

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ST THERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107158

Headteacher: Mr P Nelis

Lead inspector: Mr J Heap

Dates of inspection: 29 – 31 March 2004

Inspection number: 257967

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	220
School address:	Prince of Wales Road Sheffield South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S2 1EY
Telephone number:	0114 239 7251
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Logan
Date of previous inspection:	18 May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Theresa's is a Roman Catholic primary school that caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. It is situated close to the centre of Sheffield. This is an average-sized primary school in England with 200 pupils on the roll of the main school: 97 boys and 103 girls. In the nursery, 19 boys and 20 girls attend part-time. The roll has increased in recent years. Children arrive at school reflecting the full range of attainment levels but overall, the attainment on entry is very low. Pupils are organised into seven classes and the nursery class. The pupils come from a large, inner-city catchment area which has very significant signs of deprivation. Housing ranges from local authority estates to private dwellings. It is also an area of average mobility, for example, about nine per cent of the pupils moved in, or out, in the last year. The majority of pupils are white, and a small minority come from Black-African, Black-Caribbean and mixed-race backgrounds. Six pupils are learning English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage of acquiring English. Three pupils of these pupils have refugee/asylum seeker status. These figures are higher than most schools. There are 42 per cent of the pupils entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. Thirty-six pupils (18 per cent) in the main school are on the list of special educational needs, the majority have communication, behavioural or specific / moderate learning difficulties. Seven children in the nursery are identified as having special educational needs and the majority of these have communication difficulties. Altogether, this amounts to 20 per cent of the school which is around the national average. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is in line with the national average. The most significant change since the last inspection is related to the high turnover of staff.

The school is deeply involved with the busy local education action zone and is part of the excellence in cities initiative. The school received a Schools Achievement Award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18824	J Heap	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language
9649	J Smith	Lay inspector	
30834	A Lowson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs
14732	E Korn	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some very good features. The judgement is better than at the last inspection and is supported by the views expressed by parents and pupils. Overall, the school achieves average standards in national tests and pupils' achievement across the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good, but inconsistent. The headteacher provides good leadership and the management of the school is effective. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards in English national tests at the age of 11 are high when compared to similar schools;
- pupils' achievement is good from the very low attainment they show on entering the nursery;
- pupils have very good attitudes, relationships and they behave very well, owing to the very good spiritual, moral and social development that the school provides;
- pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well because of the effective support that they receive;
- this is a very caring school that keeps a very good check on the many needs of its pupils;
- links with parents, community and other establishments are very good and boost pupils' learning;
- attendance is good as a result of the outstanding work done to improve it;
- standards in mathematics and science are not high enough, particularly at the age of seven;
- there is insufficient use of literacy and numeracy skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum;
- there is no coordinator for learning English as an additional language;
- governors have unclear academic aims and this hampers their responsibilities as evaluators.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. There has been very good development of the provision and standards in information and communication technology. Statutory requirements are now fully met and the improvement planning is better. Pupils are more skilled as independent learners, but there is still some way to go, particularly in developing the use of literacy and numeracy skills. Standards are higher and teaching has improved, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Provision of care and links with parents and the community have been much improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Overall, pupils' achievement is **good**. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs, those in the care of the local authority and from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve at the same level as their peers. Children enter the school with very low standards, particularly in literacy, numeracy and social development. Overall, achievement is good in nursery and reception, but the best progress is made in the nursery. Standards are still below average by the time children enter Year 1. By the time the children enter Year 1, standards are well below average in communication, language and literacy. Standards are below average in knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematics and creative development and average in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the age of seven standards in national tests are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. On the basis of inspection findings, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average. By the end of Year 6, results in national tests compared to similar schools are well above average in

English and average in mathematics and science. The work seen is average in English and mathematics and pupils' achievement is good. Standards in science are below average and achievement is satisfactory. Targets set by the school are challenging but achievable. At the age of seven there is no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. However, in the national tests at 11, girls did better than boys in 2003. The school puts a lot of emphasis on the teaching and learning of basic skills. Standards in English are high enough, but there is room for improvement in mathematics and science, particularly for the highest attaining pupils at the age of seven. Standards in information and communication technology are average.

**Overall, pupils' personal development is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Pupils like school and their attitudes and behaviour are very good and this is much approved of by the parents. Attendance is good and much improved.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

Overall, the quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in nursery and Years 3 to 6. Across the school, the particular strengths include the encouragement of pupils, the insistence on high standards of behaviour and the promotion of equal opportunities. In Year 6, the teacher is doing a very good job of preparing the pupils for life at secondary school. Assessment procedures are good, but the use of the information is more variable and this leads to some pupils being given insufficient challenge, for instance, higher attaining seven year old pupils in mathematics and science.

Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. It is strongest in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils benefit from the good programme of enrichment, such as visits, clubs and visitors. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The programme of work for science is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs, those in the care of the local authority, and those learning English as an additional language are well catered for and this is a major reason why they are doing increasingly well in national tests. The quality of care is very good and pupils forge very trusting relationships with adults. Links with parents and the community are very effective. Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership. Senior staff provide sound support in many areas, but they do not have enough time to check on standards and teaching in subjects. Overall, the work of the governing body is satisfactory, but their role in shaping the vision and direction of the school is unsatisfactory. Statutory requirements are fully met.

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

Parents and pupils have very positive views about the school. Parents recognise that the staff work extremely hard for their children.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in mathematics and science;
- Improve pupils' use and development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum;
- Improve the science curriculum;
- Develop governors' competence in setting aims for the school and evaluating provision;
- Appoint a coordinator for English as an additional language.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, achievement is **good**. It is best in the nursery and in Years 3 to 6. Although children make good progress in the Foundation Stage they still enter Year 1 with standards that are low in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. At the age of seven, standards are not high enough in mathematics and science. At the age of 11, progress in English is good and the work of the higher attaining pupils is mature. Pupils with special educational needs, those in care and those learning English as an additional language achieve well.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the 2003 national tests, standards in English at the age of 11 were average compared to all schools and well above average compared to similar schools.
- The big improvement in standards and achievement in information and communication technology.
- At the age of seven, standards and achievement in mathematics and science are not good enough, particularly for the higher attaining pupils.
- Pupils do very well in swimming.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.2 (12.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.1 (11.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.8 (13.9)	16.3 (16.5)

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

1. Overall, the average points scores are generally well below the national average. The 2003 scores show improvement, particularly in reading and writing. There are encouraging signs in all subjects that higher attaining pupils are doing better than previously, but significant numbers of pupils do not reach the average level in reading and writing. Teacher assessments in science are below the national average with all areas showing signs of weakness.
2. However, compared to similar schools (the same proportion of free school meals) standards are average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Over three years, results in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The trend in the school's results is below the national one.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.3 (26.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.0 (27.0)	28.6 (28.3)

