

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST THOMAS MORE RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Middlesbrough

LEA area: Middlesbrough

Unique reference number: 111704

Headteacher: Mrs C Short

Lead inspector: Mr A Margerison

Dates of inspection: 22 - 24 March 2004

Inspection number: 257981

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	163
School address:	Erith Grove Easterside Middlesbrough
Postcode:	TS4 3QH
Telephone number:	01642 317350
Fax number:	01642 300597
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T J Cane
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated on the Easterside estate in Middlesbrough and serves the Roman Catholic parish of St Thomas More. The school is placed in an area of mainly local authority owned housing and most of the pupils come from the estate and parish, but it is a popular school and a few pupils are brought to the school by their parents from the surrounding area. Although pupils' backgrounds vary, overall their socio-economic circumstances are below average. There are 163 pupils on roll aged between three and 11 years including 26 children who attend the nursery part-time. When children start school, their attainment varies from year to year, but overall it is below that which is typical for their age. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties, is average, but varies from year to year. There are a very small number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very small and no pupils have English as an additional language. Overall, the number of pupils who join and leave the school during the school year is below average. In 2003, the school was awarded the Healthy Schools Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21666	A Margerison	Lead inspector	Geography History Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language
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4926	T Aspin	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music
32283	D Goodchild	Team inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>31</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money.** Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. It is well led and managed by the headteacher and governors.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children are taught and achieve well in nursery and reception.
- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics to attain at least satisfactory standards by Year 6.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and behave very well due to the positive Catholic ethos and values of the school that are threaded through all its work.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in developing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills so standards are below those expected in Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils do not develop a sufficiently clear awareness and understanding of cultures other than their own so that they are well prepared for living in a culturally diverse society.
- Pupils are well cared for and their views and opinions are valued by the school's leadership.
- There are not enough consistently challenging activities in mathematics and science lessons for higher attaining pupils.
- There are no systematic procedures to involve parents in the work and development of the school.

Since the last inspection the school has improved satisfactorily. Following the last inspection the school went through a period of falling pupil numbers and staffing instability. Since the appointment of the current headteacher four terms ago the school has re-established a clear direction. All the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection have been addressed appropriately and standards are beginning to improve. The headteacher has introduced good procedures to analyse assessment data to track pupils' progress and to set whole-school targets for improvement. Subject leaders have taken steps to ensure that school's policies and subject guidance are fully in place, but there are still a few inconsistencies in their implementation.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils achieve satisfactorily** as they move through the school. In nursery and reception, children achieve well so that by the end of reception, children exceed the goals they are expected to reach in their personal and social development. In communication, language and literacy skills and mathematics, standards are below those expected. In all other areas of learning they attain the expected standards. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, standards were average in reading and mathematics. However, mainly due to the very low proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels, standards in writing were well below average. In the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, standards improved on the previous year and this group of pupils achieved very well considering their attainment at the end of Year 2. Standards are continuing to improve.

Currently, pupils in Year 6 are achieving well in mathematics and are set to attain good standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils are also achieving well in English in Years 2 and 6 to attain satisfactory standards. Standards are in line with those expected in science, design and technology and above expected in history in Year 2. Standards are below those expected in ICT in Years 2 and 6 and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make judgement on standards or achievement in any other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development are good.**

Their attendance is below average due to a few parents who keep their children off school. However, pupils are punctual to school and have positive attitudes. They develop a very clear understanding of right and wrong and behave very well.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory** and over time pupils make sound progress. Provision and teaching in nursery and reception are good so children achieve well. Throughout the school, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and encourage them to do their best. As a result, pupils try very hard, are fully involved in their work and want to succeed. Teaching assistants are used well in lessons and make an important contribution to lessons and the progress pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, make. Throughout the school, teachers teach the basic skills of subjects well. However, in science and in mathematics in the lower years of the school, there are too few activities for pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, to use their understanding to plan and carry out investigations for themselves. In addition, there are too few activities in lessons for pupils to practise and use their ICT skills so they do not make sufficient progress as they move through the school. Assessment procedures are thorough in English and mathematics and the headteacher and subject leaders use this information well to predict the levels pupils should attain by the end of each year. However, the information is not consistently used well enough by all teachers to set targets for individual pupils, apart for those with special educational needs, and there are no consistent whole-school procedures to involve pupils in setting and reviewing their own targets for improvement.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched by a good range of sporting, creative and other activities. Provision for pupils' personal, health and social education and for those pupils with special educational needs is good. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good and they are well involved in the work of the school. The school has established good links with the community and other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The school is well led and managed.** The headteacher has established good procedures to evaluate the performance of the school so she has a clear vision and high aspirations for the future. The school has a sense of purpose. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide a good level of support and challenge to its staff. The senior management team has only been working in its current form for one full term, but is beginning to make a positive contribution to aspects of the development of the school.

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

Parents have a good opinion of the school and its work. They feel that the teaching is good, pupils behave well and their children make good progress. However, a significant proportion of parents of pupils in one year group in particular do not feel that they know enough about the progress their children are making and do not feel sufficiently involved in the work of the school. Pupils have positive opinions of their school and feel very well supported and involved in its work.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in ICT.
- Improve the range of activities to develop pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own so they are well prepared for living in culturally diverse society.
- Ensure that activities in mathematics and science lessons consistently challenge all pupils.
- Provide more systematic opportunities to involve parents in the work and development of the school.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Pupils achieve satisfactorily.** Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. By Year 6, standards in English and science are average and in mathematics are above average. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in nursery and reception.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 to attain good standards by Year 6.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected in Years 2 and 6. Achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (16.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.0 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.3 (16.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Results in the 2003 tests for pupils in Year 2 were similar to the previous year and reflected the trend in results, which is broadly in line with the national pattern. Results in reading and mathematics were average when compared to all schools and were above average when compared to similar schools. Results in writing were well below average nationally and below average when compared to similar schools. This was mainly due to the very low proportion of pupils who attained the higher than expected levels reflecting the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs for literacy difficulties in this group. With this being a small cohort each pupil had a significant impact on the overall results and so the apparent fall in standards in writing from 2002 is not significant.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (25.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.2 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.6 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

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

2. Overall, the school's results in the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 6 were in line with the national average when compared to all schools. This was an improvement on the results in 2002 and reflected the trend in the school's results over time, which is above the national pattern. The results were average in English and science when compared with all schools nationally. However, when compared to this group of pupils' performance when they took the

Year 2 tests they were well above average and reflected very good achievement. In mathematics the results were above average when compared with all schools, but based on their results in Year 2, pupils' performance was very high and placed them in the top five per cent of schools in their group. One of the main factors that contributed to this was the above average proportion of pupils who attained the expected level in mathematics and science. However, although the proportion of pupils who attained the higher than expected levels in English and mathematics was at least in line with the national average, it was below average in science.

