

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST WILFRID'S ROMAN CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY AIDED  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bishop Auckland

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114262

Headteacher: Mr S Rudd

Lead inspector: Mr A Margerison

Dates of inspection: 12 – 14 January 2004

Inspection number: 257996

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:	223
School address:	Murphy Crescent Bishop Auckland County Durham
Postcode:	DL14 6QH
Telephone number:	01388 603451
Fax number:	01388 451500
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Hellens
Date of previous inspection:	October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Bishop Auckland near Durham. The school is placed in an area of mainly local authority owned housing, but it is a popular school and a significant proportion of the 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 223 pupils on roll aged between three and 11 years including 34 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 broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties, is average. There are a very small number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. No pupils have English as an additional language. A few pupils are from Traveller families. Overall, the number of pupils who join and leave the school during the school year is below average, but this varies significantly from year to year. In 2002 the school was awarded the 'Activemark Gold' for its sports provision.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21666	Mr A Margerison	Lead inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs
9002	Mr D Ashton	Lay inspector	
30851	Mrs M Entwistle	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music Foundation Stage
15474	Mr J Fairclough	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
Anglia House  
Carrs Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 2LA

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **fairly effective** school that provides **sound value for money**. Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. It is well led by the headteacher, key staff and governors.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes.
- Standards in mathematics, particularly number skills are good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave well.
- The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the school and high aspirations.
- Standards and provision in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are below expectations in Year 6.
- Procedures to use assessment information and involve pupils in setting targets for improvement are unsatisfactory.
- Teachers do not use lessons outside of English and mathematics sufficiently to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
- Subject leaders are not involved enough in monitoring standards and teaching in their subjects.
- Links with other schools are very good.
- There are no systematic procedures to involve pupils and parents in the work and development of the school.

Since the last inspection the school has improved satisfactorily. All the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection have been addressed appropriately. The headteacher has introduced good procedures to analyse assessment data to track pupils' progress and to set whole-school targets for improvement. In addition, after a period of staffing turbulence, there is now a settled staff and, as a result, standards are beginning to improve. As a result of careful financial planning, a major building programme is about to begin to improve the accommodation further which includes provision for a new library and Computer Suite.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 and in communication, language and literacy skills. 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, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was above average in reading. In the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, standards improved on the previous year. However, this group of pupils demonstrated sound achievement, considering their attainment at the end of Year 2, except in science in which results have been consistently below average. Standards are continuing to

improve. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are achieving well in mathematics and well set to attain good standards by the end of Year 6. Standards are also above those expected in physical education. Standards in science and ICT are below those expected. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development are good.** Although their attendance is below average, pupils are punctual to school, have very positive attitudes to school and behave well. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent.

## **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 the nursery and the reception class 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, they try very hard, are fully involved in their work and want to succeed. Teaching assistants are used very well in lessons and make a very important contribution to lessons and the progress pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, make. Throughout the school, teachers teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well in English and mathematics lessons. However, other subjects are not used sufficiently to give pupils planned opportunities to use these skills and, in science, there are not enough activities planned for pupils to develop their investigative skills. In addition, there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and use their ICT skills, so pupils do not make sufficient progress as they move through the school. Assessment procedures are thorough in English and mathematics and the headteacher uses 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 teachers to set targets for individual pupils and there are no systematic procedures to involve pupils in setting and reviewing their own targets for improvement. There are no assessment procedures in place in other subjects.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched by a good range of sporting, creative and other activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Care, guidance and support for pupils are very good. However, there are no whole-school procedures to involve them in the work of the school. The school has established very good links with other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The school is well led and managed satisfactorily.** 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. Through his teaching the headteacher is a very good role model for staff and pupils. Because of good procedures to evaluate the performance of the school, he has a clear vision for the school and high aspirations for pupils and staff. He is well supported by key staff, including the deputy headteacher, but other subject leaders do not have enough opportunities to monitor their subjects so they are not able to take a major role in raising standards or improving teaching. Financial planning is good.

