a good curriculum. Pupils are confident in their relationships with staff and receive good care. **Support and guidance are very good**, particularly in English and mathematics; staff know the pupils well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of both leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership, particularly at present when several teachers with responsibilities are new to the school, and is successfully supported by key staff. The school is managed well, with regular checks on the effectiveness of its provision. **The quality of governance is good**, with particular success in setting high aspirations for improvement following the last inspection and appointing staff with suitable skills to achieve these.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. A large majority particularly appreciate that hard work is expected of the children. They are less confident about how their views are sought and the school has plans to improve this aspect. **Pupils have very positive views about their school**, especially about their relationships with staff. They think some children do not behave as well as they should.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards further in art and design, geography, history and physical education
- improve the use of assessment to assist planning for individual pupils' progress in the non-core subjects
- develop techniques for planning pupils' learning across curriculum more precisely
- increase the opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and leadership skills, including occasions to express their views and contribute to school decisions.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good overall with examples of very good achievement in the juniors and Foundation Stage. Pupils enter the infants achieving at least the expected standards for their age. Standards in English and mathematics are good by Year 2 and very good by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and often reach the standards expected for their age group.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- Very good achievement consistently across the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Potential for higher standards, especially by most able pupils, in some non-core subjects.

Commentary

1. The pupils achieve very well in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. This is due to very good teaching which takes account of what children already know and can do, and skilfully builds on this. Although most pupils enter school achieving the expectations for their age, some do not. The provision in the Foundation Stage caters effectively for the range of ability and most of the children are on course to achieve the goals expected of them by the end of reception. In most areas of learning, a large majority are likely to exceed these expectations in their knowledge of the world about them, in mathematics, and in personal and social development.
2. The school has focused on raising standards in English and mathematics. The school's results in national test for seven year olds in 2003 indicate that standards are well above those of schools nationally in reading and writing and about the same as other schools in mathematics. Results in reading are above those in similar schools and well above in writing, but below in mathematics. The school was successful in ensuring the more able pupils achieved suitable standards; in writing the results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally and above those of similar schools; in reading results were very good compared with the national figures and those of similar schools; in mathematics the results of higher achievers were about the same as other schools nationally, but were well below those in similar schools. The standards in science were assessed by the teachers and compared well with other schools in reaching the expected Level 2 for the age group, but the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was below schools nationally and well below similar schools.
3. Overall the results of the tests reflect the achievement and standards seen in lessons and pupils work, especially the low attainment of the more able pupils in science. In mathematics, the more able pupils are now attaining at an appropriate level. In other subjects, achievement and standards are good in information and communication technology, and satisfactory in geography and art by Year 2. Not enough evidence was available to judge standards or achievement in design and technology, physical education, history and music.
4. The tables below show the average of the points scored by pupils of all abilities in the school, including those who did not reach the expectations for their age group, and compares the school to the national averages for all other schools. For example, the school's points score exceeded the national average in writing, was close in reading but significantly below in mathematics, which was a dip from the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.4 (18.1)	17.9 (15.8)
Writing	17.2 (15.3)	16.2 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.8 (19.7)	18.4 (16.5)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. The 2003 national test results for Year 6 pupils see the school in a very positive position in the top five percent of schools nationally in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, the school is in line with their standards in English, well above in mathematics and in the top five per cent in science. The school was particularly successful in reaching the higher level compared with both similar schools and those nationally. In English 70 per cent of pupils attained the higher level, 77 per cent in mathematics and 90 per cent in science. Pupils achieved well compared with their results when they were in Year 2, and so have made good progress. Standards in lessons mainly reflect these results with very good standards and achievement in English and mathematics, and good standards and achievement in science.
6. In other subjects, there is room for better standards and brisker progress for most pupils. Standards and achievement are good in music and ICT and satisfactory in art and design, history and geography. In physical education, standards in dance are satisfactory although pupils have made rapid progress and achievement is very good. There was no evidence in design and technology as this work takes place after half-term.
7. Overall, the highest standards are due mainly to the quality of teaching.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.2 (29.5)	29.1 (27.0)
Mathematics	31.2 (31.8)	29.9 (26.7)
Science	32.4 (32.4)	31.2 (28.3)

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

8. Pupils who have special educational needs attain similar standards to other pupils. They make good progress and achieve very well because of teaching and other support that they receive. For example, a pupil whose attainment in English was below average, achieved standards at the level above those expected nationally in mathematics and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

This aspect is strength of the school and is consistent across the age groups. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as is their moral and social development, and the provision for their spiritual development. Cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to their work and behaviour are very good.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are very good.
- The consistent expectation by pupils and staff of high standards of behaviour.
- Very good moral and social development, and provision of spiritual development.

- The systems for seeking and acting on the views of the pupils are limited.
- Cultural development is extensive but tends to neglect the contributions of other cultures to British society.

Commentary

9. The school draws for its ethos on its close relationship with the Church and its values and strength are drawn from its Christian foundation. The commitment of staff to bring these shared values to the pupils by example is evident in the school and the way pupils respond. They are seen to enjoy their learning and work well both individually or co-operatively. Relationships between staff and the pupils are very good and they behave very well.
10. Within the nursery and reception years, the pupils are secure and confident and able to take part in activities with good levels of independence for their age. Many are able to share with each other and respond well to adults. In preparing for outside activities many of the young pupils were able to dress themselves for the activities, putting on coats and Wellington boots. Once outside they quickly chose an activity and played alone or with friends in reasonable harmony. They are well placed to reach the personal goals expected of them by the end of the reception class.
11. Throughout the school this early provision is supported and developed through consistent expectations for behaviour and hard work, and lessons that are often stimulating and challenging.
12. All pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to school. Their confidence and self-esteem are similar to other pupils, and are boosted by the very good help they receive in school from teachers and learning support assistants. This was very clearly demonstrated in a music lesson in Year 3. Relationships between pupils with special educational needs and other pupils and adults are of a very high order.
13. As they move about the school and in their recreational activities the overall quality of the pupils' very good behaviour and attitude is sustained. Although provision for roles of responsibility and opportunities for initiative are not formally structured, the pupils respond well to those roles afforded. On the occasions that pupils seek to raise issues of concern the school's response is positive and supportive. However, there is no formal opportunity to seek the views of pupils or to involve them in influencing aspects of school life that affects them. As pupils' personal development is so good, their potential to contribute to these decisions is high.
14. Attendance has improved over the last year and at 95.2 per cent overall is now better than the national average, with no evidence of unauthorised absence. The school takes positive initiatives to encourage parents to ensure their children attend every day, but the checking of registers to ensure pupils are safely in school is not yet rigorous enough. Most pupils are punctual, but a very small number are regularly a little late in the mornings.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions: There were no exclusions during the last year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	180	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

15. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to promote their **spiritual awareness are very good**. As well as providing time for reflection, assemblies help all pupils to feel part of the school community and to show compassion for others through their prayers and acts of charity such as the ‘Christmas Shoebox’ appeal for needy children in other parts of the world. Pupils’ successes are celebrated. The school provides many interesting experiences for pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder at the world around them. Pupils were fascinated in a history lesson by a visiting ‘Ancient Egyptian High priestess’. In assembly pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 gave a high quality performance of music that amazed the audience of younger pupils. Some of the displays of work are also spiritually uplifting.