3. Children start in school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those expected for their age, but in communication, language, literacy and mathematics current children in reception started school with skills that were well below that which is typical. They achieve well as a result of good teaching that focuses on developing their basic skills. This is particularly the case for their personal skills, in which they achieve very well. As a result, by the end of the reception year, children exceed the levels expected in their personal and social development. In communication, language and literacy and mathematics children also achieve well from a low base, but a significant proportion of them will not attain the expected levels by the end of reception. In their physical development, children achieve well to attain the expected levels for their age. There was insufficient evidence to make judgement on standards and achievement in children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development.
4. Inspection evidence shows that the improvement in standards seen in 2003 is being maintained. Currently pupils are achieving satisfactorily in English and science as they move through the school to attain standards in the Year 2 and 6 groups that are in line with those expected. This is despite more than a third of pupils in both year groups having special educational needs and reflects the good provision the school makes for these pupils. As a result, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. In mathematics, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 to attain standards that are in line with those expected. However, these standards are based on pupils developing very secure number and calculation skills with less emphasis on developing their understanding of how to use and apply these skills. By Year 6, pupils achieve well and attain good standards. However, this is mainly due to consistently good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and effectively targeted small group 'booster' teaching in Year 6. In science, pupils are attaining the expected levels in Years 2 and 6 because they are taught the knowledge of the subject well, but there are fewer opportunities in all classes, particularly for higher attaining pupils, to learn how to plan and conduct investigations. As a result, the proportion of pupils who attain the higher than expected levels by Year 6 is below average.
5. In the last two years the school has concentrated on improving provision and standards in English and mathematics following the disappointing results in 2002 by introducing good procedures to analyse assessment data in Years 1 to 6 to track pupils' progress and to set whole-school targets for improvement. As the improving standards show this has been effective. However, as result, other subjects have not had the same focus which has had an impact on standards particularly in information and communication technology. The school has identified ICT as a current priority for improvement and steady progress is being made to improve provision, but as yet, the lack of effective tracking procedures to check what pupils know, understand and can do, results in teaching that fails to develop pupils' skills progressively. As a result, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory as they move through the school and standards are below those expected in Years 2 and 6. Standards in history in Year 2 are above those expected with pupils achieving well. Standards are in line with those expected in design and technology by Year 2 and 6. Due to timetable arrangements it was not possible to make judgments on standards in any other subjects.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

**Pupils' personal qualities are good.** Their attendance is below average, but they are punctual to school. They have positive attitudes to school and behave very well. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in their personal and social development in nursery and reception.
- The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour so they develop a very good understanding of what is right and wrong.
- Provision to develop pupils' appreciation of cultures other than their own is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils are interested in school and are keen to take part in any activities or responsibilities provided for them.
- Relationships between pupils are good and the school has good procedures to deal with any misbehaviour so pupils are largely free from any form of bullying or harassment.
- A few parents do not ensure their children attend school enough.

### Commentary

#### Attendance

6. Although pupils' attendance is below average, the vast majority of both pupils and parents agree that the pupils enjoy coming to school. The school encourages pupils to attend school and this is reflected in the punctuality of pupils for the start of school. There are very few latecomers. However, a few parents regularly keep their children off school for extended periods. The school has a clear policy to ensure that absences are appropriately recorded and followed up. The headteacher has recently introduced a policy to follow up pupil absence on the first day as a means of encouraging parents to be more rigorous about the importance of full attendance.

#### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.2%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

7. Pupils develop good attitudes to learning and school. The vast majority of parents report that their children enjoy school and that the school encourages them to work hard and to be responsible and mature. The school encourages pupils to take an active part in school and places a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' moral values based on Christian principles that reflect the good Catholic ethos of the school. This begins in the nursery and reception class where children achieve very well in this aspect of their learning and sets a very firm foundation for the positive attitudes and very good behaviour seen throughout the school. Through assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons, pupils' learn to respect each other's feelings and values. As a result, relationships between pupils are good, they are generally enthusiastic in lessons and are keen to be involved in activities. There are occasions when the pace of lessons drop or that work is not accurately matched to their needs that a few pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils in Year 4, lose their concentration and do not make any contribution. They do not disrupt lessons, but display an impatience to be working rather than listening to the teacher.

8. Pupils learn about their responsibilities as members of the school community and to each other. They willingly take on responsibilities that are given to them, such as the school council and older pupils are involved in supervising younger pupils. They also learn about their own local heritage and culture. However, although pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs through religious education lessons, there are few other opportunities for them to learn about other cultures or lifestyles so they are not sufficiently well prepared for living in an integrated culturally diverse society.
  
9. The very good behaviour seen in lessons and around the school reflects the very high expectations all adults have of pupils' behaviour and the clear procedures the school has to deal with any misbehaviour, anti-social or racial behaviour. Through the parents' questionnaire and at the meeting for parents, the majority feel that behaviour is good and that pupils are largely free from bullying and harassment. A few expressed concerns, but this view is not endorsed by pupils or evidence from the inspection. In classrooms pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other, put up their hands to answer questions and behave appropriately, as they move around the school and in the dining hall. In the playground, although a few pupils' behaviour is boisterous, no serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour were seen during the inspection in classes or outside.

## Exclusions

### *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	161	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	11	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.** Teaching is satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched well. The accommodation and resources are good. Pupils are well supported and the school has established good links with other schools and the community.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	4 (13%)	11 (35%)	14 (45%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in nursery and reception is good so children achieve well.
- Throughout the school, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers encourage pupils to take part in lessons through the effective use of praise and questions.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs.
- The range of planned activities to encourage pupils, particularly those of higher attainment, to work on their own and to use their investigative and problem solving skills in mathematics and science is inconsistent and ICT is not used enough in lessons.
- Information from assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics are not used consistently by teachers to ensure activities consistently challenge pupils of all levels of attainment.