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



3. In relation to the average point scores, English results have generally been around the national average, with 2003 showing a further movement ahead of the average. Girls did particularly well in 2003. In mathematics, results over time are very inconsistent and below average. Girls are, most recently, doing better than boys. Science results have been consistently below average.
4. Results for 11 year olds were average in 2003 for English and well below average in mathematics and science when compared with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, English results were well above average and average in mathematics and science. Overall, results were average in comparison to all schools and above average compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Over three years, results are a little above average in English and mathematics and average in science. The trend is inconsistent but, overall, is above the national trend. Girls outperform boys, particularly in English. Targets for the forthcoming year are challenging, but achievable.
5. Early indications of standards on entering the nursery show attainment to be very low. Achievement in the nursery is very good and satisfactory in reception. By the time the children enter Year 1, standards are well below average in communication, language and literacy. Standards are below average in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They are average in personal, social and emotional development and physical development.
6. In English, pupils achieve well across the school. Pupils' difficulties from an early age in communication and literacy means that they have much ground to make up from a low starting point. By the age of seven, standards are below average in speaking, listening and reading but pupils are working at their full level of capability. The same can be said of pupils' written work, even though standards are well below average. The evidence is that pupils have made good progress since the start of the year and the highest attaining pupils have good basic skills. By the age of 11, pupils have built successfully on the hard work done in previous years and standards are average. Pupils' achievement is good and the quality of written work has improved the most. The highest attaining pupils are very good readers and writers, and they are showing a great deal of maturity in the way that they use language to interest the audience.
7. Standards in mathematics are below average at the age of seven and average at the age of 11. The achievement of seven year olds is unsatisfactory, particularly in relation to the progress made by the highest attaining pupils. The reasons for this underachievement is that the expectations are too low and this is mainly due to the teacher's lack of experience of teaching Year 2. The match of work to individual pupils is not accurate enough and, consequently, all pupils are doing the same work regardless of their level of attainment. By the age of 11, pupils' achievement is good and this is a reflection of good teaching, particularly in Year 6. Teachers and pupils have high expectations and there is a strong emphasis on giving pupils challenging targets to achieve. A growing strength is in the way that pupils are planning and organising their own methods of solving problems and investigations.
8. In science, standards are below average at ages seven and 11. Pupils' achievement varies from year to year, but is satisfactory, overall. The key factor in these variations is the quality of teaching; so, for instance, the highest achievement is in Year 1 and Years 3 to 5. In Year 2, assessments of pupils' work are not used well enough to match accurately the level of work and pupils' attainment. As a consequence, pupils' achievement is lower than it should be, particularly for the highest attaining pupils. This is shown most markedly in the lack of systematic development of scientific enquiry skills.
9. Standards in information and communication technology have improved sharply since the last inspections. This is due to much better provision and an active commitment to use and

develop information and communication technology skills across a wide range of subjects. At the ages of seven and 11, standards are average and achievement is good. Pupils' confidence in using various forms of technology is good and they are developing a good working knowledge of technical language. The work of the consultant is highly influential in the improved performance of staff and pupils and has led to high expectations across the school. This is obvious in the range of skills being learned, from good word processing, through the development of multi-media presentations, to the use of spreadsheets in mathematics.

10. Standards and achievement in religious education will be inspected and reported in a separate report by denominational inspectors.
11. In other subjects, standards are average at ages seven and 11 in design and technology and geography and achievement is good. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements in art and design, history, music and physical education. However, pupils' achievement in swimming is very good from very low standards when they start lessons in Year 4.
12. Pupils learning English as an additional language (usually asylum seekers/refugees) are achieving well. This is due to the good support they receive through:
  - the early identification of levels of attainment and any shortcomings;
  - the work of the learning mentor, who ensures that they are not left out or shouldering a problem on their own;
  - the work of the local education authority staff on a short-term basis for some of the pupils.
13. Pupils with special educational needs and those living in the care of the local authority reach standards in line with their age and ability. This represents good achievement.

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

The school promotes personal development very effectively. As a result, pupils' attitudes, values and the development of their personal qualities are **very good**. Attendance is **above** the national average and punctuality is **satisfactory**. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour help to promote their achievement very effectively.
- Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are exceptionally good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- The excellent strategies used to encourage regular attendance have resulted in a significant increase in attendance.

### **Commentary**

14. The school provides a very orderly, happy and purposeful learning environment. Pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes both to their work and to all the other school activities and clubs provided. In lessons, they are eager to actively participate, they concentrate well and work industriously. They particularly like the interactive whiteboards which they say make lessons more interesting. For example, in a science lesson about the risks faced by thrushes in their reproductive cycle, Year 5 pupils became very excited as they played a game using the whiteboard and dice to bring home the lottery of chance in a bird's life. Pupils respond very well to teachers' consistently high expectations of good behaviour and to the good reward scheme. They display a good level of self-discipline. There were only two fixed term exclusions in the last school year and no racist incidents. This is testimony to the school's active race relations policy and the school's commitment to treating all equally and with

respect. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development.

**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	155	2	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0

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

15. Underpinning the school's strong sense of community are the exceptionally good relationships which exist throughout the school. Pupils work and play together in a very friendly and considerate way and incidents of bullying are rare. This has meant that the pupils learning English as an additional language (usually asylum seekers or refugees) are quickly, and successfully, integrated into the life of the school. In lessons, pupils cooperate well, listen to each other respectfully and often help each other when stuck; for example in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils sitting next to those with special educational needs helped them in a very good natured way. Staff constantly encourage pupils and take great pride in their successes. Similarly, in the weekly "Show Assembly", pupils enthusiastically applaud each others' achievements.
16. A strong Catholic ethos pervades all aspects of the school's life and provides pupils with a firm bedrock of spiritual and moral values. This ethos is conveyed through morning and afternoon prayers, thoughtful assemblies and special services. It is also seen in the quality of mutual respect and care shown in relationships. The school promotes social values very effectively. Older pupils help in a very responsible manner in the running of the school and younger pupils are keen to be helpful. The school has some thoughtful strategies for promoting good social habits. These include the rule of the week which prompts pupils to think about matters such as good manners or care for the environment. Another good idea is the way that civilised behaviour and conversation at lunchtime is encouraged by everyone sitting down together around tables before pupils serve the food.
17. Some aspects of pupils' cultural development are promoted well. For example, all pupils participate in school performances and they also benefit from regular visits and visiting performers. In recent years the school has worked to improve pupils' understanding of other cultures and religions, particularly through the two multi-cultural weeks held every year. However, in talking to older pupils it is clear that their knowledge and awareness of other cultures and religions is fairly limited. The school needs to continue to develop pupils' understanding of these in order to better prepare them for life in multi-cultural Britain.

## Example of outstanding practice

### Improving attendance

In the last few years a determined drive has helped to push up the attendance rate from well below to above the national average. This remarkable achievement is due largely to the school's and the learning mentor's distinctive and positive strategy to raise the profile of attendance. Every day when parents bring their children in to class they walk past a large attendance board celebrating the success of individual pupils in achieving full attendance for each half term, or for a full year, and also the class with the highest weekly attendance. Incentives and the positive messages conveyed by the board and in other ways have helped to increase parents' and pupils' interest in attendance. The good, trusting relationships built up between parents and the learning mentor and her availability for parents at the start of the day are also helpful factors. Rigorous daily monitoring of attendance is another aspect of this very successful strategy.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5
National data	0.4

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

18. Those pupils with special educational needs who also have emotional, behavioural and social problems are well integrated into school life. They make friendships quickly and are well supported in the self-management of their behaviour by the effective support of the school's Learning Mentor and by all teachers and adults in the school. As a result, pupils with special educational needs behave well.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is **good**. There are particular strengths in the teaching of English and information and communication technology. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. There is **effective** provision in the Foundation Stage and the overall curriculum is **well** enriched. This is a **very** caring school that has forged **very** good links with its major partners.

### Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **good**. It is strongest in the nursery and Years 3 to 6. Assessment is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school there is a very strong insistence on high standards of behaviour.
- Overall, teaching in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Overall, teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- The use of information and communication technology is well planned and enhances teaching and learning.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8 (19%)	17 (39%)	18 (42%)	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.*

19. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated and there is a higher proportion of very good practice. This is a significant achievement because the school has experienced difficulties in retaining and recruiting teachers. Several of the current staff are relatively inexperienced, but they are developing into a strong and resilient team. This is due in large measure to the leadership and management of the headteacher and his positive approach to:
- providing good professional development;
  - checking on teaching quality and providing helpful feedback;
  - leading the school's approach to behaviour management. The outcome of this improvement is that standards and achievement are improving, despite the growing incidence of pupils with special educational needs. Parents returning questionnaires and those attending the meeting with inspectors are very clear in their belief that the quality of teaching is at least good.
20. In the Foundation Stage, teaching in the nursery is very good and this maintains the high quality provision identified in the last report. In the reception class, teaching is satisfactory and there are examples of good practice. This teacher is newly qualified and making good progress. The main strengths across this stage are:
- the very good relationships with children ensure that they feel encouraged to learn and get fully involved in the lessons;
  - the very high standards of behaviour which are the result of teachers' vigilance and good sense. As a result, children have few barriers to working hard and doing a lot of useful work. It is no accident that they achieve well and make good progress.
- Provision in the nursery is so strong because of the very detailed planning that sets clear learning objectives for the full range of activities and ensures that they are very interesting. Adults assess the work of children carefully and provide the right level of support. Children are confident and happy.
21. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is satisfactory. The strongest elements of the practice are:
- the good relationships between adults and pupils;
  - the high expectations for pupils' behaviour;
  - the good use of homework to support learning in lessons.
- As a result pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, there is room for improvement, particularly in the teaching of mathematics and science.
22. Just over half of the lessons observed were good and there were occasional very good lessons. In the best lesson, a very good Year 1 literacy lesson, the strengths included:
- very good subject knowledge that enabled the teacher to promote and challenge pupils' speaking and listening skills;
  - very good use of resources and classroom assistants, particularly in the use of information and communication technology. This enabled the teacher to illustrate the actual reading and writing skills she wanted the pupils to learn.
  - the involvement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. This showed that pupils have good knowledge of letter sounds and are willing to use them.
23. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is good. More than half of the lessons observed were good, and a further quarter were very good, and all of these were in Year 6. In the best lessons, the main strengths were:
- the very good use of information and communication technology;
  - the very good planning ensures that all pupils are challenged, appropriate to their prior attainment;
  - the lessons have brisk pace and skills are built upon in clear, definable steps;
  - the effective use of resources. For instance, in the very strong mathematics lesson higher attaining pupils were able to extend their learning by working independently on solving problems about ratios.

Marking is good and focused on raising pupils' standards and achievement. Targets for improvement are set for all pupils after each piece of work; this is particularly strong in English and is a significant reason for high standards when compared to similar schools.

24. The teaching of pupils learning English as an additional language is sound. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that pupils are assessed as soon as practicable after arrival, particularly in English, mathematics and social skills. If the pupil has a difficulty with learning, an individual education plan is drawn up. Teachers ensure that these pupils are involved in lessons, and if it is found that the pupils are reticent, then the learning mentor plays an important role in raising their confidence. However, the lack of a coordinator means that staff have no one to refer to directly and raise issues, such as their lack of training.
25. The teaching of those pupils with special educational needs is good. In many classes, teachers' planning indicates an awareness of specific targets that need to be addressed on pupils' individual education plans and in practice, this helps those children to achieve their targets. Learning support staff work closely with teachers, and in discussion with them, it was clear that they appreciate the good liaison they have with all staff. Those children who need greater support with their learning benefit from regular teaching in small groups, or occasionally, they will work on their own with an adult to tackle an identified area for improvement. This is a good feature of support. What could be improved is the way teachers involve support staff in their weekly planning. In most instances, learning support staff are not involved in any joint planning of lessons, when some of their in-put would be of value to the teacher.
26. In the Foundation Stage there are good systems for assessing the progress of the children. These start from detailed observations and culminate in completing the national Foundation Stage profile before entering into Year 1. The observations are particularly well used in the nursery where the work is very well matched to the children's ability. This good assessment makes a significant contribution to children's very good achievement in this class.
27. The school has recently established a range of assessment procedures that are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Many of these are new and their full impact is yet to be felt. A good feature throughout the school, in all subjects, are statements that help the pupils understand how well they are doing. In English and mathematics, these link well with the pupil tracking system. In English, good use is made of assessment to target specific pupils for additional support for literacy. The marking policy is not consistently applied in all subjects throughout the school. The use of assessment to vary the work to pupils' abilities in science is unsatisfactory.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a **good** curriculum, which gets them off to a good start. **Good** provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs. The school provides **good** opportunities for activities out of school and lessons are made more interesting by the good use made of visits and visitors. Accommodation is **good**. Resources are **satisfactory** for all subjects, with the exception of resources for Information and communication, where they are **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's involvement in the continuous development of the curriculum is extensive and is helping the school to raise pupils' achievement.
- The impact of the school's involvement with the Sheffield Education Action Zone has been beneficial in developing the curriculum.
- The curriculum in science is unsatisfactory and fails to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in enough depth.

- Curriculum planning does not indicate with enough clarity how opportunities to use key skills in literacy and numeracy can be used to support learning in all subjects.

## Commentary

28. The headteacher has a very clear overview of the curriculum. He ensures that good opportunities are taken to ensure that all pupils in the school benefit from a strong religious base to their everyday life in school. The school is involved in the Sheffield Educational Action Zone and this has been very beneficial to the development of the curriculum. For example, specialist help has been brought in to help the school address the weak literacy skills that many children have when they first enter school in the nursery. Language programmes have been introduced to help the development of the pupils' vocabulary and the evidence indicates that this is becoming effective. Another example is in the area of education for sex and relationships and personal education. Currently, the governors have taken the decision that the school will have no formal programme of sex education and they are slowly recognising that this needs to be resolved. With the help of the Educational Action Zone, a scheme of work has been produced and a health education consultant has provided training for all staff and governors and has demonstrated some of the resources for the scheme of work. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are fully met.
29. The school has very good resources for information and communication technology. There is a separate computer suite and the school receives effective technical support. As a result, the school has a timetable that enables all classes to make best use of this valuable resource to help pupils learn new skills. All units of work from the National Curriculum are now taught and teachers' make effective use of information and communication skills to support learning in other subjects. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection.
30. The school makes good provision for those pupils with special educational needs. In English and mathematics lessons, pupils are given extra support to ensure that they work towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. The school has focused much of its planning on the development of speech and language because this is a clear weakness for many children who enter the school. This is appropriate and those children with speech and language difficulties have crisply written targets to help them make progress. Currently however, the school has very few individual education plans with the focus on extending skills in numeracy, when clearly there are pupils who could benefit from this. This is an area for improvement.
31. The curriculum for science is unsatisfactory. For instance, there are repetitions in some aspects of the curriculum and, too often, all pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment are provided with the same work. A strength in the curriculum is the inclusion of issues such as extinction of wildlife, and this makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.
32. An analysis of curriculum planning indicates that there are weaknesses in the way opportunities to extend key skills in literacy and numeracy are taught. As a consequence of this, not enough use is made of literacy skills to support learning in other subjects and this has a particular effect on the pupils' achievement in writing. A similar weakness is apparent in the use of numeracy skills to support learning in other subjects, where not enough planned opportunities are evident.
33. The school enriches the curriculum by providing a range of interesting, well-planned visits that are selected to make lessons in school more interesting. The school provides a good range of out of school activities, which are well attended. Although the school has a race equality policy, there are relatively few opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons to enable them to prepare for life in multicultural Britain.

34. The school's accommodation is good. It is well maintained, spacious and used well to provide a good range of learning opportunities. The school benefits from good outdoor accommodation and this enables a good range of outdoors and sporting activities to take place. The number of teaching and learning support staff is adequate to meet the needs of both the curriculum and for those pupils who have special educational needs. In an overall sound picture for educational resources, the provision in the Foundation Stage is good.

### Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very good** care for pupils and **very effective** support and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement and personal development. Although there is not a school council, the way in which the school seeks pupils' views and involves them in its work is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff work very effectively as a team to ensure pupils' happiness, wellbeing and safety.
- Pupils facing emotional or other difficulties are very well supported.
- Arrangements for helping children to settle into school are very good.

### Commentary

35. Everyone in the school community works together to ensure that pupils are secure and well cared for. Pupils are very confident in turning to staff when they are upset or need help. In turn, the school monitors pupils' academic and personal achievements effectively and this leads to pupils receiving very good support. A key role in this is played by the learning mentor and particularly with those pupils learning English as an additional language.
36. The headteacher knows each pupil individually and takes great pride in their achievements. Parents are very pleased with the good care which the school takes of their children and of the way in which the school makes each child feel special. The school works to ensure that break time is an enjoyable part of the day for pupils. The sheltered seating, football goals and adventure play equipment are popular. At lunchtime, the learning mentor plays organised games with pupils on the infant playground. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety and staff are vigilant at all times. There are very effective procedures for child protection and for the care of looked after children. The school's plans to improve disabled access have been approved and work will begin on this shortly.
37. Many pupils face difficult circumstances in their home lives. The school is very aware of these problems and their impact. It provides very sensitive and well directed support for pupils according to their need, whether this is help to cope with an individual crisis or problems of an emotional or behavioural nature. The learning mentor, through individual counselling and group work with pupils, plays a crucial role in this very good support.
38. The very careful transition arrangements which the school makes to help children settle into the nursery focus on the needs of the individual child and are therefore flexible. Home visits are offered to all parents and these help to break down the barrier between home and school. Pre-visits and a staggered entry into the nursery help children and staff to become familiar with each other. There are good arrangements to help ease the transition from the nursery to the reception class.
39. Those pupils who have special educational needs have the targets on their individual education plans reviewed regularly, and, during the reviews, parents and pupils are invited to share the process. Of great benefit is the caring attitude of all adults in the school, who give very effective support to those children with special educational needs, which ensures that these children feel happy and secure and thus learn well. The Learning Support mentor is



very active in her involvement with those children who have emotional and social problems and this support enables these children to establish good relationships with others.

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

The **very good** links which the school has with parents, the community and other schools make a significant impact on pupils' learning.

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

- The school involves parents very effectively in its work and in their children's learning.
- Courses held for parents are very successful and bring benefits to parents, their children and the school.
- The learning mentor plays a vital role in strengthening the home-school partnership.
- The school's membership of the local Education Action Zone brings significant benefits to pupils.

#### **Commentary**

40. Parents have great confidence in the school because the school effectively seeks their views and acts upon the issues that they raise. The results of the questionnaire and views expressed at the parents' meeting show that parents are very happy with all aspects of the school's work. The school has a very effective strategy for encouraging parents to become involved in its work and in their children's learning. Parents particularly value the approachability of the headteacher and all the staff. Parents of younger pupils take their children into class and have opportunities to see their children's individual targets, and in the Year 1 class to help their children write their daily diary. The quality of information which the school provides for parents, including the regular newsletters, is good. Curriculum boards in the corridors display pupils' work and give parents insight into the kind of progress which is characteristic of different subjects. Most parents are supportive of their children's homework and reading and are satisfied with the school's homework policy.
41. The parents' courses which the school provides are another very successful means of involving parents in the school's work. Over the past two years eight accredited courses have been held with an average of about fifteen parents on each course. These successful courses are organised by the learning mentor and one of the reasons for the impressive uptake is the good relationship she has established with parents. Parents who have taken these courses are not only better able to support their own children but provide useful and regular help in the classrooms and with after-school activities.
42. The school greatly benefits from its membership of the South East Sheffield Education Action Zone. The school is involved with other schools in its cluster and the zone on joint projects in communication in the nursery, information and communication technology, reading and writing and emotional literacy. The work done through these projects is helping to raise pupils' attainment in these areas and also helping to overcome some of the barriers to learning which pupils face. The school has a very positive working relationship with the local secondary school which provides:
- valuable sports training for both pupils and staff;
  - successful training in sports community leadership for parents;
  - effective partnership in relation to the movement to secondary school at the end of Year 6 and the school provides a high level of extra support for those pupils who might find this transition difficult.
- The school has many other good links with its community which benefit pupils. It greatly values the close links it has with all the local churches. Pupils also benefit from the free sports coaching they receive through the school's good links with professional clubs in Sheffield.

43. The school liaises well with those parents and carers who have children with special educational needs. For example, at the earliest stages, when children first enter the Reception class, an information booklet about the school's provision for special educational needs, written by the Special Needs Co-ordinator, is given to all parents. This booklet offers them support, as well as guidance and is a good feature of the school's links with parents. Parents are given copies of their child's individual education plan, so they are well informed of what their child's learning targets are. Annual Reviews for those pupils with Statements are carried out annually in accordance with local educational authority guidance and parents are invited to attend and participate in the meeting.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. The leadership of other key staff is **satisfactory**. Management is **good**. Governance is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision and high inspirations for the school.
- The teacher in charge of the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) leads and manages well.
- The management of an inexperienced staff is effective.
- Financial management is good.
- The governors' role in shaping the vision and direction of the school is unsatisfactory.
- There is no coordinator for English as an additional language.

### Commentary

44. Overall, the strengths identified in the last report have been maintained and there has been a satisfactory improvement in the work of coordinators and in the setting up of the good school improvement plan. Since the last inspection the school has successfully alleviated many of the barriers to raising achievement that it confronts, such as:
- the very low attainment of children entering the nursery;
  - the increased levels of pupils with special educational needs.
- Parents and pupils appreciate the work of the staff and, in particular, there is high regard for the headteacher.
45. The headteacher provides good leadership and clear educational direction. He is effective in many areas, for example:
- promoting a strong sense of community and commitment among the relatively inexperienced staff and the pupils;
  - maintaining a firm focus on Gospel values, whilst fostering pupils' standards and achievement;
  - continuing to pursue the highest academic standards through improvements in resourcing, assessment and the insistence on good behaviour in the school. The success of this approach can be seen in the fact that trends in national test results at age 11 are above the national trend.
  - his commitment to help this challenging community to have higher aspirations, through:
    - the programmes for parents to receive training in information and communication technology and for those wishing to become classroom assistants;
    - his willingness to provide parents of pre-nursery age children with fundamental resources for drawing and reading.
46. The management of the school is strong and highly supportive of the relatively inexperienced staff. Consequently, there is a growing sense of vision and teamwork that shows itself in the good quality marking, target-setting and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Although there is no coordinator for the work with pupils who have a mother tongue other than English, the learning mentor

does much valuable work to encourage and support them and promote their integration into school. The interests of these groups of pupils are effectively monitored through:

- the regular monitoring of their attainment, achievement and progress;
- the implementation of a comprehensive policy for racial equality and reports to governors and parents.

The management of behaviour is particularly good, with little recourse to oppressive measures and strong emphasis on praise and rewarding positive actions by pupils. Most coordinators have a sound knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and this makes a good contribution to the improved school development planning. The coordinator for the Foundation Stage makes a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school and children achieve well in her class.

47. Overall, governance is sound. The strengths are:

- the mission statement and aims that focus on gospel values and the development of the child's spiritual and moral strengths;
- the support they give the school in a range of matters;
- ensuring that statutory requirements are met, which is an improvement on the last inspection;
- greater involvement with checking on the school's provision, particularly in health and safety matters.

However, their shaping of the vision and direction for the school is weak. This is because their aims are not sufficiently specific in terms of, for instance:

- achieving the highest possible academic standards;
- preparing pupils for life in a multicultural society.