16. **Moral and social development are very good**. Moral issues are used as assembly themes. They also form part of the religious education curriculum and appear in other subjects, such as geography. Teachers and other adults set a very good example. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the pupils rise to the challenge. Older pupils know that they are role models for younger pupils and again rise to the challenge. In class pupils work collaboratively well, sharing ideas and listening with respect to the opinions of others, as in a Year 6 geography lesson. Pupils share with each other very well. In a Year 6 lesson a pupils whose ink cartridge ran dry was instantly given a replacement by another pupil without even having to ask.

17. **Cultural development is good**. All pupils have a fuller understanding of the world around them through their studies of the local area and other topics in history and geography. They study religion other than Christianity and, for example, a visitor from a Jewish Museum talked to pupils in Year 3 to Year 6. Art and music also contribute effectively to their cultural development, notably through visiting artists, such as Helen Bradley and an African Dance group. However, there is limited evidence of pupils being made aware of the diversity of cultures to be found within this country. This is an area for further development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils with particular strengths in the quality of teaching.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, and have improved well since the last inspection. Assessment is good in English and mathematics, but variable in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is very good in the nursery and reception class, and the children achieve well in all the areas of learning.
- During the inspection, teaching was very good for pupils in Years 3 to 6, particularly in English, leading to very good learning and good achievement.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Occasionally, teachers' lesson planning does not show clearly enough how different groups of pupils will achieve the learning objectives.
- The staff expect and receive high standards of behaviour from the pupils.
- Pupils work hard and try to achieve what is expected of them because they have very good working relationships with the staff, and with each other.
- The staff ensure that pupils from minority ethnic groups, those from Traveller families, and those few learning English as an additional language are well supported to help them achieve.
- Specialist teaching in music and dance add very well to the overall quality of education.

Commentary

18. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. Children achieve very well in most of the areas of learning because the staff provide very good opportunities for them to develop personal and social skills. Children with particular needs, such as those with special needs or learning English as an additional language, are well supported and achieve as well as their peers. A good example of the high quality of the education offered was in the reception class's project on autumn, using the character 'Percy Parkeeper as a focus. The staff used the very good outdoor environment skilfully to recreate scenes from the book stories. This enabled the children to make good and sometimes very good progress in reading, writing, counting, singing, their understanding of seasonal change, and in the social skills involved in organising and enjoying a birthday party.
19. Teachers plan very well for pupils with special educational needs with tasks matched to prior learning and closely linked to high quality individual education plans. Good support is provided in lessons by teachers and by learning support assistants when they are present make a significant contribution to the very good progress made by all pupils who have special educational needs. The pupils are fully included in all aspects of the lessons, especially in whole class questioning by the teacher and when checking on learning at the end of a lesson, for example in a literacy lesson in Year 4. Targets are set, as for other pupils, and so pupils know what they have to do in order to improve.
20. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, and has led to high standards in national tests in recent years in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers and support staff plan effectively to meet all pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs: provision for these pupils is very good. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, the teaching and planned activities were not challenging enough to ensure the majority of pupils made suitable progress. During the inspection, teaching was very good overall in Years 3 to 6 because lessons seen were almost all at least good, and two-fifths were very good or excellent. The best teaching was in English, science, music and physical education.
21. Part-time specialist teachers in music and dance add high quality to pupils' learning. For example, after leading a stunning display of rhythmic drumming by Year 5 and 6 in assembly and joyous singing practice by Years 3 to 6 pupils, the music teacher taught an outstanding lesson with Year 3. Based on her excellent subject knowledge and understanding, she made sure all the pupils achieved very well, and supported pupils with special needs superbly so that they grew remarkably in self-confidence and musical skill.
22. Teacher's planning is good, and is generally founded well in their assessment of pupils' achievement. The records they keep of this assessment are more substantial and used more

effectively than at the last inspection, especially in English and mathematics. There are also timely plans to develop assessment practice further in other curriculum subjects. Detailed analysis of national test results has been influential in raising standards well by the age of 11. However, in some lessons in the rest of the curriculum, teachers do not show clearly enough in their planning how different groups of pupils will make progress in their learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	13 (32%)	21 (52 %)	5 (12 %)	1 (2 %)	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.

The curriculum

Overall, curriculum provision is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school has a successful approach to providing for the variable needs of its pupils, including activities beyond the school day, that helps to keep the pupils enthusiastic about learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad curriculum meets statutory requirements, maintains pupils' interest and effectively supports high standards in English and mathematics.
- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs results in suitably high standards
- Good range of extra-curricular sports activities for junior pupils.
- Strong emphasis on opportunities for all pupils.
- Planning for linking pupils' work across subjects is at a very early stage.
- Access to the building and facilities is restricted for anyone with limited mobility.

Commentary

23. The Foundation Stage curriculum is securely planned and well adapted to the needs of the pupils in the nursery and reception classes, ensuring very good progress for all pupils whatever their achievements when they begin school. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are included regularly in the infant and junior curriculum. This provision is enhanced by extra-curricular activities for junior pupils, including a good range of opportunities for sport, such as rugby, badminton, soccer and athletics, that give the pupils' very useful opportunities for personal development. The school ensures pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have the opportunity to achieve well by taking an individual approach when a pupil has needs which are not common to most other pupils. This is effective.
24. The staff are suitably qualified for the age range they teach and they plan with good awareness of the national guidance. This works well, especially in English, mathematics and science where standards are very high by the time pupils reach Year 6, and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Where a teacher has specialist expertise in a subject, the pupils' learning is enhanced; for example, in music. In some other subjects, although pupils make at least steady progress, the planning is not as sharply focused on their individual needs. On these occasions, the work pupils undertake is not always set at the appropriate level of challenge, and does not give them the opportunity to demonstrate their best efforts.
25. The school is beginning to plan pupils' work across subjects. There are regular opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learned in English and mathematics to other subjects. However, the planning of cross-curricular learning is very basic at present, focusing mainly on natural links when similar topics are being studied. Occasionally the planning is focused on

developing pupils' key skills using more than one subject. For example, several lower junior pupils learned how to read scales on a thermometer during work in science rather than mathematics. This is a good start to planning cross-curricular opportunities for teaching and learning which the school intends to develop further.