## Commentary

10. Although teaching overall is satisfactory it is inconsistent through the school. However, there are no specific aspects of teaching that are consistently unsatisfactory and there are a number of strengths that are common to all lessons.
11. Throughout the school lessons are orderly and positive experiences for pupils. The basis for this is the very high expectations teachers and support staff have of pupils' behaviour. They are very consistent in their insistence on pupils listening to each other and conforming to basic classroom rules such as putting up hands to answer. As a result, pupils behave very well in lessons. Teachers plan carefully and usually share the aims of lessons with pupils at the start of lessons so they know what they will be learning about. In most lessons, teachers encourage pupils to contribute and use praise well to reward their contributions and efforts even if they are not totally correct. This helps develop pupils' self-esteem and so they develop confidence in their capacity to learn. In the best lessons, teachers use questions well in whole-class discussions to involve pupils in lessons and to encourage them to express their ideas and opinions, target questions to specific pupils and vary the difficulty of these questions and achieve a good balance between open and closed questions. Through this approach they are able to check which pupils have understood the key ideas. However, in less effective lessons, particularly in Year 4, this good balance between discussion and pupil activities is not successfully achieved. Introductions are too long so the pace of the lesson drops and questions are too generalised or targeted at lower attaining pupils. Although this 'over-teaching' ensures that these pupils develop secure basic skills in number and literacy, higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently, tend to withdraw from the discussion and begin to get impatient to start work themselves. In addition, group activities in these lessons do not consistently reflect the range of attainment in the classes with too much reliance being made on using the national plans without varying the tasks. For example, similar worksheets are used for all pupils rather than expecting higher attaining pupils to use their literacy, number or ICT skills to record their ideas. Together this limits the pace of these pupils' learning and the rate at which they achieve.
12. The exception to this is the teaching in the nursery and the reception class, which is consistently good and the English and mathematics 'booster' groups in Year 6. A good broad range of activities are provided for children that effectively develop children's personal, language and basic number skills. Role-play activities develop children's imagination and encourage them to work and play with each other. On going assessments of how children have got on in lessons on a daily basis provide teachers and support staff with a clear picture of each child and how they are progressing. This enables them to plan activities that build progressively on children's skills. In the 'booster' groups the teacher focuses very clearly on specific skills, provides a good mixture of practical tasks and discussion so pupils learn well.

13. Support staff play a very important part in lessons and teachers use their skills effectively to work with individuals and groups. Relationships between the staff and pupils are good so pupils respond very well to their encouragement and prompting. When they are working with groups they achieve a good balance between helping pupils and prompting them whilst encouraging them to come up with an answer for themselves. This has a particularly positive impact on the progress that pupils with special educational needs make.
14. Assessment procedures in English and mathematics are good and the headteacher and subject leaders use this information well to identify whole-school areas for improvements and to predict where pupils might be by the end of the year. However, this is not so effective in other subjects such as science and ICT. There are whole-school procedures in place to assess how pupils are getting on, but teachers' and subject leaders' ability use of this to evaluate how pupils are getting on in these subjects, as they move through the school and to identify areas that need working on is inconsistent. This results in the lack of a variety of tasks to match pupils' different abilities seen in a few lessons and their limited use of marking to explain to pupils how they can improve and to set them clear targets to work towards. A result of these two weaknesses in the assessment procedures, most teachers do not actively and systematically involve pupils in setting and reviewing their own targets for improvement.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The opportunities for enrichment are **good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for children in nursery and reception is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- The links between subjects and how they can be used to develop pupils' ICT skills are tenuous so there are too few planned opportunities in lessons for pupils to use their ICT skills.
- The range of activities outside of the school day, particularly visits, visitors and sports are good.
- The match of teaching and non-teaching staff to the demands of the curriculum is good.
- The curriculum fails to place sufficient emphasis on education for ethnic and cultural diversity.

### **Commentary**

15. The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of activities and experiences covering all areas of the national curriculum. The curriculum for children in nursery and reception is good. The teacher and support staff provide children with plenty of experiences that develop their skills in all the areas of learning. A very strong emphasis is placed on developing children's personal skills through discussions, role-play and collaborative activities. Since the last inspection the school has successfully developed new subject policies and introduced the most recent national guidance as the basis for planning the curriculum, including literacy, numeracy and other subjects. In addition, a wide range of initiatives are deployed in school to raise standards in literacy and numeracy and to increase access to the curriculum. However, this involves frequent withdrawal of groups to a specific room which on a few occasions is unnecessary and results in pupils consistently missing elements of other subjects. Good links have been established between subjects to promote pupils' literacy skills, but this is not planned as coherently for pupils' numeracy and ICT skills. In mathematics the links are satisfactory, but ad hoc, so pupils' ability to apply their knowledge to solve mathematical problems is not promoted systematically. In ICT, a whole scheme of work was introduced recently, but as yet has not had time to have a significant impact on standards or pupils' achievement because teachers do not link activities in lessons well enough to give pupils additional opportunities to practise the skills they learn in the computer suite.

16. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. A whole-school scheme has recently been introduced that complements and gives a coherent structure to the systems that were already in place to recognise pupils' achievements and to promote their understanding of issues such as drugs, sex and health education. The school has also been awarded the Healthy School's Award in recognition for the importance it places on promoting this aspect of pupils' personal development. However, there are too few other opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures or lifestyles so they are not sufficiently well prepared for living in an integrated ethnic and culturally diverse society.
17. Circle Time is an integral part of the timetable in all classes and teachers use these sessions well to follow up assembly themes and any issues that are of interest within or without school. This promotes good opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas and feelings. However, the scheme for personal, social and health education is in its early stages and the co-ordinator has not yet had time to evaluate how effectively it is being taught in each class.
18. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that procedures reflect the current national guidance. Assessments are made of what pupils need to learn so that the individual plans in place for all pupils have clear and explicit targets. Support staff use these targets well to plan activities in lessons and small group work so pupils make good progress towards their targets. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and new targets set, but limited use is made of performance data to monitor the progress that these pupils make when compared with peers with higher attainment and to evaluate the provision.
19. Pupils are provided with a good range of activities and experiences to enhance what they learn in lessons. A range of sports clubs enables pupils, mostly in Years 3 to 6, to extend their skills and enjoyment in areas such as football netball, dance, games (Years 1 and 2), and gymnastics. Although activities in other aspects such as music and creative arts are fewer, there are clubs for recorders, animation club, ICT and gardening and the school is currently rehearsing a joint drama production of 'Bugsy Malone' with 2 other local schools. The numbers of pupils who take part is good. In addition, a good range of educational visits are made including a residential trip to an outdoor education centre near Hawes in North Yorkshire. Other visits encompass the local area and outings linked to specific history or geography topics. The good range of visitors to school makes an important contribution to pupils' experiences in some subjects such as dance, art and design and religious education. All the utilities, such as the police and fire service have visited. The school has established good procedures to prepare older pupils for transferring to secondary school. In their last term they study 'bridging units' partly taught at the secondary school by secondary staff which are continued when they move on. Specific visits are made by pupils in Year 6 to use the science and ICT facilities. As a result, the pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education.
20. Since the last inspection there have been significant reductions and changes in teaching staff, mainly due to the falling pupil numbers. However, the number of support staff has increased well and they play an important role in school. The resources and accommodation are good and have been improved since the last inspection. The transfer of the children in nursery and reception to the main building of the school has enabled the creation of a coherent Foundation Stage Unit. This well resourced and is a bright attractive area for children to work with good use being made of displays to celebrate children's achievements. However, this is not consistently the case throughout the school. Although, some teachers use displays well, such as in Year 2, to reinforce what pupils learn in lessons, in other classrooms, very little of pupils' work is displayed and teachers do not consistently encourage pupils to use displays to reinforce their learning. The computer suite is potentially a good resource, but has suffered from a lack of systematic management and maintenance. As a result, it has frequently broken down which has reduced teachers' confidence that they will be able to teach the