Consequently, they find that the evaluation of areas such as these is difficult to manage and the subsequent identification of priorities is also a problem. Put simply, they are too dependent on the headteacher. There are also a few examples of indecision, such as the lack of development of a stronger policy for sex and relationships education.

48. Leadership and management of special educational needs throughout the school are good. The governors ensure that the co-ordinator has time to complete the tasks needed to fulfil the requirements of her role and this increases the impact of her work. The co-ordinator is very pro-active in her work with outside agencies to ensure that effective support is given to those pupils who need it. This is a good feature of her work and enables children to achieve well. What could be improved is the organisation of Annual Reviews to ensure the full participation of all. For example, currently, learning support and teaching staff are not invited to Annual Reviews to enable them to be fully involved in the review process.

49. Financial management is prudent and focused correctly on the need to achieve the educational priorities identified. Management and governors work well to identify need and resources are allocated. The clearest example of the success of this approach is in the very good improvement of provision for information and communication technology. This programme is evidence of a good approach to:

- continuing professional development;
- induction of new staff;
- checking staff performance and identifying priorities.

50. The budget surplus is quite high at around £54,000. The school can identify the reasons for its development and these are reasonable. They also identify its uses and quantify the amounts, such as:

- developing the present 16-place computer suite for 32 places;
- upgrading the present resources for information and communication technology;
- setting up a breakfast club and the costs of refurbishing the kitchen to enable the initiative to take place.

51. The school has sound procedures and practices for ensuring they receive value for money in their purchasing of supplies and services. The strengths include:
- the comparisons they make with other schools in relation to academic standards;
  - the wide consultation with parents, pupils, education action zone and other partners;
  - the level of competition they invite on matters such as cleaning, catering and sickness insurance;
  - the challenges they accept to improve the building and the academic resources.
- However, the weaknesses in evaluating provision mentioned earlier mean that the overall picture of the school is not fully understood.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	623,616
Total expenditure	655,203
Expenditure per pupil	2,776

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	86,267
Balance carried forward to the next	54,000

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) is **good** overall. The high standards identified in the nursery class provision since the previous report have been maintained.

52. Children can join the nursery at the start of the term following their third birthday and many attend for more than one year before they enter the Reception Year. There are 22 children who attend in the mornings and 18 in the afternoons. Older children transfer to the reception class in September and younger children in January. There are 28 children in the reception class.
53. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage children is good. The two classes are adjacent to each other and have the benefit of sharing a large hall, which is used more by the nursery than the reception class. Children share a secure outdoor site that is well stocked with plants but which lacks a large flat play area. Reception children have access to a large field and a very good climbing frame, but this is not in a fenced off area. Both classrooms are decorated brightly with children's work and there is a good range and quantity of resources.
54. Children enter the nursery with overall standards that are very low compared to those expected for their age. In particular, language skills are poor. Overall, children benefit from good teaching. They achieve very well during their time in the nursery and satisfactorily in the Reception Year. Children enter Year 1 with average standards in their personal, social and emotional development, in their creative music development and in their physical development. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is below expectations for their age. In their language skills and computational skills in mathematics, pupils enter with standards which, although improved, are well below the expected levels.
55. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is good. The coordinator has created an effective team and leads by example. For instance:
  - she provides a very good model of practice in the nursery;
  - the activities she provides take very good account of how young children learn.As a consequence, the children in the nursery achieve very well. However, the coordinator's influence in the reception year could be greater. The staff in the reception year lack sufficient opportunity to observe and benefit fully from this good role model. The process of monitoring teaching is undertaken thoroughly, in accordance with school policy, but this has not been followed through in order to maximise its impact. Some of the very good practice in the nursery class, such as the very good use of assessment in order to match precisely the learning to the needs of the child, is not transferred to the Reception Year.

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

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

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

- Children enter with levels well below expectations for their age.
- They achieve very well and by the time they leave the Reception Year they are attaining the Early Learning Goals for this area of their development.

## Commentary

56. There is a consistent approach and considerable emphasis in both the nursery and the reception class on promoting children's personal social and emotional development by all the practitioners. The children make very good progress due to the very good teaching they receive. There are good relationships between the adults and the children and this helps them to become confident. Rules and routines are consistently reinforced and children try hard to conform. Adults encourage children to listen attentively, to share, to consider the needs of others and to take turns. The very good teaching in the music session provided in the nursery effectively develop children's listening skills, turn taking and confidence. Younger nursery children are starting to make choices and by the end of the nursery period children confidently select their own equipment and express their own needs as they play together. Transition arrangements between the nursery and the reception class are good and this supports children's confidence. By the end of the reception year, children work and play well together in a constructive manner, they show a good interest in their learning and they concentrate well on their tasks.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enter with poor spoken language skills and they achieve very well due to the priority placed upon this aspect of their learning.
- The focused support for children's language development is effective.
- Most older children recognise the sounds of letters and many key words before they leave the reception year and they achieve well in this aspect of their learning.
- The small number of higher attaining pupils are achieving the Early Learning Goals when they leave the reception year, but the majority of children leave with standards well below those expected for their age.

## Commentary

57. When children enter the nursery they play using very little interactive language and practitioners interact with them as they play to develop their spoken language skills. Older nursery children frequently play together in an imaginative manner but their language is restricted to short sentences and phrases. Developing children's spoken language is an identified priority and adults provide a constant role model to enrich children's linguistic experience. Teaching in the nursery is very good. The nursery teacher uses both planned and spontaneous opportunities to promote a rich language model well. Almost all the children with special educational needs have language related difficulties. The education action zone funded language intervention programme for these children is very effective and many achieve very well because of this. Almost all children in the reception year can use language to express needs and concerns and explain what they are doing in response to adults' talk. Through good teaching, higher attaining children respond to teacher's questions in sentences and continue conversations.
58. There is a good emphasis on traditional children's literature in both year groups and by the reception year children are anxious to hear stories. Teaching is good in both year groups. Teachers encourage children to join in the refrains. Higher ability children in the nursery recognise the sounds of letters in their own names. By the Reception Year, children know many key words through good teaching and daily repetition and the higher attainers can construct sentences using these words. Older children are noticeably more advanced in this respect and many know all the reception year key words long before they leave the class and they recognise these in books. Most younger children recognise only a few key words.

Children's ability to identify the initial sounds in words is less well advanced. Almost all reception children can write their name and around two thirds are starting to write simple recognisable letters and words. In the lesson seen, the children identified as having special educational needs were not supported as well as they needed to be and little new learning took place.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enter with standards well below expectations for their age.
- They achieve very well in the nursery and satisfactorily in the reception year.
- Overall standards are below those expected for their age when children leave the reception class and well below in their computational skills.

### **Commentary**

59. In the nursery, children are introduced to counting, sorting and numerals. The teaching is very good in the nursery. It is very well structured to the ways in which young children learn. Younger nursery children count to three and with the support of their teacher select objects to make groups up to five. They learn rapidly, achieving very well and older children count to ten. In the Reception Year, the teaching is satisfactory. The higher ability children are starting to count in twos to 20 and to add and subtract two small numbers, and these children are attaining the Early Learning Goals. Most children are unable to do this and the youngest are still working with numbers to six. In reception, not all the teaching is as precisely matched to the children's ability as it should be and as a consequence their progress and achievement although satisfactory, is reduced. A strength in the teaching in the reception year is the good support for the pupils with special; educational needs and the youngest children who are the lower attainers.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enter with standards well below expectations.
- They receive very good support in the nursery and satisfactory support in the reception year and they achieve well.
- Many children do not attain the early learning goals.