26. Overall, resources satisfactorily support the school's current curriculum. The resources for information and communication technology have improved considerably since the last inspection, and the school is now well placed to improve pupils' standards further.
27. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. The school has resolved the issue of curriculum entitlement identified in the previous report very successfully so that these pupils are provided for fully in all subjects. When pupils are withdrawn from the classroom it is to receive extra help in the subject that is being taught to other pupils at that time. The help given to pupils who have special educational needs by teachers and by learning support assistants is very good because of the expertise of the co-ordinator, the teachers and learning support assistants. Whilst the accommodation is satisfactory overall, it is unsatisfactory for pupils who have physical disabilities because of the number of steps inside and outside the building.

Care, guidance and support

The overall quality of provision for the care, welfare and the health and safety of the pupils is good. Provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good. Provision to involve pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very strong pastoral knowledge and support provided by the staff raises pupils' self esteem and confidence.
 - The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good in English and mathematics.
 - The induction arrangements for the pupils are effective in settling pupils quickly into school.
 - Child protection procedures are not sufficiently understood by all staff.
 - The school does not have systematic procedures to seek pupils' views.
28. The strength of this provision is the quality of relationships that exist between staff and pupils and the high level of pastoral knowledge and support the school offers. Relationships are warm and trusting and the pupils love attending school where they enjoy the challenge and support that they experience in lessons. Overall, most parents voice strong approval for this aspect of the school's provision.
 29. In the nursery and reception year groups, the youngest pupils are happy and content and settle quickly into their routines and join in activities. As a result of the school's very good induction arrangements they are well supported. They show sufficient confidence to relate to visitors and strong attachment to the nursery staff. When pupils enter the school in other year groups, the approach is welcoming, with a focus on the individual pupil which includes an assessment of educational needs as well as arrangements for their social integration into the school. This works very well.
 30. The ability of pupils to learn and make progress is strongly promoted by the school environment and relationships. Guidance based on assessment, monitoring is available for personal development as well as work in lessons. The guidance is most effective in English and mathematics where good assessment data is available, and also where the good quality of marking enables the pupils to see what they need to do next to improve their work.

31. The school reviews the progress of pupils with special educational needs rigorously each term and sometimes more frequently. Individual education plans highlight key areas for improvement for pupils with very concise and specific targets and these are agreed with the pupils. A key factor in the very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs is the early identification of such needs and the action taken to make the necessary provision to help the pupils.
32. All members of staff seek to ensure the security and well being of the pupils and the school's policies and guidelines are based on a consensus and consistently applied. Overall the school is a safe secure environment for learning being well maintained and managed. Occasionally the access to the school grounds and the building is not as secure as the school intends, as doors or gates are left open. The staff listen to pupils' ideas but the school does not yet provide formal arrangements for the views of pupils to influence policy and practice. Not all staff are confident in their knowledge of procedures for child protection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school makes good provision for its links with parents and with other schools. Its links with the community are very good. The quality of this provision ensures strong support for the pupils' attitudes to learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The positive support of parents for the school's educational aims.
- The effective arrangements for ensuring the school is part of the local and faith community.
- The very good transfer arrangements from pre-school provision to the nursery.
- The development of the web site has been slower than anticipated in helping parents at a distance.

Commentary

33. The school has the confidence of a broad section of parents and a number are active in directly supporting the school and the children's education. The parents association is also active in organising events and activities throughout the year and raises significant funding for resources to support the children's education. A small number of parents provide valuable help in classes and by accompanying pupils and staff on outside visits. Through its close links with the Church, the school enjoys a number of activities involving shared celebrations with parents and members of the wider faith community.
34. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress. Opportunities are provided for parents to attend formal evenings on three occasions during the school year with provision for those who cannot make these to have individual appointments. Annual reports of pupils' progress are informative and relevant. The school is developing a website to provide better access to information for parents on school activities. This development has taken longer than anticipated, but is set to improve the links with parents who do not visit the school site every day, for example, parents who are working during school hours. If parents have concerns or requests, the staff are readily available at the beginning and end of the day, and this works well for most situations.
35. The school ensures that parents are kept very well informed and are included in discussions as soon as possible when needs are identified by the school. The school is very active in involving parents in the reviews of the individual education plans. The school also has a booklet for parents that explains all that they need to know about special educational needs and the provision in the school.

36. Good links exist with other schools through the Catholic schools sports association and pupils from the local secondary school are invited to school productions at St Peters. Links to support transfer arrangements for pupils moving to secondary schools are in place and are generally effective, with pupils visiting their selected schools and exchange visits by teaching staff. Visiting students from local secondary schools and college are attached to St Peters as part of their studies for non-vocational qualifications. The arrangements for transfer from pre-school provision to the nursery are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of both leadership and management is good. The school is effectively managed and well led by the headteacher and senior staff. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership by the headteacher has resulted in the school's improving rapidly.
- Very good team building provides a shared and effective approach to improvement.
- Good leadership of teaching by key staff.
- There is effective management of the school's review and appraisal systems.
- Very good leadership and management by staff in the Foundation Stage.
- Effective commitment to ensuring all pupils, whatever their backgrounds, have the best provision.
- Limited overview of the effectiveness of the whole curriculum provision and the priorities for innovation.