lessons that they have planned. However, the school has recently bought into an extended technical support package from the local education authority in an effort to improve the reliability of the system. In addition, the chairs provided are unsuitable for the age of the pupils', particularly the youngest, so they find it difficult to reach the keyboards and see the screen without standing up or straining.

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

Provision for ensuring pupils' care and welfare is **good**. Guidance and support for pupils is **satisfactory**. The arrangements for seeking the views and opinions of pupils are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Arrangements for settling children into nursery are very good.
- Procedures to ensure pupils work in a safe environment are good.
- Pupils have great confidence in the adults in school and that any problems will be dealt with effectively.
- The arrangements for seeking the views and opinions of pupils on the work of the school are good.

### **Commentary**

21. This aspect of the school is viewed as a real strength of the school by parents. The school has established comprehensive procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, including risk assessment. All staff know and understand the procedures for child protection. The school has established very good procedures for children starting in the nursery. For example, home visits that staff make in order to meet parents and carers, prepare children very well for school so they settle in very quickly. The lack of clear and consistent procedures to involve pupils in setting targets limits teachers' ability to give them formal academic advice, but good relationships throughout the school enable staff to give pupils clear and explicit advice to support them on a personal level. As result, most pupils feel that they know who to speak to if they have a problem and the vast majority are confident that they will be listened to.
22. The procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school and to develop their awareness of their role within the school community are good. The school's council, involving pupils from Years 2 upwards has a strong voice and has influenced developments around the school such as the introduction of a 'Buddy system' at lunchtime. There is also a good range of additional responsibilities that pupils can aspire to as they move through the school. This system makes sure that all pupils see it as fair and also develops pupils' awareness of the importance of their role within the school community.

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

The school has established **satisfactory** links with parents. Links with other schools and the community are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Procedures to deal with any parental concerns are good so parents are supportive of the school.
- The links with the parish church and the local Catholic community are strong.
- Links with other schools make a positive contribution to pupils' learning experiences, and ensure that they are well prepared for starting secondary school.



- There are no systematic procedures to seek the views and opinions of parents on the work and development of the school.
- Information provided for parents on their children's progress is good in the nursery and reception class. It is inconsistent across the rest of the school.

## Commentary

23. The school has established a sound relationship with parents so most parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns. The school's procedures ensure that any concerns are dealt with promptly. As a result, parents are supportive of the school in terms of helping on school visits and, particularly with younger pupils, take a lot of time to help them with reading and homework. They are provided with a good annual report each year that meets requirements and provides them with clear and concise information about the progress their children have made and outlines targets for the coming year. However, other information provided for parents about the work of the school varies from class to class. It is good in the nursery and reception class, where there are plenty of informal opportunities for parents to meet and talk with staff. However, as pupils move through the school these links become less consistent. As a result, a small proportion of parents do not feel adequately informed about the progress their children are making and have misconceptions on what the school is trying to achieve. In addition, there are no systematic procedures to seek the views of parents on the work of the school so a significant proportion report that they do not feel that the school seeks or acts upon their views.
24. The links that the school has established with local schools and the community are strong and improving and reflect the strong Catholic ethos within the school. The parish priest plays an important part in the life of the school as a governor and general mentor to staff and pupils. He is a regular visitor to school and takes Mass in school on a weekly basis. However, the school also works closely with other local schools and organisations on several levels. The recent establishment of the 'Skittles' all day childcare facility on the school site that is available for all the community, has forged even stronger links with the Easterside residents and local schools. The 'Sure Start' language development team is involved with the Foundation Unit to tackle the language deficiencies identified in a few children. With a second local primary school and a special school St Thomas More has been involved in a 'Pathfinder Project' that provides increased access to a local sports centre for parents and children. Links with the local secondary school are also good so pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, have plenty of opportunities to use the facilities. Curriculum projects such as opportunities to share aspects of the Arts curriculum and to worship together are regular experiences. The deputy head is currently developing a Science Project with Newlands Secondary School to support scientific enquiry and ICT.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The school is well led and managed. Governance of the school is good.** The headteacher's leadership is good and she is satisfactorily supported by other staff. The school is managed well.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision and high aspirations for the school and leads the school with a sense of purpose and direction based on good self-evaluation procedures.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and support the teaching staff well. They have been prepared to make difficult decisions in the light of falling roles.
- The headteacher and governors use performance data well to identify school priorities and to monitor progress towards its targets, but individual staff are not sufficiently involved in setting targets and expectations for themselves or their pupils.

- Not all subject leaders have had sufficient opportunities to monitor standards or the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Financial management and the attention given to ensure that the school gets best value from its spending are good.