## **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 and their children make good progress. However, a significant proportion feel that they do not know enough about the progress their children are making and do not feel sufficiently involved in the work of the school. Pupils have very positive opinions of their school and feel very well supported.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- develop systematic procedures to use assessment information to set expectations for individual pupils and to involve pupils in the setting and review of their targets;
- improve teachers' planning to give pupils activities in lessons to use and practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills;
- provide more activities in lessons for pupils to develop their skills of scientific investigation;
- provide opportunities for subject leaders to monitor standards and teaching in their subjects;
- introduce procedures to seek the views and opinions of pupils and parents on the work of the school and to involve them in its development.

## 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 are average and in mathematics are above average. Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the nursery and reception class.
- Standards of children's personal, social and emotional development are above those expected by the end of reception.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils' competence in mathematics, particularly number, is good.
- Standards of pupils' listening skills are good by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils' skills of scientific investigation are insecure so the proportion of pupils attaining the higher than expected levels at the end of Year 6 is below average.
- Pupils' understanding of how to use their ICT skills of spreadsheets, databases and graphic is insecure.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (17.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.5 (16.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.3 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (24.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.8 (25.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.6 (26.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

### Commentary

1. Children start in school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those expected for their age, but they achieve well as a result of skilled teaching that focuses on developing their basic skills. This is particularly the case for their personal skills, in which they achieve very well, and language development. Currently, nine children in the nursery have additional support from the local authority's 'SureStart' language and speech therapy team. However, because of the skilled teaching of the staff in the nursery who provide a very broad range of activities that encourage independence, imaginative language development and social skills, they make rapid progress. This is built on effectively in the reception class, where very effective teaching of early reading develops children's basic literacy skills well. As a result, by the end of the reception year, children exceed the levels expected in their personal and social development and attain the expected levels in their communication,

language and literacy skills. A similar emphasis is placed on developing children's basic number skills so that by the end of the reception year, most attain the expected levels for their age. In the other areas of learning, children also achieve well to attain the expected levels.

2. In 2003, the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 2 were average when compared with all schools and similar schools. Underpinning these results was the above average proportion of pupils who attained higher than the expected level in reading and the well above average proportion of pupils who did so in mathematics when compared to similar schools. For the years 2000 – 2003, the upward trend in the school's results for pupils in Years 2 and 6 has been broadly in line with the national pattern. However, pupils' performance in Year 2 has generally been better when compared to all schools and similar schools than in Year 6. In 2003, this pattern was reversed with the Year 6 results being much improved in English and mathematics. This reflected the careful analysis of the performance data that the school had done following the very disappointing results 2002 and the action it had taken. Additional teaching sets were created in Years 3 to 6 and 'booster' classes were set up to target a group of pupils who needed extra support to attain the expected level in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils achieved satisfactorily, based on their prior attainment at the end of Year 2, to attain standards in line with all schools and similar schools.
3. The good improvement in results was achieved despite the fact that twenty five per cent of the group joined the school during Years 3 to 6 and twenty per cent of pupils had special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well in reading and writing as they moved through Years 3 to 6 and satisfactorily in mathematics. This difference reflected the limited number of targets in pupils' individual plans for mathematics and the emphasis placed on focussing on pupils' literacy skills. There is no significant evidence that there was a difference in the achievement of boys or girls and the few Traveller pupils made similar progress to rest of their group. Results in science were slightly better in 2003 than the previous year, but they remained well below average when compared to all schools. Although the proportion of pupils who attained the expected level was above average, the low overall result was mainly due to the fact that very few pupils attained better than is expected. This reflects the limited opportunities pupils have in lessons to practise and develop their investigative and experimental skills.
4. Inspection evidence shows that this improving pattern in English and mathematics is continuing. In English, standards are broadly average in Years 2 and 6. However, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good in Year 2 and pupils are achieving satisfactorily as they move through the school with good standards of listening skills seen in Year 6. However, a significant proportion of pupils lack confidence in speaking and need to be encouraged to express their ideas and opinions. In mathematics, pupils are achieving well, reflecting the school's emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills. As result, in Year 2, standards overall are above those expected and pupils in Year 6, have good number skills. However, their ability to use and apply these skills and to handle data is not as strong. The impact of the very good teaching seen in the 'booster' classes for English and mathematics upon standards and progress in Year 6 is significant. Standards in science remain below those expected by Year 6 owing to the continuing lack of investigative activities in lessons, although pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of the subject. Standards in ICT are also below those expected, but this is due mainly to the limited resources available for teachers to give pupils regular enough opportunities to use their skills. Standards are in line with those expected in art and design, history and physical education. Insufficient evidence was available to make secure judgements on standards in any other subject.