### **Commentary**

60. There are good opportunities provided in both the nursery and the reception classes. Teaching is very good in the nursery and good in the reception class. In both classes pupils with special education needs are supported well. Children have opportunities to observe materials such as water, dough and sand and to use a wide range of construction toys. In the nursery, they use spades to gather pebbles from water and to observe as the water seeps away. Adults help them to use tools such as hammers and saws safely and to use scissors accurately. Children are developing a sense of place. In the nursery, they have constructed a picture of the roads outside the school and in the reception class they pretend to shop in a role play area depicting a garden centre. These children use a computer independently, controlling a mouse to draw pictures. Children in both classes require real experiences in order to enhance their learning and teachers frequently provide these, such as reception

children observing caterpillars and comparing real and plastic flowers. However, when this is not the case, and resources such as illustrations are not realistic, children's learning is not developed effectively.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are provided with a wide range of activities and they achieve well.
- Music is used well in the nursery to develop children's control of their bodies.
- By the end of the reception year most children are achieving most of the early learning goals.

### **Commentary**

61. In many activities within the nursery and the reception classes, children are presented with opportunities to manipulate small objects, pencils and tools. Over time, many develop sufficient precision to attain the Early Learning Goals. Children have outdoor provision that includes opportunities to climb and develop their balance and ability to pedal 'trikes'. In music lessons, where the teaching is very good, nursery children satisfactorily control and move their bodies in time to the music. There are good opportunities to use gymnastics apparatus. Teaching in the reception class is good and they achieve well, developing a satisfactory sense of space and control of their bodies as they squat, roll and crawl.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enter with levels well below that expected for their age.
- The use of music to develop children's listening skills and confidence is very good.
- Children achieve well but the majority do not attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

### **Commentary**

62. Children in both the nursery and the reception year have opportunities to select and use paint and a range of materials for collage. Teaching is good at these times. Activities are frequently linked to developing knowledge of letter sounds, such as when nursery children make hats with their names on and reception children make collages of objects beginning with the letter of the day. Music teaching in the nursery is very good. These children have very good opportunities to listen and respond to music and they achieve very well in these sessions. Younger children play an instrument in time to music and older children sing songs with considerable accuracy and vigour.



## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in national tests compared to similar schools are well above average at the age of 11.
- Achievement is good across the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Insufficient use is made of literacy skills in other subjects.

#### Commentary

63. Given the very low standards that children have on arrival in the nursery, they progress very well in English as they go through the school. This is an improvement on the satisfactory progress pupils were making at the time of the last inspection. This is further highlighted by the small improvement in national test scores at age 11. These results are well above average compared to schools in similar circumstances.
64. By the age of seven, standards in speaking, listening and reading are below average. This judgement is in line with the school's own assessment and shows pupils to be achieving at their full capacity. Pupils listen carefully and generally make appropriate comments when asked a question, or when given the opportunity to talk about their own experiences. Pupils read accurately, fluently and show understanding. Higher attaining pupils have strong skills and a wide vocabulary. Standards in writing are well below average, but pupils are working to their full capacity. A large proportion have made good progress since the start of the year. The majority of pupils have good basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. The highest attaining pupils are particularly strong in punctuation, where they include good use of direct speech and are beginning to use paragraphs. Their stories are interesting and the detail captures the attention. For example:  
'One starry night when everyone was asleep . . .'
65. By the age of 11, good improvements have been made in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Standards are average and pupils' achievement is good. These gains are a direct result of good teaching, particularly in Year 6. The majority of pupils listen carefully, often to stories and discussions that are complex and challenging. Their responses are appropriate and there is a welcome growth in vocabulary and confidence. Most pupils are accurate, fluent and expressive readers who have good skills when finding information from library books. The very best readers have a splendid attitude to their work and a wide knowledge and enjoyment of a range of authors. Lower attaining readers have sound basic skills and provide good detail about the books they have read. In writing, the highest attaining pupils are mature and accurate in terms of style and accurate use of basic skills and vocabulary. For example:  
'Our story begins on a seemingly unremarkable Tuesday morning . . . . . A young woman was sitting in a remarkably elegant but slightly dilapidated buffet at a hotel.'  
All pupils' writing has progressed well since the start of the year and this has much to do with the good quality marking and challenging targets set by the effective teacher in Year 6.
66. Pupils with special educational needs, and those in the care of the local authority, are supported well and make good progress. Resources are well matched to their needs and they are growing in confidence, particularly in relation to speaking, listening and reading. These pupils are working well and at their level of capability. Pupils learning English as an additional language (usually asylum seekers/ refugees) receive sound support and are progressing well. Where appropriate they have effective individual education plans that

highlight areas for specific development. In most cases, pupils have sound literacy skills that enable them to take a full part in these lessons.

67. The key strengths in teaching are:
- the very good development of basic skills that enables pupils' standards to steadily rise;
  - the good planning that uses assessment well to identify learning objectives that are accurately matched to individual needs;
  - the very good marking and target-setting that ensures challenge and progress.
- Inevitably, given a relatively inexperienced staff, there is some variation in teaching quality. However, this never drops below satisfactory and is more often good or very good. Information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and learning. The main area for development is the further broadening of opportunities to develop literacy skills across other subjects.
68. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator is clearly keen and enthusiastic and works hard to develop the subject. She has a clear and accurate picture of standards from assessment details and analysis of test results. However, she is less clear about strengths and weaknesses in teaching because of few opportunities to observe lessons since March 2002. The growth of information and communication technology provision and skills has been used well in English to develop learning skills, particularly in reading and writing.

### **Use of language and literacy across the curriculum**

69. This is an area for improvement because:
- by the age of seven, the range of writing opportunities in other subjects is too narrow and the expectations of the written work are lower than in English;
  - by the age of 11, prepared worksheets reduce the opportunities for pupils to write at length and in their own style.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics by the age of eleven because of the very good teaching they receive in Year 6.
- Higher attaining pupils in the infants are not given enough challenging activities and this has led to some underachievement in Year 2.
- The subject leader has made very good use of test data to identify weaknesses in learning and has put in place strategies that are proving to be effective, but some weaker aspects of teaching have not been tackled with enough rigour.

#### **Commentary**

70. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average and achievement is good. Standards in Year 2 are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. Standards have been maintained in the juniors since the previous inspection, but they are not as good as they were by the age of seven and one of the reasons for this is because of the inexperience of staff who are teaching this age group.
71. By the age of seven, the analysis of pupils' work indicates that the tasks and activities given are not matched well enough for the pupils' different abilities, with higher attaining pupils being given the same work as pupils of average ability. Providing challenging activities for higher attaining pupils was an issue for the school to address in the previous inspection, and in this there has been insufficient improvement.