## Commentary

25. Since the last and positive inspection the school has had to deal with a number of challenging factors that have created turbulence and difficulties. Firstly, the numbers of pupils attending the school has fallen by nearly a third due to local birth and housing trends. This is a significant local issue, but has resulted in staff reductions and a falling budget. In addition, the then headteacher was off work due to illness for a long period with the current deputy headteacher taking on the role in an 'acting' capacity whilst fulfilling a heavy teaching commitment, there was a change of parish priest and the chair of governor's term of office ended after many years involvement with the school. The view of the governors is that as a consequence, the school went through a period of decline reflected in the fall in standards in the 2002 national tests in Year 6. However, in September 2002 a number of positive factors coincided that has given the school its current sense of purpose and clear direction. First and foremost the current headteacher was appointed, but in addition, the Chair of Governors returned to the post and a new parish priest took up his position.
26. The headteacher is giving a good lead to the school. She has high aspirations for the school, the staff and pupils. Through her relationships with pupils, she is a good role model for the whole school. Since her appointment some five terms ago, she has given a strong impetus to the school focussed on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. In order to achieve this, she has had to implement a significant number of changes to the way the school operates based on clear self-evaluation and monitoring to establish priorities for action. As part of this re-structuring she has recently established a senior management team consisting of the deputy head teacher, Key Stage 1 manager, and the special educational needs co-ordinator. As a management team they meet regularly to review progress being made towards whole-school initiatives, give a clear direction for the school and are good role models for the staff through their teaching.
27. The role of other subject leaders is developing steadily and overall they are giving satisfactory leadership to their subjects. The Foundation Stage leader in particular, has established a strong team ethos between support staff and herself in the recently established Foundation Stage Unit. Other subject leaders all have at least a secure understanding of what they need to work towards, but most have not had time, as yet to directly monitor and evaluate standards and provision in their subjects. However, due to the good leadership the school now has clear direction, staff work together as a team and standards and the quality of teaching and learning are beginning to improve.
28. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well, including ensuring that the school has a clearly stated race equality policy. All health and safety procedures are effectively implemented and the annual report to parents complies with requirements. The Chair of Governors has been an influential figure in the school for a long time and his role was recognised at the last inspection. Governors share the headteacher's high aspirations for the school, have given her good support since her appointment and have been fully involved in determining its immediate priorities for development. These aspirations are at the heart of the school improvement plan. This plan clearly identifies the priorities and who is responsible for different aspects, including the evidence the school will use to judge the impact on standards or provision. Governors challenge the senior management team on issues related to all aspects of the school improvement plan and they have been prepared to make difficult decisions in the recent past regarding staffing and financial management. Links have been established with subject leaders and governors play an important role in monitoring the impact of the initiatives the school undertakes, particularly those that can be evaluated by using academic performance data.

29. The main strength of the management of the school is the effective use of data and self evaluation to systematically identify priorities for development and to monitor the impact of the action the school has taken. Quite rightly, the school has focussed on improving the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics and the action the school has taken has been effective. For example, it was decided to employ a part time teacher to work with a group of pupils in Year 6 to improve the proportion of them attaining the expected level and a second group who had the potential to attain the higher levels. As a result standards improved in 2003 and are set to maintain that level in the current year despite a third of pupils in this group having special educational needs. The headteacher has worked closely with the subject leaders for these subjects to identify specific areas for development and to set targets for improvement. Data analysis is used well to evaluate and identify these areas. Staff performance management strategies and development priorities are closely linked to whole- school targets which gives a coherence to school improvement.
30. Financial management by the headteacher and governors is good. They have a strong awareness on the importance of obtaining best value from any spending so priorities for school improvement are carefully costed. The high carry forward figure in the table below was due to funds being retained to create the integrated Foundation Unit for children in nursery and reception that opened in September 2003, and to maintain staffing levels for the current academic year which ensured small teaching groups in Year 1 and enables senior managers to be released to fulfil their roles.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	520,658	Balance from previous year	4,633
Total expenditure	477,262	Balance carried forward to the next	43,396
Expenditure per pupil	2,374.44		

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

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

Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is **good**.

The accommodation and resources has improved significantly since the two classes moved into a purpose-designed unit in the main school building in September 2003. Children enter the nursery soon after their third birthday. Before starting they make visits that help them to settle in more easily and staff visit children at home. Overall, children's attainment on entry is below that which can be expected, but this varies from year to year. Current children in reception entered school with skills that were well below expectations in early literacy and mathematical development and below those expected in social development. All children are given equal opportunities to do as well as they can and have a good start to school. They achieve very well in developing their personal and social skills. They are interested, confident, enjoy school very much, and are well motivated to learn more. Most are on track to exceed the goals expected in their personal and social development and to meet them in their physical development. However, although children achieve well in their mathematical, communication, language and literacy development, due to the low starting point, a significant proportion will not achieve the expected levels by the end of reception. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on provision and standards in children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development.

The curriculum, based on national guidance, is good and is at the heart of the good quality of teaching and learning. Teaching is good because the adults have a clear understanding of appropriate ways of learning for this stage and activities are thoroughly planned with a good balance of child and teacher led learning. The teacher leads the Foundation unit well and plans the work for both the nursery and reception class and involves the support staff well in developing activities and organising the classes. The high degree of teamwork between the staff is a notable feature of the provision. Support staff have very clear roles and encourage and support children very well, allowing them to make progress without intervening too soon. The Foundation Stage Profile is used along with entry assessment to match learning carefully. On-going observations are used well because they are linked to the steps children take towards achieving the early learning goals identified for their age in the six areas of learning. Targets are shared and followed up for language, number and social skills in the nursery and linked to homework. High expectations ensure that learning is good and children achieve well. Parents are well informed by notices in the foyer about what children are learning that week and how they can help.

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

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

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

- Relationships are very good and staff provide very good examples.
- Very clear routines are understood and enjoyed by the children who feel safe, secure and confident and so make very good progress.
- Teaching has a very good emphasis on developing children's social skills in all the areas of learning.

## Commentary

31. Due to very good teaching, children of all levels of attainment achieve very well from their below expected level of skills on entry. Most are in line to at least reach the level expected by the end of the reception year and a good proportion will exceed them. They gain a very positive sense of themselves as the member of a school family. Children keenly explore the experiences on offer in a safe, secure environment where very clear routines and boundaries of right and wrong are constantly reinforced so that they understand them. They make very good progress in learning how to look after their own needs such as hand washing, dressing and undressing. Growing in confidence, they are curious and eager to try new things, share ideas and feelings and speak in a large group. They generally behave very well in a range of situations, for example, in assemblies, whole-class, small groups, and on their own. Some find it hard to concentrate and sustain listening for more than short periods but, with patient teaching, they learn to take turns in discussion, follow instructions for activities and all share equipment sensibly. They show independence when selecting activities. Opportunities for children to become aware of, and value other cultures, are too limited.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching shows a good knowledge of the learning needs of children of this age. This leads to effective learning through talk and practical, first hand experiences.
- Good opportunities are given to practice speaking, listening and reading.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for children, particularly the more advanced to practice their writing for different purposes.