## 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 very positive attitudes to school and behave well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very interested in school and are very keen to be involved in activities.
- Relationships between pupils and with adults are excellent.
- The school has effective procedures to deal with any form of harassment.
- A significant minority of parents take their children out of school during term time.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of their own culture and those of other faiths and traditions.

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	7.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

### Exclusions

#### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

#### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
223	6	0

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

### Commentary

- Although pupils' attendance is below average, the vast majority of both pupils and parents agree that the pupils enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in the punctuality of pupils for the start of school. There are very few latecomers. The school encourages pupils to attend school and discourages parents to take their children out of school, but there are a small, but significant proportion of parents who take family holidays during term time and a few Traveller children who, overall, miss several weeks of school during the year. The school has a clear policy to ensure that absences are appropriately recorded and followed up. However, it does not have a procedure 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.
- The school's motto of 'care, concern and courtesy' reflects the importance it places on developing pupils' social and moral qualities and more than ninety per cent of parents agree that the school encourages pupils to become more responsible and mature. As they move through the school pupils develop very good attitudes to learning. In lessons, they are very keen and enthusiastic to take a full part in the activities teachers provide for them and the numbers of pupils who join in with activities after school such as sports clubs and team is very good. The basis of the harmonious atmosphere in the school is the excellent relationships between pupils and with staff. This focus on developing pupils' personal and social skills

begins in the nursery where children achieve very well in this aspect of their learning. Behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils in most classes listen attentively to their teachers and each other, put up their hands to answer questions and behave appropriately in classrooms, as they move around the school and in the dining hall. A few parents and pupils expressed concern about pupils' behaviour, particularly 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 and most pupils say that they are largely free from any bullying or harassment. However, the school takes a very serious view of any such behaviour and this reflects the six exclusions in the last year. The four pupils involved have now left the school.

7. The Catholic ethos of the school is threaded through the work of the school. In assemblies and in other lessons, such as personal, social and health education sessions, pupils are given appropriate opportunities to reflect upon their work and to consider the feelings and values of other people. Pupils learn to respect and reflect on the achievements of others. For example, each year the school has a visit to France for older pupils with another school from Tyneside. As part of this, the party visits the First World War cemeteries in Normandy, which helps pupils appreciate the sacrifice made by others in the past and to understand the significance of 'Poppy Day' to the current generation. Visits to theatres and museums develop pupils' awareness of their own traditions well and through religious education lessons they learn about the traditions of cultures other than their own. As a result, pupils learn respect for all people and are well prepared for living in a culturally diverse society.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.** Teaching is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Pupils are well supported and the school has established very good links with other schools.

### Teaching and learning

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception class are good.
- Teachers effectively encourage all pupils to take a full part in lessons.
- Teachers and support staff expect very high standards of behaviour.
- Support staff are used very effectively in lessons and make a very important contribution to pupils' achievement, particularly those with special educational needs.
- There are no assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics to help teacher to track the progress pupils make and to identify what pupils need to do to improve.
- Pupils are not systematically involved in setting and reviewing their own learning targets.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	5 (14%)	18 (48%)	14 (38%)	0 (0%)	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.*