Commentary

37. The school is led effectively by a capable headteacher whose clear view of how the school should develop has had a major impact on improving pupils' achievements since the last inspection. Sensible decisions are made about leadership responsibilities that help to maintain the school's momentum. For example, new staff, including the deputy-headteacher, who have posts of responsibility are not yet fully involved in their roles. However, they are still able to provide leadership in their subjects as they have an experienced subject leader acting as mentor. This successfully enables the first phase of their plans for improvement to be turned into action without undue delay, and keeps the management team functioning well and motivated. Key staff are well established in their roles, are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility and have influenced the quality of work and standards of achievement, especially in English and mathematics, and in the Foundation Stage. The staff team is strong and individuals work well together, whether leading or following, and this has also helped the pace of improvement.
38. The management of the school effectively supports the commitment to ensuring that teaching is of good quality and pupils achieve well. This has involved considerable attention to developing staff skills, monitoring their performance and providing opportunities for further improvement. This works well as the quality of teaching is good and often very good, and staff enthusiasm for further improvement is high. The headteacher has developed a range of strategies for checking the school's effectiveness, some of which are at an early stage, such as checking parents' views. However, most are well established with a focus on ensuring pupils behave well and standards are suitably high. The emphasis on standards has been directed mainly at English and mathematics, and has been successful. The school improvement plan correctly identifies that this good practice needs extending to other subjects, and work on doing this has already started, for example, by bringing in specialist staff to improve the quality of the teaching and learning in music and dance. The overall responsibility for leading and managing the curriculum has not been allocated up to now as each subject has been led and managed by a subject leader. Although this arrangement has worked satisfactorily in improving several individual subjects, now that the school is planning to extend cross-subject

working, there is a need to consider how this is going to be co-ordinated to ensure all pupils continue to have good access to a suitable range of opportunities for success.

39. Priorities for development are clear and appropriate. Financial procedures have received a positive scrutiny from the local authority recently, and the school is in the process of amending its practice in line with recommendations. The principles of best value are taken into account in the approval of expenditure. Although the school development plan does not itemise all the costs involved in delivering the school's priorities, due care is taken by the headteacher and governors to ensure that funding is targeted and available for these priorities. The local education authority has the respect of both the governors and the senior staff, and is seen as a valued partner in future developments.
40. Leadership and management of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The co-ordinator for special education needs has a very clear vision and sense of purpose because of her high level of concern for the pupils. She maintains files on the pupils very efficiently and uses opportunities to check on teaching and learning very well. This informs the preparation of the individual education plans. She also provides high quality written termly reports that ensure the governing body is fully informed.
41. The governing body is effective. Governors are supportive of the headteacher and staff, as well as providing leadership when needed. For example, when appointing the current headteacher, the governors were aware of concerns about the standards the school was achieving at the time, and considered carefully what a new headteacher would have to bring to the school in order to improve the standards while also developing the school's welcoming and supportive approach. Governors have a strong commitment to including pupils of all abilities and backgrounds in the school's welcome and its provision. Their increasing confidence in the school's leadership and management is evident, but they remain watchful and are closely involved in staff appointments, checking data on standards and contributing to the school's strategic plans. The governing body's own procedures are sound and keep them well informed on most aspects of the schools, although governors are not as involved in curriculum matters as they are in issues of finance and buildings.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	578,580
Total expenditure	562,748
Expenditure per pupil	2,501

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	26,935
Balance carried forward to the next	15,832

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. **Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.** Emphasis is placed on developing language, literacy and numeracy skills, within a broad range of practical experiences which are suitable for the age group. **Teaching is very good in all areas, as is children's achievement.** Almost all pupils are on course to meet the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Individual needs are the main focus of assessments and the planning of activities in all areas takes good account of these. The arrangements for recording assessment and planning do not show these good links clearly enough. Children in the nursery attend for half days. Good progress has been made overall since the last inspection, especially in the levels of achievement in the nursery.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff have consistently high expectations and children respond well to these, learning quickly to take responsibility and make decisions.

Commentary

43. The children achieve well as a result of good teaching. The organisation of the nursery and reception classes provides for children to work with each other, and to behave with consideration and respect for other people. This gives regular opportunities for staff to help children develop the necessary skills to be comfortable in a larger group than they have in their families. In addition, staff provide challenging and interesting activities which capture the children's imagination and encourage them to succeed. Confidence grows and pupils learn to listen to adults and other children, and to sit still when necessary. This works very well. When pupils do not make the right decisions, staff gently explain and encourage. As a result, the relatively new children in the nursery settle quickly, know what is expected of them and concentrate on learning. The atmosphere in both classes is busy, with many activities, but calm overall with regular routines organised well alongside opportunities to explore. The children respond very well to this approach and learn to be independent in tasks such as putting on their coats, but also in tidying away and developing their own ideas in activities such as construction.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**. Language development is a priority and pupils' achievement is good, although a small minority of pupils are still reluctant to speak.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for writing and listening to good quality stories.
- The systematic introduction to early reading skills.

Commentary

44. Staff are very good at including opportunities for the development of literacy skills in the daily provision. Role play areas are well resourced and the staff become involved in the play, providing good models of spoken language for the children to hear. This works well. Most children are eager to talk with their friends, and use the writing corner to write messages or greetings, as well as to draw. The more able children can retell stories with confidence and most others are willing to speak in class discussions. In the reception class, a discussion about how to organise a birthday party for Percy Parkeeper led to a lively discussion about invitations and who to invite. The children used a range of descriptive language as they composed the content of the invitations. Writing is developing well and many pupils made recognisable attempts to write draft invitations and almost all could write their name accurately. They also recognise letter and sometimes words in familiar stories and a few can read confidently in the books designed for their age group.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good** with regular opportunities for the children to apply their developing skills, especially in shape and number.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high expectations for children's achievement begin as soon as they enter the nursery.

Commentary

45. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Both the nursery and reception class provide a good environment for mathematical development, for example, with planned opportunities for pupils to count, to add, and to recognise shapes and patterns as part of their daily experiences. The children are introduced effectively to mathematical language at an early stage and encouraged to use it. In the nursery, for example, shapes were being examined using descriptions such as edges, corners and sides. The children were encouraged to put shapes together to see if they would fit without leaving spaces, and to watch for patterns and they played with different shapes. The children naturally incorporate number in their talk, such as "we need another red crayon to make three". In the reception class, most children are achieving better standards than expected for their age and a few are not and are identified for additional help.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Challenging activities which generate questions.
- Skills in using the computer.

Commentary

46. The children use technology with confidence and rapidly growing skill. In the reception class, children have already been taught how to use paint tools on the computer in preparation for designing invitations, and have a clear understanding of many of the possibilities for using information and communication technology in their environment. They discuss presentation and consider how to ensure the graphics reflect the type of party they are planning, and compared commercially produced invitations. The classrooms in both reception and the nursery provide useful examples of ICT, including labelling.