## Commentary

32. Children achieve well in the area of learning. However, from a low starting point a significant proportion will not attain the expected levels for their age by the end of reception. Due to good teaching that focuses on developing their basic understanding of letter sounds and names, the majority develop secure understanding of early reading skills. This begins in the nursery and is extended in reception. The careful planning by the teacher using the national guidance ensures that children's skills develop progressively as they move through the Foundation Unit. Children's language skills are nurtured effectively by adults. The role of support staff is very carefully planned by the teacher so that children of different ages have access to activities that are appropriate to their age. There are plenty of opportunities for them to work together in role-play activities such as pretending to make meals and to run a garden centre. As a result, their ability to communicate with each other develops well and they gain in confidence when talking to adults. However, during class discussion the teacher has to prompt them with questions and a significant number are unwilling to contribute their ideas spontaneously. Most children learn to recognise letter shapes and learn to write their names, but not enough opportunities are provided for children to practise these skills by simple devices such as writing the date and giving their work headings. This particularly affects the children with higher attainment, few of whom are writing sentences on their own or describing the work that they have been doing in their own words.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching focuses on children learning through talk and practical first hand experiences
- Basic number skills are taught well so children achieve well in this aspect of mathematics.
- There are not enough activities to develop children's understanding of shape and measuring.

## Commentary

33. By the end of reception, standards are below those expected. However, children achieve well, particularly in their counting and number recognition. They learn through good practical activities and so most children can count and order reliably to five, ten and beyond, according to their age and level of attainment. For instance, when matching the number to the dots on the monsters. Most children are in line to reach the levels expected for their age by the end of the reception year in these areas of learning and around a quarter are already there, as they count confidently to at least 10. Most grasp the terms 'more than and less than', but few can confidently and consistently take one number away from another. Children of higher attainment are beginning to add and take one away from numbers to 20 accurately. Children with special educational needs are confident dealing with numbers to five. They are making attempts to form numbers to five and ten, but with too many reversals. Most children accurately identify order, shortest and longest, heaviest and lightest, using non-standard units. However, they are not fully secure on the basic shapes such as circles, triangles and rectangles.
34. In **knowledge and understanding of the world** and **creative development** there was insufficient evidence to make firm overall judgements on standards, teaching, learning or achievement. Teachers' planning and work seen in **knowledge and understanding of the world** indicates that children have a good start for the later subjects of science, history, geography and ICT by learning how to enquire, investigate and explore their world and materials. For example, they find out about different types of weather and what conditions plants need to grow best. From a walk around the local streets they learn about some of the important buildings and features in the area where most of them live. Children use play mats and models to make imaginative worlds and make interesting models using construction kits and waste materials. When discussing birthdays and days of the week they begin to use the language of the past and the future. Children confidently use a mouse to click and drag when they use computer programs and discover how they can control events and equipment. In **creative development**, children explore a good range of different media. They learn about line, colour, texture and shape to make individual paintings and drawings. In music children learn the names of, and how to handle, simple percussion instruments. There are good opportunities for imaginative play such as role-play and dressing up. Imaginative displays such as the 'Garden Centre' in the outside play area reinforce their learning in classroom sessions.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The six areas of learning are used well to provide opportunities for physical development
- Support staff are used well in lessons so that children in nursery and reception have physical education lessons together.

## Commentary

35. Due to good teaching, children attain the expected levels for their age by the end of reception. Most children in the nursery and reception classes show good control of tools such as pencils, brushes and scissors and use them safely. They use dough, sand and glue carefully to make letter shapes and know how to pinch, roll and cut. In physical education lessons in the hall, nursery children move expressively to music, use space well and control their bodies by curling up and stretching high. They move quickly and very, very slowly and take long and short strides. Reception children walk carefully on tip-toe, balancing well and move forwards, backwards and sideways with good control and coordination. Since the last inspection, the developments in the outside provision has broadened the range of opportunities and improved the facilities for children well.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is satisfactory with some very good teaching in Years 2 and 6. Its impact on raising the achievement of higher attaining pupils is inconsistent.
- Pupils have opportunity to use their literacy skills in other subjects and to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons.
- Pupils have a good attitude to learning because of good relationships.
- Assessment is used well to identify the needs of individuals and groups of pupils and pupils of lower attainment receive good support.
- Leadership and management are good and have taken action to raise standards in writing.

## Commentary

36. Overall standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations. There is good emphasis on the development of pupils' phonic skills and very focused guided reading in Year 2. This helps pupils achieve average standards in reading by the end of Year 6. Standards in speaking and listening and writing are average. Given the below average attainment on entry and the high percentage of special educational needs pupils in Years 2 and 6, this represents good progress. Pupils make good progress for several reasons: very good teaching gets the best out of pupils in Years 2 and 6; a focus on writing is helping to raise standards and 'booster classes' gives extra support to pupils to achieve higher standards. Good support from teacher assistants helps lower attaining pupils make as good progress as other pupils. Teaching assistants have good relationships with pupils and deal sensitively with any problems. This ensures pupils remain on task and make the best use of their time in lessons.
37. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Good relationships and well-managed lessons ensure pupils are well behaved, have a good attitude to learning and are productive in lessons. In a very good Year 2 lesson a variety of teaching and learning styles kept the pupils interested. The class questioned a pupil playing a princess from a story. They worked in pairs writing out questions to ask the princess. This helped to develop pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills. The teacher then modelled the writing of a character profile based on their suggestions. Clear explanations and high expectations helped pupils make very good progress during their independent work.

38. In a very good lesson Year 6 pupils made good progress in their understanding of writing information texts and in their speaking and listening skills. Good questioning identified key elements and encouraged pupils to explain their answers. They responded appropriately, cooperated and listened sensibly to others' points of view. A well led discussion developed their understanding of paragraphs and helped pupils to appropriately group ideas in their writing. However, in a few lessons there is insufficient challenge in questioning, discussions and activities to help raise standards further in the higher attaining pupils. Pupils are not asked to clarify answers and thus deepen their understanding. Or, inadequate time is provided for discussion at the end of the lesson for pupils to evaluate and reflect on their work and identify areas for improvement.
39. Leadership and management are good. They monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and carefully analyse test results. Writing was identified as an area for development and action taken is helping to raise standards. Assessment information is used well by the school to identify the needs of individual pupils and also to identify groups of pupils in need of additional help. Teaching assistants are used to support these pupils as discrete groups and also the school has funded an additional teacher to teach 'booster groups.'

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

40. Pupils' language and literacy skills are well developed throughout the school. Using information and communication technology Year 1 pupils wrote brief descriptions of their sculpture work in design technology. Year 2 pupils also used their word processing skills to create Jungle Story books. Some very good work was seen in Year 2. Pupils wrote in the character of Florence Nightingale and of a Victorian child labourer deepening their understanding of a period in history. In Years 5 and 6, effective use was made of pupils' geography and science work on the water cycle. Their vocabulary and writing skills were well developed as they wrote a piece of information text for younger pupils. All pupils have opportunity to record their scientific investigations in a variety of forms. Year 3 pupils' observational drawings and paintings of shells and tomatoes inspired them to write sensitive poetry.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Standards are above average in Year 6.
- The consistently good teaching in Years 3, 5 and 6 leads to good achievement by the end of Year 6.
- Those with high attainment are not challenged sufficiently until they reach Year 3.
- Mental skills and strategies are unsatisfactory by the end of Year 2.