72. By the age of 11, pupils are making good progress over time. There is a significant improvement in Year 6 because of the very good teaching they receive. For example, the analysis of Year 6 pupils' work shows that they know how to organise their work. They tackle mental arithmetic and problem-solving activities in a systematic manner and they have clear strategies to help them plan investigations. Pupils know what they need to do next because the marking succeeds in identifying the targets they have to meet to improve. Pupils respond well to the high expectations, for example, in the way they present their work. This is a very good feature and is having a positive effect on learning. Pupils' achievement is also improved by the very effective use of information and communication technology resources. For example, using the whiteboard to plan an investigation into proportion and ratio. Pupils of all levels of attainment construct their own investigation with a good degree of accuracy and, in discussion, they show a good level of understanding.
73. Pupils with special educational needs, and those in the care of the local authority progress well towards the targets set for them. They are well supported in class by vigilant staff and good lesson plans that identify those who will benefit from a particular task or activity. However, the school has no individual education plans with a particular focus on improving numeracy skills and there are some pupils who would benefit from this. Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language (usually asylum seekers/refugees) have activities clearly explained to them and have their written work carefully checked. The analysis of their workbooks shows that they are making good progress and achieving well.
74. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is stronger in Years 3 to 6, with the very best practice in Year 6. The common strengths are:
- the teachers are very keen to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding;
  - teachers have good pupil management skills and as a result, classrooms are calm, quiet and busy;
  - effective use is made of information and communication technology skills to support learning in mathematics;
  - clear targets are given to each pupil and these are regularly checked by the teacher. Targets are written in "child friendly" language, so the pupil can readily understand their own priorities and therefore develop an understanding of what they need to do next to improve.
- Areas for development in teaching are mainly focused on overcoming inexperience, particularly raising the expectations for higher attaining pupils. The use of literacy skills to support learning is not strong. For example, the analysis of work in pupils' books shows that in some classes, where pupils misspell key mathematical words, they often go uncorrected, which is a missed opportunity to extend spelling skills.
75. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. This is a similar judgement to the previous inspection, although there has been good improvement in the development of the coordinator's role in school. There are clear strengths. For example:
- the subject leader is an exemplary mathematics teacher who has very good subject knowledge and is a good role model for all staff;
  - the analysis of pupils' performance in tests has been used very well to identify weaknesses, for example in their ability to read and solve problems. This has been tackled with speed and rigour and, as a result, the strategies that have been put into place have the capacity to raise attainment and achievement.
- However, areas for development in aspects of teaching have not been tackled with similar speed and rigour and, as a consequence, there has been less impact on the pupils' achievement.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Overall, this aspect of the curriculum is satisfactory. Key skills in mathematics are used to plot charts and graphs to support work in science and geography. However, curriculum planning for other subjects does not identify, with enough clarity, how the key skills in mathematics will be used, developed and extended in the full range of subjects.

## SCIENCE

The provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 and pupils in these classes achieve well.
- Information and communication technology is used particularly well in Year 4.
- The focus on pupils learning and using the appropriate scientific vocabulary is effective in Year 4 and 6.
- There are weaknesses in the curriculum that include shortcomings in the development of scientific enquiry skills.
- The use of assessment to accurately match work to pupils' levels of attainment is unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

77. At the ages of seven and 11, standards are below average. This is lower than the average standards reported at the previous inspection. These findings are better than the results of teacher assessments at seven and national tests at 11 in 2003, when standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 were well below the national average. However, at the age of seven, there is a closer match with the comparisons to similar schools, where standards were below average. In Year 6, standards were broadly similar to those in similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils attaining better than the expected results (Level 5) was above the average. There was no significant difference in the results of boys and girls.
78. Pupils' progress and standards vary from year group to year group and match the variations in the quality of teaching. Teaching and achievement are good in Year 1 and Years 3 to 5. Although no unsatisfactory lessons were observed there are some weaknesses in the satisfactory teaching in Years 2 and 6. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their science work because of its practical nature.
79. By the age of seven, scientific enquiry skills are not developed systematically. However, a good feature is the observing of wildlife in a range of habitats around the school and pupils have a secure knowledge of the characteristics and life-cycle of the frog. Nevertheless, the teaching does not help pupils to link this learning to previous work so that pupils extend their understanding of life processes or introduce the idea of adaptations in order to raise attainment.
80. By the age of 11, pupils have a sound appreciation of how to use apparatus to find things out. For example, Year 6 pupils use mirrors to observe, and identify, the direction in which light travels and draw diagrams to show how they have reflected light. Higher attaining pupils explain how the light travels to their eye. This work builds effectively on previous learning related to shadow formation. Whilst higher attaining pupils draw a suitable diagram, others, due to lack of guidance, draw diagrams that are too small or they spend too much time drawing irrelevant detail. In the Years 3 to 6, pupils learning of scientific investigative skills is not as consistent as it should be and this restricts standards. For example, in Year 5, pupils make reasoned predictions but this skill is not practised sufficiently in Year 6. Nor is it extended often enough into identifying a fair test in order to consolidate the concept. These pupils do not record a full investigation until half way through the year.

81. Pupils with special educational needs, and those in the care of the local authority work with a learning support assistant who enables them to be fully included and supports their learning, so that they achieve well. The few pupils for whom English is not a first language (usually asylum seekers/refugees) are supported well by teachers, at times by placing them with other pupils who can help them if needed, and so they achieve well.
82. The weaknesses in pupils' communication skills are a barrier to learning. Throughout the school, at all levels of attainment, pupils find difficulty in explaining their observations accurately. Teachers are very conscious of this problem and constantly remind pupils of the correct vocabulary. This is particularly effective in Years 4 and 6, where pupils are starting to use scientific terminology well. The development of writing skills in a scientific genre is not sufficiently emphasised. However, information and communication technology is used well to construct graphs and there are good programs, as used in Year 4, to consolidate learning and support assessment.
83. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is variable. In Year 1, teaching is good, with a very focused range of activities that meet the demands of the National Curriculum well. Owing to the high expectations of the class teacher, pupils make a good start to their learning and achieve well. This good start is not maintained in Year 2, where the curriculum followed is not clearly mapped out and there are inaccuracies in the assessments. Consequently, insufficient work is covered to extend the higher attaining pupils, who do not achieve as well as they could. The analysis of pupils' work shows that in Years 3 to 6 teaching is generally good and pupils achieve well. However in Years 4 to 6, there are inconsistencies in the way that teachers build on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding from year to year. This is mainly because assessment data is not used sufficiently well. This has a cumulative impact on achievement and progress and these are reduced to satisfactory.
84. The coordinator has shown good leadership since taking the position, but the actions she has taken have not had the time to have an impact on standards. Self-assessment statements in easily understood language are providing the pupils with an understanding of their own learning. The co-ordinator recognises that these statements need to be modified to link more closely to the levels of the National Curriculum. In line with school policy, monitoring of work has taken place, but the co-ordinator does not have access to the records that track pupils' achievements over time in order to fully evaluate attainment and progress throughout the school. Insufficient improvement has been made since the previous inspection in the use of assessment. As a result:
- there are repetitions in some aspects of the curriculum;
  - all pupils, irrespective of their prior level of attainment, are provided with the same work.
- A good use of assessment has been the introduction of key scientific vocabulary for each unit of work. A strength in the curriculum is the inclusion of issues such as extinction of wildlife, and this makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good improvement since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Resources are good and this enables the teachers to make effective use of skills and knowledge in other subjects.
- Leadership and management are good.

## Commentary

85. Since the last inspection, the provision and standards in information and communication technology have improved greatly. The main developments are:
- higher standards and achievement, particularly by the age of 11;
  - greater confidence and expertise amongst staff;
  - much improved resources, including a computer suite and whiteboards in all rooms that computer images can be projected onto;
  - better management that includes weekly input from a teaching consultant.
86. By the ages of seven and 11, standards are average and pupils' achievement is good. Seven year olds have confidence in their use of keyboard, mouse and printer. They save and retrieve their work and word process their stories. Many pupils effectively use a simple data-handling program and successfully give a series of commands to control programmable toys.
87. By the age of 11, pupils have built well on the skills learned earlier and they are confident in using a range of applications, such as:
- linking together text and photographs;
  - using paint programs and 'clipart' to illustrate their own worksheets;
  - using a digital camera;
  - developing control and sensing skills for models of traffic crossings and measuring light and temperature.
88. Pupils with special educational needs, those in the care of the local authority and those learning English as an additional language (usually asylum seekers/refugees) achieve well. Staff are very aware of who needs support and the type to give and this is guided by the good assessment procedures that are in place. Furthermore, the helpful pairing of pupils is supportive and challenging to all, whether they are higher or lower attaining pupils.
89. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The main strengths in the teaching are:
- teachers' subject knowledge and understanding which enables them to plan effectively the use of technology in other subjects;
  - the use of resources to provide opportunities that are challenging in information and communication technology lessons and supportive to learning across the whole curriculum;
  - the use of the competences held by support staff as they help and guide those pupils experiencing difficulties, or lack of confidence;
  - the positive influence on standards and teaching quality of the consultant who works in the school one day a week. This was seen in a very good Year 6 lesson as she instructed everyone on how to add sound to an otherwise visual presentation.
90. Leadership and management benefits from:
- the strong teamwork of the coordinator and consultant;
  - the good checking of provision and standards through work scrutiny, assessment records and lesson observations;
  - the effective support of headteacher and governors in applying the right level of resources to improve a previous weakness. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are good and include useful self-assessment by pupils in conjunction with their personal folder of work.