47. The children learn to observe and explore their environment in many ways, including visits to the local area and use of the school's grounds. Well planned activities encourage them to ask questions and explore solutions. For example, a water tray had fishing nets, apples and carrots available and two children were amazed to see that the apples did not sink but the carrots did. This led to a discussion, enhanced by occasional visits from the teacher, about what was happening. They tried holding the apples at the bottom of the water, and could not understand why they would not stay. Through this exploration emerged an early recognition of floating and sinking, which included an awareness that factors other than weight affected an object's ability to float. In addition the children learned words such as "bobbing" and "settling".

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good** despite limitations in the secure space available.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of limited secure outdoor space in the nursery.
- A good ability to move to the rhythm and mood of music.

Commentary

48. Children are aware of the benefits of outdoor and indoor exercise and they learn to change their clothes for different activities. They have suitable opportunities to run, slide, climb and crawl as well as using pedal power. They are very enthusiastic and enjoy energetic activity. Most have a very good awareness of safety issues when using equipment. They handle tools well and have a good range of activities in which they can use them, including scissors, and pencils for finer work. They effectively manipulate small and large equipment when building objects with construction materials. Progress in this area is particularly good as many children enter the nursery with very basic abilities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good and sometimes excellent**, with many children starting from a basic level of competence.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations and carefully planned experiences.

Commentary

49. The children have regular opportunities to work with paint and other media to produce their own paintings, drawings and models. The planning is clearly focused on developing their skills while allowing ample scope for individual work. For example, in a music session, a group of nursery children were introduced to different sounds being produced by using different materials and implements. They worked outside with the teaching assistant and used metal cooking pans, and un-tuned percussion instruments to make and listen to the sounds they made using wooden spoons and sticks as beaters. They listened for "loudness" and "softness" and with gentle prompting recognised that sounds can be changed, for example by turning a pan upside down. They also began to appreciate that the loudest noise made by an implement such as a wooden shaker, was never as loud as beating a pan. The pupils are fascinated by this area of their learning and are well supported by imaginative teaching and good preparation by staff.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is very good. By Year 6 standards are very good and overall pupils achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 and Year 6, and those attained in national tests, are very good notably the high percentage of pupils who attain standards above those expected for their age.
- Assessment, tracking and target setting are linked to high quality marking that takes learning forward.
- Teaching is very good overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and consistently very good in Years 3 to 6, making a significant contribution to the progress and achievement of all pupils.
- Leadership and management of the subject reflect high aspirations and have management skills to support the aspirations.
- All pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- Pupils do not yet have enough involvement with their targets to know what they have to do to improve.

Commentary

50. Raising standards in English is at the forefront of the school's planning. Standards of work seen are above those expected nationally in Year 2 and well above in Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The results compare very favourably with schools in similar circumstances because of the percentage of pupils who attain standards above national expectations in Year 2 and the very high percentage of pupils who attain standards above the national average in Year 6. This is because the school caters for all pupils according to their prior learning and plans teaching very carefully using detailed analyses of test results and setting realistic, but challenging targets for all pupils. As a result pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 make steady progress and older pupils make good progress so that achievement overall is high.
51. Pupils extend their speaking and listening skills well in lessons. Teachers read interesting passages from texts and use very effective questioning techniques that require careful listening and answers that contain good explanations. In a literacy lesson, pupils in Year 6 described with confidence and real feeling what other people may think about, for example, a stunt man. Later in the lesson a 'hot-seating' activity provided further opportunities for promoting speaking and listening skills as well as enabling the teacher to check on their learning. As a result, standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
52. Pupils make good gains in their reading with a significant number achieving at the higher levels. Teachers set a very good example for reading, as when, in the Year 5 class, the teacher read an extract from a play script based on *Carrie's War*. This encourages pupils to emulate them when they read aloud. Where teachers have very high expectations and give pupils encouragement and confidence, pupils respond very well to challenges such as reading, at sight, accurately, fluently and rhythmically play scripts or, in Year 3, a poem about squirrels. Pupils enjoy reading and take books home daily to read to parents, other adults or siblings. Most older pupils are confident in their ability to locate books and to use the contents and index pages efficiently. All older and many younger pupils have good strategies for choosing fiction books to read. How well the school teaches pupils to appreciate literature was exemplified by the statement by a higher-attaining pupil in Year 6 that a film cannot capture a book and '*Cuts out how you imagine it.*' As a result standards have risen and are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.

53. Attainment in writing is above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. The thorough, flexible use of the National Literacy Strategy ensures that pupils have good opportunities to practise writing in a range of styles. In a good lesson pupils in Year 2 learned how to compile instructions. Strategies to increase pupils' vocabulary to make their writing more interesting are used well. As a result one pupil in Year 4 wrote '*I kick the leaves, laughing with glee*'. A pupil in Year 6 captured the essence of autumn in a poem that began

*It is autumn now.
Leaves dive off
Trees, like a bird
Gliding to the
Floor.*

54. Teachers and learning support assistants help pupils with special educational needs very well in English lessons. Tasks are challenging and take note of pupils' individual education plans. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make the same gains in their learning as other pupils.
55. Teaching is very good overall. Teaching is good in Year 1 and Year 2 and consistently very good in Years 3-6. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and is one of the main reasons that standards have risen. Particular strengths of teaching are the high expectations of work and behaviour, the challenging tasks matched to prior learning, the pace of the lessons and the way teachers arouse the interest of all pupils, encouraging them to keep their minds on the tasks. The consistently high quality of the marking makes a very significant contribution to the gains in pupils' learning. For example, 'This is a well organised report. You have included ...'. Marking also indicates how pupils may improve their writing, for example 'Try to find alternatives for "a lot" ...'. The marking of the half-termly pieces of assessed writing ensures that pupils know exactly what they have to do improve. However, these targets remain in the assessed writing books so pupils cannot readily remind themselves of what they are expected to do to improve. The school is aware of this and recognises that pupils should be able to go to their teacher, for example, to show how they have attained a target whether the piece of work is in literacy or in another subject. There are two principal reasons why teaching is better and pupils make better progress in Year 3 to Year 6. Teaching is often more imaginative and captures and holds the interest of the pupils more easily, as shown in a lesson in Year 4. Also the tasks are often even more challenging.
56. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the subject, but it is clear that the subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator has very high aspirations and is determined that the achievement of all pupils will be as high as possible. There is a very clear understanding of what will improve pupils' learning based on an audit of the subject and analysing the results of national and optional tests. This is reflected very clearly in the school development plan.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. The school is focusing on providing planned opportunities in question and answer sessions as well as in group discussions, as in a mathematics lesson in Year 5, to raise standards in speaking and listening. Pupils also write in other subjects such as in lessons about the Ancient Egyptians in history and the visit to a local park in geography. There are also an increasing number of opportunities in information and communication technology to consolidate literacy skills. These planned activities also make a very good contribution to attainment in English. Similarly pupils have good opportunities to practise the skills of information retrieval from non-fiction books and from web sites, so remedying one of the deficiencies identified in the previous inspection. These opportunities consolidate the good, and in Year 3-Year 6 very good, gains in their learning that pupils make so that the level of achievement is high overall.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good, and standards are very good by the age of 11. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment in national tests has been well above average at the ages of seven and 11 taken over the last three years, although the number of Year 2 pupils reaching above expected levels fell last year.
- Achievement is good for all pupils, including higher attainers and those with special needs, because the teaching is good.
- There is good concentration on number work, but the whole curriculum is covered well.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is very thorough, and helps them to improve effectively.