## Commentary

8. 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 use questions well in whole-class discussions to involve pupils in lessons and to encourage them to express their ideas and opinions. The aims of lessons are usually shared with pupils at the start of lessons so they know what they will be learning about and this clear structure ensures that lessons are well organised and well paced. In the best lessons, teachers 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, group activities in lessons do not consistently reflect the range of abilities in the classes with too much reliance being made on pupils producing work at their own level rather than varying the tasks provided for them. For example, similar worksheets are used for all pupils rather than expecting high attaining pupils to use their literacy, number of ICT skills to record their ideas. This is particularly the case in science and other subjects such as history. This is also linked to teachers' limited use of assessment information to plan a variety of tasks and the limited use of marking to explain to pupils how they can improve and to set them clear targets to work towards.
9. 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 very 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 teachers focus very clearly on specific skills, provide a good mixture of practical tasks and discussion so lessons are very brisk and as a result pupils learn very well.
10. Support staff play a very important part in lessons and teachers use their skills very effectively to work with individuals and groups. Relationships between the staff and pupils are excellent 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 particularly positive impact on the progress that pupils with special educational needs make, although the lack of targets for mathematics in pupils' plans limits adults' ability to clearly focus on specific weaknesses.
11. 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, class teachers are not involved enough in this process so they are not sufficiently clear about their expectations for pupils in the medium term. In addition, there are no whole-school procedures to assess how pupils are getting on in other subjects. This limits teachers' and subject leaders' ability to evaluate how pupils are getting on as they move through the school and to identify areas that need working on. As a result of these two weaknesses in the assessment procedures, they do not have enough information to actively 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 **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Curriculum planning does not provide pupils with enough activities in lessons to practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
- In science lessons there are not enough activities to ensure pupils develop secure investigative skills.
- The range of sporting activities for pupils is very good and a lot of pupils take part.
- The number of support staff is good and they play an important part in the school.
- The range of resources and the accommodation for teaching ICT are inadequate.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.

### Commentary

12. 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. Teachers provide children with plenty of experiences that develop their skills in all the area of learning. A very strong emphasis is placed on developing children's language skills through discussions, role-play and collaborative activities. This continues in Years 1 to 6 where the provision for pupils' personal, health and social education effectively develops their awareness of issues linked to these areas. Since the last inspection the school has successfully introduced the national guidance for literacy and numeracy as the basis for planning English and mathematics lessons. Additional literacy support programmes have been introduced into Years 3 and 5 to develop and reinforce a few pupils' basic skills. However, the links between the activities in English, for example, and in other subjects such as geography and history are underdeveloped. As a result, pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to practise and reinforce their basic skills. This also applies to the pupils' ability to use and apply their number and ICT skills. Similarly, in science, although pupils are taught the knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum, insufficient emphasis is placed on giving pupils activities that extend and develop their investigative skills. This has a negative impact on the standards pupils attain at the end of Year 6, particularly the proportion of pupils who attain the higher than expected levels.
13. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are individual plans in place for all pupils with 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. Less effective use is made of the targets in the parts of lessons where pupils are working in groups as the basis for activities and there are few targets for mathematics, so pupils make less progress in mathematics than they do in reading and writing.
14. 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 and gymnastics and the school is heavily involved in local sports activities. The numbers of pupils who take part is very good. Activities in other aspects such as music and creative arts are fewer. However, a good range of visits are made including a residential trip to Middleton in Teesdale and France. Other visits encompass the local area and theatre and pantomime outings. The good range of visitors to school make 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 together with a falconry expert, an African and American visitor, guide dogs and

church representatives. The school has established good procedures to prepare older pupils for transferring to secondary school. In the 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.

15. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in teaching staff, particularly in Years 3 to 6 where this turbulence has had some effect upon the progress pupils have made and the impact subject leaders have made on their subjects. However, the number of support staff has increased well and they play an important role in school. The resources and accommodation are satisfactory and have been improved since the last inspection, but there are still shortcomings. However, a major building programme is about to start that includes a new computer suite. The school has also invested heavily in more hardware and software to address these shortcomings.