## The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. This is a strength of this subject and, indeed, the curriculum as a whole. Very often classes are taken into the computer suite for their English, mathematics or history lessons, for example. Whilst there are many planned instances of effective use, good examples include:
- literacy: good use of graphics in Year 4, to illustrate the use of rhyme in poetry;
  - mathematics: development of spreadsheets in Year 5;
  - history: Year 6 used the internet to find newspaper articles that are illustrate rich but flawed secondary sources of information.

## HUMANITIES

92. In geography and history, it was not possible to make an overall judgement on the school's provision for the subjects, or on standards in teaching, as no lessons were observed in geography and only one lesson in history. Pupils' work was examined, displays were observed and planning was analysed.
93. In **geography**, standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are around the average. In response to good teaching pupils in Year 2 achieve well. They demonstrate an appropriate ability to compare the differences between two localities and to identify physical features and man-made features. In conjunction with their good geographical learning, pupils also develop their spoken language skills. Work in pupils' books shows that in Years 3 to 6 they cover an appropriate range of locations and environments to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, but mapping skills are not sufficiently emphasised. The curriculum is linked well with history and contributes to the pupils' personal and social development. It is enriched by a range of visits.
94. In **history**, judging by the evidence available, pupils' experience a broad curriculum and the school makes good use of local resources to plan interesting lessons. For example, pupils have visited museums for "living history" days to study Victorian and World War Two units of work. Displays in corridors and in classrooms indicate that teachers make effective use of historical artefacts to teach pupils about the past. In a very good Year 6 lesson on information and communication skills, the teacher ensured that pupils were aware that history is the recording and analysis of past events and that there is a range of sources from which evidence can be found. As a result, pupils learned that accessing newspaper sources is a rich but flawed way of researching history.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

95. Work was sampled in **art and design**, so no overall judgement on provision has been made. Only one lesson was seen, so it was not possible to make a firm judgement on the quality of teaching throughout the school. Samples of work in pupils' sketchbooks and on display throughout the school indicate that pupils' experience a broad art curriculum. Pupils use sketchbooks well to explore new media and techniques, or to record evidence of the work they have done. Teacher's monitor pupils' work in their sketchbooks well; for example they ensure that the learning objective has been fully explored and they make an assessment of the level of skill that the pupil has displayed. In the Year 3 lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory. A good feature of the lesson was the way in which previous skills in mixing powder paint to match the colour of skin was further developed and the majority of pupils achieved success in their colour mixing.
96. In **design and technology**, the wide range of products on display shows that the subject is covered throughout the school and that standards are around the national expectation by Years 2 and 6. Achievement overall is good. Pupils are introduced to the design process from Year 1, and by Year 6 they consider the needs of the user and the functions of the materials they will use. A weakness in the design process being taught is the lack of incorporating measurement, and as a consequence some of the products, such as the toys using a cam

mechanism, cannot fully rotate and move. In the one lesson seen, pupils showed a satisfactory ability to evaluate their own product and this discussion contributed well to their speaking and listening skills. Links to other curriculum areas are made, but could be strengthened, such as incorporating electrical circuits when making torches.

97. In **music**, hymn practices contribute well to pupils singing. During these sessions the singing in Years 3 to 6 is good. Pupils sing well in unison, with good timing and sense of rhythm and with enthusiasm. These experiences contribute well to the pupils' spiritual development. Displays and work in pupils' books show that pupils are introduced to musical structures by year 3 but that they do not develop these skills systematically through to Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils link music to literature and by Year 6 they demonstrate good skills in this area as they evaluate how they changed the melody and added percussion to a well known song in order to reflect the personality of a character. In the one lesson seen, the teaching was satisfactory. The teacher's expectations were rather too ambitious and the pupils struggled to play from a musical score. A strength in the lesson was the recording of the pupils' work and they were thrilled and excited when they listened to themselves. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural knowledge of western music, including Gregorian chants and rap, but not of music from non-western cultures.
98. In **physical education**, it was only possible to observe a small portion (gymnastics and dance) of the full programme. Consequently, it is not possible to make secure judgements relating to provision, standards and achievement. Four lessons were seen; two in Year 6 and two in Year 2. Discussions were held with the subject coordinator, and, informally, with pupils.
99. The school takes pupils swimming in Years 4 and 5 and they get 11 sessions in each year. Pupils do not go to the baths very much before they go with the school and, consequently, records show that about 90 per cent cannot swim as they enter Year 4. By the age of 11, around 65 per cent swim the nationally expected 25 metres. This is very good progress.
100. In the lessons observed, the overall quality of teaching and learning was good. The strengths included:
- good energetic warm-up followed by concentrated and lively action that was challenging physically and mentally;
  - good management and control of pupils;
  - effective use of skilled pupils as an example for others;
  - the way that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, take a full and active part in all lessons. This is particularly important where classes have significant proportions of pupils with behavioural difficulties.
- On occasion, the amount of activity was not as high as it should be and pupils were sitting listening for too long, as in the Year 6 dance lesson.
101. As a result of this effective teaching and pupils' good attitudes, pupils have significant strengths in performance of dance and gymnastics. For example, at the age of seven, the majority of pupils:
- have good movement skills in dance;
  - remember and develop dance steps;
  - interpret the rhythm and beat of the music well.
- The higher attaining pupils show lots of confidence and have very good coordination and agility. By the age of 11, pupils perform dance in an uninhibited way, particularly the boys. In gymnastics, the majority:
- are active and accurate performers;
  - evaluate well their own and others' work;
  - show good balance and coordination;
  - think about improvements to performance and carry them out.



102. Overall, leadership and management are good. The coordinator is effective at checking on the programme and resources through regular and detailed auditing of provision. She also promotes a good level of out-of-school activities that include competitive sports and a 'Fit Club' for pupils in reception to Year 2. There are, also, good community links with local sports teams, schools and university.

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

103. The school does not have a formal written policy on personal, social and health education and citizenship and there is not yet a scheme of work in place. However, a thorough audit of the curriculum has been undertaken to see how this aspect of the school's work can be taught. In practice, the school makes satisfactory provision for personal, social, drugs and health education and it is clear that the school places a high importance on the development of personal and social skills. This is evident from discussions with pupils, who are developing into caring and responsible members of the school and wider community. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating, and in discussion, can give good examples of what constitutes a healthy diet. They know that an active lifestyle is an indicator of good health. Pupils appreciate the school's provision of drinking water, which is available to them throughout the day.
104. The governors have decided that sex and relationships education will not be formally taught as part of the school's provision. This is currently under review and the governors have taken advice from specialists and purchased and reviewed a range of resources.
105. There is no School Council and discussions with older children in Year 6 indicate that they would appreciate a formal council, which would enable them to learn more about the democratic process of decision-making in the school. Pupils do, however, feel that teachers and all adults listen, and respond to, their views and opinions, and they have been fully involved in the setting of both classroom and whole school rules.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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