Commentary

58. Attainment in national tests was in the highest five per cent nationally in 2002, and when compared with results in similar schools. These results were maintained at the same levels at age 11 in the 2003 national tests, and are on track to be repeated by the current Year 6 cohort. At age seven, results were the same in the 2003 tests as in the 2003 tests at the expected level, but fell considerably at the higher level. The current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve above average levels by the end of the year.
59. Achievement is consistently good across the school because the teachers plan their lessons based on the assessment of pupils' previous work, and use the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. They have moved away from using text books too much, criticised in the last inspection, and often design specific worksheets to meet the differing needs of separate groups of pupils. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 2 had to solve complex numerical questions composed by the teacher in a set time: this challenged them successfully to concentrate hard to apply their learning. Teaching in Year 6 is of high quality, and helps the pupils to make rapid progress. Pupils needing extra help to understand the properties of two-dimensional shapes, including those with special educational needs, had to use practical as well as mental skills to complete their work, consolidating their learning very effectively.
60. The staff ensure that pupils practise and learn the required number facts, including tables and number sequences. They also help them to learn mental strategies well, such as in Year 4 when the teacher set tough questions about linear measure such as, 'How many metres are there in a quarter of a kilometre?' Similarly, Year 3 pupils responded well in pairs to the teacher's rapid review of the 2, 3, 5 and 10 times tables, before moving on to work out fractions of whole numbers. In this lesson, support for pupils with special needs was skilled and sensitive, enabling pupils to take a full part at their own level. The pupils are also introduced to the whole range of the mathematics curriculum. For example, Year 4 pupils worked in groups to measure the perimeter of two different areas of the playground using different measuring equipment such as metre sticks and metre 'trundle' wheels. Unfortunately, there was no field tape measure available, which would have been a useful check for the accuracy of the measurements.
61. An important factor in the pupils making good progress is the in-depth marking of the pupils' work by the staff. This is accurate and regular, including of the supportive homework, and gives good feedback to the pupils on what they have achieved, and what they need to do to improve further. Very good analysis of the pupils' responses to national tests also provides good focus for further development.
62. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is the new subject leader, and she is beginning to build well on the successful management of her predecessor.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Pupils' numeracy skills are used effectively to support work in science, history and geography. There is also good data-handling in these subjects, reinforced by the developing use of information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good. Overall standards and achievement are good, with very good standards achieved by Year 6. This is an improvement from the previous inspection report.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in junior year groups makes the best of pupils' abilities.
- Very high standards in national test results for eleven year olds.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for science provides a good basis for learning.
- Lack of challenge in the work of the more able infant pupils slows their progress.

Commentary

64. Most pupils achieve well through school, but the more capable pupils in the infant year groups are not challenged enough to extend their learning. The 2003 national assessments for seven year olds are made by their teachers and results show the proportion of pupils achieving the level expected for their age is above the national figures and about the same as schools in similar circumstances. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level, however, is below the national figures and well below those in similar schools.
65. These results are reflected in the work in class lessons, where pupils' enthusiasm for the interesting practical activities, combined with sound teaching and good behaviour, ensures that they grasp the essential elements of the topics they undertake. For example, they know what to consider when setting up a fair test, understand the dangers of misusing medicines, and are alert to health issues such as diet and exercise, as well as having suitable knowledge for their age of how the human body works. However, much of their work tends to be practical but not sufficiently investigative, with lesson plans and recording sheets pre-determining most of the outcomes. Although this works well for a minority of pupils who need such support, it restricts the opportunities for many of the pupils to apply their knowledge and skills and to extend their understanding by working through their own ideas on occasions.
66. In the junior year groups the pace of learning accelerates, the lessons are planned and taught to provide thought-provoking opportunities, and the pupils have to apply good levels of scientific skills and understanding to undertake the tasks set. For example, in a Year 4 class studying differences between vertebrates and invertebrates, a group of pupils were delighted to see that snails were capable of moving up the vertical sides of the observation tank. A discussion followed, using knowledge of friction, gravity and lubrication as they tried to work out how the snails could accomplish this feat, followed by consideration of ways to measure and record their progress over time. Several hypotheses were suggested and, although no final conclusions were reached, the standard of the scientific enquiry was high.
67. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and sometimes very good, with clear introductions to lessons that focus mainly on the scientific aspects of the topic but also giving suitable time to explaining the pupils' tasks. Question and answer sessions in class discussion are brisk and effective in identifying pupils' level of understanding, and teaching in group work is carefully planned to ensure pupils with different abilities make progress.
68. This approach to teaching and learning in the older classes successfully leads to high standards. National test results for eleven year olds in 2003 were very good, comparing very well with national figures and those of similar schools. The higher level expected for the more

capable pupils was attained by 90 per cent of the year group. The current Year 6 is on target also to achieve high standards. This is a clear improvement since the last inspection.

69. A new subject leader has been appointed and is ready to build on the effective work of her predecessor. At present the test results are showing a tendency for pupils to achieve their best results in studies of living organisms and processes but they are sometimes less secure in aspects of physical science. As the school continues to adapt the national guidance to meet the needs of its pupils, it checks to ensure that the curriculum deals with all the required aspects of science. Assessment procedures are sound and the school has plans to develop these further to enhance pupils' progress through the year groups.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is good. Increased resources have enabled pupils to develop their skills and standards are good by Year 6, which is an improvement from the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' comprehensive knowledge of the use of ICT in their environment.
- Good competence and confidence in computer skills.
- Limited independent use of a broader range of technology.
- A narrow range of applications used in other subjects.