### Care, guidance and support

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements for settling children into nursery are very good.
- Procedures to ensure pupils work in safe environment are very good.
- Pupils have great confidence in the adults in school and that any problems will be dealt with effectively.
- There are no systematic procedures to assess pupils' skills and understanding when they join the school during term time.
- There are no regular whole-school arrangements for seeking the views and opinions of pupils on the work of the school.

### Commentary

16. The school has established very 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. However, there are no similar procedures to settle pupils into school who arrive during term time. As a result, teachers do not have a full picture of their academic skills and aptitudes which restricts their ability to meet their academic needs quickly. The lack of clear procedures to involve pupils in setting targets limits teachers' ability to give them formal academic advice, but the excellent 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. As part of the school's provision for guiding and supporting pupils, the Learning mentor is a recent appointment to the school staff, but is beginning to provide constructive and sensitive support to those pupils who have problems or personal difficulties. Pupils are involved in a few whole-school projects such as designing the new school sign, but there are no regular or systematic procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school or to seek their views and opinions on possible developments. Consequently, pupils are not aware of how they can contribute to the school community and take an active, responsible part as 'citizens'.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are supportive of the school and make a good contribution to their children's learning at home.
- The links with the parish church and the local Catholic community are strong.
- Links with other schools make a very significant 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**

17. The school has established a sound relationship with parents so most parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns. They are supportive of the school in terms of joining in with fundraising activities and the work of the Parents Teachers Association has resulted in a significant amount of money being raised to buy equipment and resources for the school. Parents also help on school visits and, particularly with younger pupils, take a lot of time to help them with reading and homework. They are provided with an annual report each year that meets requirements, but other information about what their children are doing in school and how they are getting on is limited and inconsistent. 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 effective. As a result, a significant proportion of parents do not feel adequately informed about the progress their children are making. 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.
18. Links with local schools are very good, although its links with the community are mainly based upon the parish church. These links are strong and improving and are reflected in the strong Catholic ethos within the school. There are few links with local businesses or organisations. However, the school works closely with other local schools on several levels. It is very involved in sporting activities and tournaments and parents say that it has a formidable reputation locally for the strength and skill of its teams. Links with the local secondary school are also very good so pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, have plenty of opportunities to use the facilities for science and ICT.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a very good role model for staff and pupils through his teaching.
- The headteacher and key staff have a clear vision and high aspirations for the school.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and support the teaching staff well.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors use performance data well to identify school priorities, but individual staff are not sufficiently involved in setting targets and expectations for themselves or their pupils.
- Subject leaders in subjects other than English and mathematics do not have 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

19. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and high aspirations for the staff and pupils. Through his teaching and relationship with pupils, he is a very good role model for the whole school. Following the disappointing results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2002, and with the support of the local authority advisor and the deputy headteacher, he undertook a thorough review of the performance data. The outcomes of this formed the basis of the current school improvement plan that is primarily, and quite correctly, focussed on improving standards in English and mathematics for older pupils. As a result, standards improved in 2003 and are set to improve further this year. However, although the school has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection, as a result of this focus, other subjects such as science and ICT have not been priorities for the school so standards have not improved significantly. The deputy headteacher has an important role in the school and together with the headteacher they form a strong leadership team. She is fully involved in the setting and evaluation of school priorities and in the day-to-day management of the school. The English and mathematics co-ordinators, special educational needs co-ordinator and the Foundation Stage staff have made good improvements in their areas recently. However, other subject leaders have not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of the provision in their subjects. As a result, they are not clear on the strengths, possible areas for development or how effectively their subjects are contributing to the overall school priorities.
20. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to be developed. They fulfil their statutory duties satisfactorily, including ensuring the school has a race equality policy. This forms the basis of the good provision to ensure pupils are aware of cultures other than their own. They share the vision and high aspirations for the school with the headteacher and have been fully involved in determining the short-term priorities for development. These aspirations form the basis of the school improvement plan. This 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 are also very aware and involved in monitoring the impact of the initiatives the school undertakes, particularly those that can be evaluated using academic performance data. However, they do not have a programme to monitor the impact of improvements that cannot be measured easily in this way. For example, how effective the investment in the new ICT suite will be on standards in ICT or the quality of teaching. Links with most subject leaders are tenuous. However, they do challenge the senior management team on issues related to all aspects of the school improvement plan and have been prepared to make difficult decisions in the recent past regarding staffing and financial management.
21. The school makes effective use of performance data and other information to set its priorities. This includes analysing data to predict the performance of pupils and to examine how different groups of pupils are performing. All staff work together as a team and are very supportive of each other. Performance management procedures are securely in place.