#### **Commentary**

41. The school's 2003 National tests results showed standards that were similar to those found at the last inspection. Standards in Year 2 were average when compared with all schools and above average when compared with similar schools. The numbers of pupils attaining levels higher than the basic required standard was well below average. In Year 6, standards were above average when compared with all schools and well above when compared with similar schools. Results indicate that pupils made very good progress from Year 2 to Year 6.



42. Inspection findings are that most pupils reach the nationally required standard in written calculation skills in Year 2, but that in other aspects of mathematics, including mental arithmetic, standards are below those expected. Pupils often perform skills without sufficient underlying understanding. The numbers of pupils working at higher levels is unsatisfactory. In Year 6, despite a disproportionate number of pupils with special educational needs, standards are above the nationally expected level in number and algebra, shape and space and data handling. Pupils have a thorough grounding in different strategies for calculation, secure mental arithmetic skills and are well prepared for secondary education. An above average number of pupils reach standards higher than those expected nationally. Achievement in different years is variable, with unsatisfactory achievement of those with the highest attainment in the earlier years. Overall pupils achieve well, due to the consistently good teaching in Years 3, 5 and 6 and the quantity of ground that is covered in these classes and in additional support lessons, for example, booster classes. As pupils achieve well by the time they leave school provision is judged good despite the evident weaknesses in different years.
43. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in Year 4 is unsatisfactory. It is consistently good in Years 3, 5 and 6. Where it is good teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of the subject and how to help pupils understand mathematical processes. They develop the language associated with the topic well. In all lessons pupils behave well and work hard, even when tasks are repetitive or mundane. In the best lessons pupils are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy the work. They respond well to challenge and co-operate well with each other. Teachers prepare well for all lessons, even when they are not successful. In the least effective lessons the teachers talk for too long, and do not give pupils enough opportunities to consolidate learning through written or practical activities or think for themselves. In some lessons work is not sufficiently matched to pupils levels of prior attainment, and although pupils with special educational needs are often well supported, those with higher attainment are not sufficiently challenged. This is sometimes due to an over rigid adherence to nationally available lesson plans that are targeted at the need of the average pupil.
44. The overall leadership and management of the subject are good. The headteacher has taken a key role in subject leadership in order to maintain standards. Data has been analysed thoroughly to identify both those pupils needing additional support to attain nationally expected levels and identify specific areas of weakness in subject provision. Assessment procedures for tracking attainment are good but marking and ongoing assessment is not used sufficiently to target work in individual lessons. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been reviewed to reflect the latest national guidance and the National Strategy for Numeracy. However, teachers do not plan sufficient activities for pupils to use their ICT skills in lessons.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

45. There are some good examples of the use of numeracy to support science, for example, in recording and analysing data in Years 5 and 6. Overall, the use of numeracy in other subjects is satisfactory, but the approach is rather ad hoc. There is no consistent pattern of planning to ensure that mathematical skills are used in other subjects to make the best use of time.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Teaching places an appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding so they have a good understanding of the different strands of scientific knowledge.

- There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to design and carry out their own investigations.
- Leadership and management have taken appropriate action to develop the scientific enquiry approach but have yet to assess its impact on learning.

## Commentary

46. Standards by the end of Year 2 are similar to the national averages. This represents satisfactory progress as pupils move through Years 1 and 2 from the end of reception. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average which represents satisfactory progress from Year 2. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher than expected levels is below average.
47. Overall teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are knowledgeable and in their planning and teaching make sure pupils access the different strands of scientific knowledge. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that there is an appropriate balance between the different strands of the knowledge and understanding elements of the curriculum, but the emphasis teachers place on developing pupils' skills of scientific enquiry is inconstant across the school. This ultimately has a detrimental impact on the proportion of pupils who attain the higher than expected levels by Year 6. For example, very good teaching in Year 2 lesson gave pupils an understanding of good and bad drugs. Imaginative use of resources and adults helped to develop pupils' scientific skills. They developed their skills of observation as they described, classified and recorded a range of medicine packages into an appropriate category.
48. Good lessons were seen in the two Year 5/6 classes. In both lessons teachers' subject knowledge of reversible and irreversible change was good. Subject specific vocabulary was used confidently and well-led discussions consolidated and developed pupils' understanding of sieving, filtration and solution. Both lessons were very well prepared and managed with the scientific approach being central. However, both lessons were very structured and teacher centred. Though individual pupils demonstrated a particular method there was little opportunity for pupils to explore and investigate methods of separation. This limits pupils' ability to draw on their own knowledge and understanding, to manage their own experiments and to begin to consider what might be an appropriate investigation. This particularly affects the degree of challenge provided for higher attaining pupils.
49. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has made sound improvements in the provision for science based on introducing the most recent national guidance for curriculum planning. However, the school is aware that there needs to be a greater emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills and an action plan is in place to increase the emphasis on the development of scientific enquiry in teaching. That this has raised teachers' awareness is evident in planning and teaching. However, focused lesson observations have yet to be carried out to assess its impact on learning and its contribution to raising standards. The school has appropriate documentation in place which supports teachers in their planning.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6 and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support other subjects in most classes.

- Insufficient use is made of the facilities available.
- The system is not managed effectively to facilitate tracking of individual pupils' attainment.
- Computers are out of action too often, upsetting teachers planning and limiting continuity in teaching.