Commentary

70. No ICT lessons were seen in the infant and junior classes, so no judgements can be made on teaching. However, pupils' work in other lessons indicates that they make good progress in the infants, building on the good start in the Foundation Stage. Most pupils achieve well and standards by Year 2 are good. Pupils gain skills in using word processing techniques, and many can load programs, save their work and use techniques such as "drag and drop" sufficiently well to work independently with a variety of programs in lessons.. They gather information from books and other paper sources well, but have little access to independent use of resources such as videos, photographs, photocopiers and audio tapes. Most are careful users of equipment. Pupils know how to present work in various ways, such as graphs and tables, and some can use these on the computer when provided with a template. They have only limited experience of developing their own ideas but are gaining the skills to do this successfully.
71. In the junior classes, pupils' achievement is also good as are standards overall. Their learning is helped significantly by the provision of a specialist teacher, a computer suite and many pupils having access to a computer at homes. Their programme of work is planned systematically and by Year 6 pupils are very confident in their use of computers. From the youngest age group, pupils recognise the use of technology in their environment and describe getting information from public computer facilities about travel arrangements, concerts and sporting events. Not all the facilities in the school's computer suite are functioning as yet, which restricts some of the pupils' independent work, but the means of developing control technology further are now in place. More use of equipment such as the digital cameras could usefully be started in the lower juniors.
72. The subject is well managed and led, with suitable opportunities for staff to develop their own skills. However, there is scope to consider further the range of independent work which pupils could undertake. At present, opportunities to use ICT skills are mainly controlled by staff with little freedom for pupils to develop their own ideas, such as producing a school magazine or keeping records of their own work and plans for improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. The use of Information and communication technology in other subjects is well established and regularly evident, supporting work in other subjects well, especially English. However, the range of use is a little restricted at present, because it is mainly graphs, charts and word processing. The plans for using ICT in other subjects are rarely included in the early stages of the school's planning. This results in the inclusion of ICT being left mainly to individual teachers, and their practice is not consistent. This needs to be more effectively organised.

HUMANITIES

A small number of lessons were seen in history and geography, and religious education was not inspected because the school is a voluntary-aided church school.

History and geography

Provision in history and geography is good. Pupils make steady progress and reach the standards expected for their age.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enrichment of the subjects through numerous visits and visitors, linked to carefully planned topics, ensures a good quality curriculum for all pupils that also enhances their literacy skills.
- The good teaching of history in Year 3 to Year 6 enables pupils to make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily.
- The enthusiasm of pupils in lessons promotes learning.
- The good leadership and management of the subjects help to raise standards.
- Marking of work is good and other assessment procedures are in place but not sufficiently detailed to track pupils' developing skills.

Commentary

74. Standards in geography in Year 2 and in both history and geography in Year 6 are similar to those expected nationally. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. All pupils make steady progress in their learning, and achievement is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards in history in Year 2 because of the school's arrangements for teaching the subject.
75. A key feature of both subjects is the provision of educational visits such as younger pupils visiting the local park to support learning in geography or older pupils travelling to places farther away, such as Llandudno. These visits stimulate the interest of pupils and foster the skills of enquiry. Similarly contributions by local people, including grandparents and great-grandparents of pupils who recall their experiences of living in the area, bring history to life for pupils as it did in a topic in Year 3.
76. Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about history and geography because of the emphasis on visits and visitors to enrich the lessons. They have good recall of their earlier learning about the Victorian topic. In a very good lesson, pupils in Year 4 were captivated by a visiting 'Egyptian high priestess' who answered their searching questions about Ancient Egypt in a way that consolidated and extended their learning. In this lesson the imaginative approach helped all pupils to make very good gains in their learning so that, by the end of the lesson, their knowledge was above that expected for pupils of their age. In this lesson, too, good use was made of a website for pupils to carry out research on the topic.

77. The good teaching of history in Year 3 to Year 6 and in the geography lessons seen in Year 2 and Year 6 enables all pupils to make good gains in their learning in the lessons. The good teaching is based on good planning, insistence on high standards of behaviour, good use of resources that ensures the interest and attention of all pupils. In a good geography lesson in Year 2 the effectiveness of the previous week's visit to a local park was shown by the very good recall by the pupils of what they thought were the good and bad features of the park and how the facilities might be improved. The skills and knowledge gained in Year 2 are extended as pupils get older. Pupils in Year 6 worked in pairs and small groups on real problems related to land use based on their visit to Llandudno. The activity also made a good contribution to their social development. The current school focus is on improving speaking and listening skills. In all lessons good opportunities were provided for all pupils to improve these skills, particularly through challenging questions put by the teacher. Marking of pupils' work is a strength of the teaching. The comments are constructive, relate to the intended learning and help to move pupils on. However, the school recognises that other assessment procedures need to be strengthened if standards are to be raised.
78. The subjects are led and managed well. Both co-ordinators have a clear vision and high aspirations for the subject and know what strategies to put in place to help pupils to attain higher standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were observed in art and design, and one in design and technology. Discussions were held with subject leaders, and Year 6 pupils. Work on display was also analysed. One lesson was observed in music, as were performances of practised pieces by Year 5 and 6 pupils in assembly, and singing practice for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Specialist guitar tuition for groups of pupils at lunchtime was also seen. No judgements are possible about standards or teaching in Years 1 and 2 in design and technology and music as no lessons were observed during the inspection. In physical education all the lessons seen were in dance, so judgements on other aspects are not possible.

Art and design

Provision is satisfactory, but it is improving because there is a growing emphasis on the subject. Standards are similar to those expected nationally by ages seven and eleven, although older pupils' knowledge of the work of a range of artists is shaky.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a new focus on developing the subject, led by the headteacher which has led to more interesting work and systematic planning.
- Teaching and learning were good in lessons seen during the inspection, linking well with work in history.
- There are examples of good quality work on display, and good links with the local art gallery.
- Teachers' expectations and pupils' work are too variable across the school, and insufficient emphasis is given to sculpture and work in three-dimensions.

Commentary

79. The headteacher is keen to promote the subject, following a review that revealed sporadic and uncoordinated work from class to class, weaker than described in the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 said that this had improved a little in the last two years, but that regular lessons depended more on which teacher took the class. All staff now plan to teach the subject, but some older pupils still feel confused about how art and design differs from design and technology. One pupil felt that this was because their design work for both subjects was completed in the art sketch book. More work is attempted in two- than in three- dimensions, and

this is a weakness. There is some evidence of the use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' ideas.

80. In lessons in Year 1 and Year 3, the teachers were enthusiastic, and organised and presented the lessons well, so that pupils enjoyed developing different techniques to represent their ideas. Year 1 pupils made good progress in representing their own and other family members' faces for a family tree. Pupils with special needs were successful in Year 3 in using the style of a local artist to create their own images using oil pastels. This work is led by a part-time teacher who links a study of the locality in the recent past with the work of three famous local artists very well, including a visit for the pupils to the local art gallery to see the artists' work. This enabled the pupils to imagine how the scenes they were creating might have appeared.
81. Teachers' expectations and understanding of what to expect of children of different ages and stages of development are too variable. Work of reasonable quality, such as prints made by pupils in Year 5 from incised lino tiles, contrasts with paintings of work by Year 2 pupils copying Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' without imagination or personal interpretation.

Design and technology

Provision is unsatisfactory, but a recently appointed subject leader has a well-focused action plan to begin to make improvements.

Strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils enjoy the subject and have positive attitudes towards designing and making.
- Work in the subject has been patchy in the last few years, and pupils in Year 6 have not experienced the range of skill and design opportunities expected.

Commentary

82. There is not enough evidence to judge standards by ages seven and 11. In the only lesson seen in the juniors, a demonstration lesson on making bread, standards were broadly as expected for the age and capabilities. Discussion with pupils revealed that whilst they enjoy the subject, they have not had enough opportunities to take part in practical activities. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was good, but there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about teaching overall. The curriculum now meets the minimum requirements but the subject has a low profile in the school and shares curriculum time with art.
83. The present picture is similar to that found at the last inspection, although Year 6 pupils described an increased range of activities and more emphasis on the subject since the appointment of the current headteacher. From pupils' design/sketch books, they have had some useful opportunities to design, make and evaluate, such as when Year 6 pupils tested commercially produced drinks, then made and tested their own. There is little evidence of the use of hard and resistant materials, nor of the more complex work expected in making working and powered models, and of the use of information and communication technology.

Music

Provision in music for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is very good, although it depends heavily on the continuing availability of a part-time specialist teacher.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in listening and responding to recorded music, singing, and the use of untuned percussion instruments are very high by age 11.
- The quality of teaching provided by the specialist teacher is outstanding, and leads to very good achievement for the pupils.
- There are frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their work by performing for parents and other pupils.

Commentary

84. Standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils attain high standards by the age of 11 in listening and responding to music by famous composers, singing songs from different cultures, and using un-tuned percussion instruments. All pupils achieve very well in these aspects. Excellent teaching skills in enabling pupils with special needs to take a full part in the class activities were observed. Pupils clearly enjoy singing and participate with gusto. The quality of their singing is very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy using percussion instruments to accompany recorded music, and keep very good time with prepared pieces.

Outstanding practice in teaching music by a specialist teacher.

The school employs a very knowledgeable and skilled music specialist to teach the subject across the school. She led Year 6 pupils superbly in accompanying Verdi's 'Requiem' using un-tuned percussion in a presentation assembly for the whole school and parents. This was a haunted, frightening interpretation, and the precision of the pupils' unison striking of a range of instruments, and the way the dynamics varied with the quality of the music, was very controlled and expressive for their age. This was followed by Year 5 pupils accompanying modern Asian music from 'Bollywood'. Again, this was performed extremely well, with great zest and 'feel' for the quality and variation of the rhythm. The teacher conducted the pupils with very effective control, and they responded superbly for their age. She has written her own scheme of work to develop the pupils' skills in line with the National Curriculum requirements, and interprets it with great intelligence and creativity in her choice of music from different styles and cultures to listen to, play, and compose. A trained operatic singer, she draws out of the pupils accurate pitch, good power and control, and such a joy for singing that to hear them is to share their great enthusiasm. In teaching a Year 3 class, she covered all the recommended elements of a music lesson, but with such panache, verve and sensitivity that children with special needs were her 'stars', and shone with pride as they accurately played the 'drone' to keep everyone in time.

85. Whilst this high quality teaching and learning is very good for the pupils now, it is precarious for the school as it is not part of the teaching repertoire of the whole teaching team. It would be idle to expect all the staff to be as gifted as the current lead teacher, but her skills are not currently shared sufficiently amongst the other staff for them to support her work outside the one lesson per week that she delivers.

Physical education

The provision for dance is good. Pupils in the junior years achieve well, mainly due to the expertise of the visiting teacher of dance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective use of specialist teacher.
- A strong emphasis on sport for junior pupils.
- There is a lack of consistency in planning pupils' skill development through school.

Commentary

86. All the lessons seen were in dance, mainly with junior classes and taken by the visiting specialist teacher. In these lessons, pupils achieved well, some from a very basic level, responding to the high level of participation expected. Most pupils, although not initially fluent in their movements, successfully practiced a sequence of actions linked to the music, taking account of the rhythm and changing mood. When identified by the teacher, individuals or small groups were capable of demonstrating their ideas and, occasionally, incorporating the ideas of other pupils into their own dance. They are less confident when verbally describing and evaluating their own work and that of others, mainly because most lack a suitable vocabulary to describe movement. A few pupils are very good at dance using a full range of movement with firm confidence and good control of their bodies. These pupils were able to interpret the music without direct guidance from the teacher and improved their performance as the sequence of movements was repeated. Overall, the standards are close to national expectations for the majority of pupils. Boys and girls joined in with enthusiasm and generally behaved well.
87. The teaching of dance was good. The specialist teacher sets high expectations for vigorous movement, sustained physical activity and an awareness of the music. Pupils responded well to this energetic approach to learning and motivation was high.
88. The physical education provision is not supported by a scheme of work at present. Although staff have the benefit of national guidelines for reference, and published materials for planning lessons, planning the development of pupils skills is not yet robust enough to support consistent progress through the school. Nonetheless, the curriculum includes a range of activities including swimming, cricket, rugby and hockey, and a range of extra-curricular sporting activities for junior pupils. Specialist staff are used to good advantage. The school's good levels of success in competitive events is evidenced by the trophy cabinet, but pupils are also encouraged to take part in activities to develop their own interests and skills.
89. The subject is well managed within the limited time available and the subject leader takes an active interest in extra-curricular activities. A new policy is in place and suitable plans to improve the subject further are in hand. Assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses is basic at present and has only incidental impact on the planning of lessons.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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