## Commentary

50. Standards are below those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6 and achievement of pupils with all levels of prior attainment is unsatisfactory. Standards are beginning to improve as teachers gain more confidence. In some aspects, for example, in the use of multimedia presentations in Year 6 standards are almost at the expected levels and in Year 2 pupils are confident using painting programs, but overall pupils do not have the full breadth of subject knowledge and skills expected. For example, in Year 6 pupils are unable to use e-mail at school and have limited experience with control. Although basic word processing is used extensively throughout the school, insufficient use is made of ICT to support other subjects. Insufficient use is made of both the computer suite and the computers in the classrooms.
51. Teaching is unsatisfactory, although in Years 5 and 6 teaching is good. Good use is made of the subject manager's subject knowledge expertise to ensure that all pupils in Years 5 and 6 have similar good quality experiences. In all lessons pupils behave well regardless of the quality of the teaching, enjoy working on computers and would like more opportunities to use them to 'find things out'. In unsatisfactory lessons, work is not matched to the needs of the pupils and too much time is wasted going over basic facts that pupils already know. Teachers lack confidence using all of the resources.
52. Recent work has been done to improve teacher expertise and introduce a new scheme of work. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, and the headteacher has identified provision for ICT as a school priority for the current year, but there is much to be done. The computer system is not managed effectively to facilitate tracking of individual pupils' attainment, and computers are out of action too often, upsetting teacher's planning and limiting continuity in teaching. Standards were judged in line in the previous inspection, but the nationally expected standards are now much higher and therefore a direct comparison is not appropriate. Recent improvement in provision is satisfactory.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53. Currently there is insufficient guidance for teachers how to teach ICT skills through other subjects and use ICT to develop learning in other subjects. Consequently, there are few systematically planned activities in other lessons for pupils to use their ICT skills. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were seen using the internet to conduct research in history and in Year 4 to produce the contents of books they were designing for younger children. However, overall pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their skills to draft or prepare or present their work using graphs, charts or publishing programs.

## HUMANITIES

There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on the overall provision for **history** or **geography**. However, in samples of pupils' work, the two lessons seen and discussion with the subject leaders indicate that the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The subject leaders are keen and enthusiastic, but have not had time to monitor the strengths in the provision of the quality of teaching and learning.

Standards of pupils' work in history in Year 2 indicate that standards are above those expected. Pupils learn to use evidence well to draw basic conclusions about a good range of people from the past, their influence on the modern world and how life in the past compares to the present day. They have plenty of activities to use their literacy skills to record their own ideas and opinions. There was insufficient evidence to evaluate standards in Year 6. However, throughout the school, pupils' work indicates that there are few opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in lessons.

In geography the amount of pupils' written work was very limited, particularly in Year 6. However, the topics reflect the statutory requirements and the school's subject policy and scheme of work. In the one lesson seen in Year 6, pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of the basic physical features of rivers, but a lack of appreciation of how important rivers are to human existence and the importance of them to their local heritage.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

No lessons were seen in **art and design** and it is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching. Analysis of pupils' work, displays and discussion with the subject leader indicates that pupils have access to an appropriate range of activities. The subject leaders' portfolio of work demonstrates a good quality of work which is not universally matched by work currently on display. Within the portfolio are paintings inspired by Monet and Miro. Pupils work with different materials creating collages, batik work and dough plaques based on their geographical work. Examples of landscape paintings and still life from the art club display a real sensitivity to colour and tone. Similar quality work was also seen in a Year 3 class where from direct observation pupils painted seashells and tomatoes. Year 2 pupils demonstrated good brush control and skills in mixing colours in their paintings of Monet's garden at Giverny.

Due to timetable arrangements during the inspection, no judgements can be made on the provision, standards and achievement in **music** although it is clear that experiences are planned and a suitable scheme of work is in place. Provision for extra-curricular music is satisfactory, and approximately a quarter of pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 take part in some regular additional musical experiences such as violin, recorder, guitar and woodwind lessons. Pupils are given the opportunity to perform in front of others and parents regularly, including in religious celebrations. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to listen to instrumentalists or go to different types of musical performances but opportunities are missed for pupils to listen to a variety of music when going to and from assemblies and other whole-school gatherings.

Only one lesson was seen in **physical education**. This is insufficient to make an overall judgement in this subject. Teaching was satisfactory in a Year 2 lesson. Pupils understanding of the benefits of exercise was addressed well. Though ball control skills were taught there was insufficient use of pupils' evaluation to improve performance. The school has a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities to further develop pupils' skills. These include football training, dancing and football matches with other schools. All pupils have opportunity to learn water safety and to swim, the large majority achieving 25 metres.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for design technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show good design skills in Years 1 and 2.
- Some aspects of evaluation and the technical elements of the subject are not addressed.

## Commentary

54. Pupils' work in design technology is average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good progress by the end of Year 2 given their below average standards on entry and satisfactory progress by the end of Year 6.
55. It was not possible to observe teaching in Years 1 and 2. However, analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils in Year 1 and 2 have a good start to their work in the subject. The Year 1 teacher puts a good emphasis on placing the pupils' work in a meaningful context. For example, following a visit to see local sculptures, Year 1 pupils used construction kits to create their own sculptures. Using their word processing skills they then wrote brief descriptions of their sculpture. Year 1 pupils as part of a community project designed a logo which was incorporated into a key ring and a t-shirt. There were strong elements of the design process seen in Year 2 work. In creating a design for 'Joseph's Coat' they had looked at different materials. This provided ideas for patterns some of which were created using the 'Dazzle' programme on computers. They then made a template so that they could accurately cut out the shape of the coat. Pupils recorded their work in diagrams but there was no written evidence of evaluation of the finished product.
56. Teaching seen in Years 4 and 6 was satisfactory. However, Year 4 pupils had insufficient technical knowledge on how to create moving parts. This was not addressed within the lesson and this limited the range of designs of books with moving parts. In a Year 6 lesson, in which pupils were constructing models of a bird hide, the teacher had correctly reminded the pupils to remember the purpose and function of the building and to carefully measure materials. However, pupils did not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of creating joints and of the importance of creating a stable framework. This limited pupils' progress in constructing an effective model.
57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has appropriate documentation in place to support teachers' planning.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong sense of community in the school, based on Christian principles.
- Relationships are good and pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong.
- Children in the Foundation stage achieve very well.
- There is insufficient evidence of value placed on pupils' work through display.
- Insufficient emphasis is placed on raising awareness about the diversity of cultures in local areas.

## Commentary

58. There is a strong caring ethos and a committed approach to pupils' personal development by all members of staff evident in lessons and around the school. Adults provide a happy and relaxed atmosphere to which pupils enjoy coming and they would happily recommend this school to any of their friends or relatives. A new well-prepared scheme of work is being implemented alongside a programme of religious education that contains a strong personal and social education element. This is successful in ensuring pupils very strong moral awareness. Classroom boundaries for behaviour are well established, and often agreed by the pupils themselves, so that teachers rarely need to correct misbehaviour. Relationships

between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are good, and pupils cooperate well in a variety of activities. Health education, including sex education and awareness of misuse of drugs is well thought out and supported by comprehensive policies. In this aspect pupils are well prepared for future life.

59. Despite the values placed on individual pupils, few classrooms demonstrate this through the display of pupil's work, although what is displayed is well presented. Nearby communities are rich in cultural diversity and the school recognises that insufficient is done to develop pupils' understanding and acceptance of differences they will meet in their own locality. Leadership and management, including the vision for future development are good.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
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).*