However, teaching staff are not sufficiently involved in translating the assessment information into setting expectations for themselves or their pupils. Financial management of the school is good. The headteacher and governors ensure that the school gets good value from its spending.

## Finance

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	586,429
Total expenditure	571,219
Expenditure per pupil	2,561

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	47,950
Balance carried forward to the next	8,453

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

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

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

- Improvement since the last inspection has been good, because of the very good leadership of the coordinator and the team's active approach to improvement.
- Links with parents are very good, and parents think highly of the provision.
- The children achieve well, most especially in personal and social development, reading and in imaginative play.
- Teaching is consistently good or better, and teaching assistants making a strong contribution to the team's effectiveness.
- Tracking systems across and between the two classes do not match up to the good quality of on-going assessment.
- The learning environment entices the children into learning.
- Progress towards an integrated indoor-outdoor curriculum is good but not yet complete.

#### **Commentary**

22. The co-ordinator and head teacher have shown vision and persistence in obtaining outside funding and support for the successful creation of a secure and play-safe outdoor area. Additional storage and teaching space has also been made indoors. The co-ordinator and team now aspire to create a single open unit so that the team can work flexibly across both age groups.
23. The contribution of parents in the projects has been significant, because of the well-established good links between the parents and staff of the Foundation Stage. Induction arrangements are good, newsletters keep parents feeling well-informed, and teachers are receptive towards parents at arrival and home times. They feel happy about leaving their children in the teachers' care.
24. The teachers plan a curriculum that is very well suited to these young learners. They follow statutory planning guidance carefully, ensuring that there is good progress towards the Early Learning Goals expected of all children by the end of the reception year. Teaching approaches combine good questioning and conversation with direct teaching, and the balance subtly changes as the children grow older. Activities are stimulating and well planned to develop the areas of learning alongside each other. The teachers use assessment effectively, although they record it in different ways. At present, there is no overview to enable the co-ordinator to track and monitor the progress of individuals and groups as they move through the Foundation Stage as a whole.

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

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

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

- The children achieve very well and are caring, kind and thoughtful towards each other.
- The very good links with parents mean that children make the transition from home to school surrounded by care and encouragement.
- Teachers and support staff expect and insist upon a high level of good, considerate behaviour from first entry to the nursery.



## Commentary

25. The children are set to reach the Early Learning Goals in this area and many children in the reception class have done so already and will exceed them by the end of the year.
26. The children achieve so well because the provision is very good. Teaching is very good because the promotion of social learning and concern for others is threaded through the teachers' planning at every turn. Adults are excellent role models of polite and considerate behaviour towards others. As a result, nursery children quickly learn what is expected of them in school, and settle in well. They choose their early morning or afternoon activities independently, and there is little flitting from one activity to another. During the class lessons in the reception year, the children sit and concentrate very hard, partly because of the teacher's lively manner and ability to make the learning 'fun' but also because she expects them to listen hard and behave well.
27. Relationships are harmonious. The children care for each other, and look after their equipment carefully. For example, in the reception class, children thoughtfully helped each other to the crayons and paper needed for rubbings, and chatted in pairs sociably as they waited for all to be ready, enjoying each other's company.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of reading and the opportunities for speaking and listening are very good.
- Children get off to a flying start with the basics of learning to read.
- 'Homework' in reading and writing brings about good support from parents.
- Some children in the reception class could be pushed even harder in their first steps towards independent writing.

## Commentary

28. Some children begin school with poorly developed oral language, but by the end of the reception year, most children are coming close to or have comfortably reached the Early Learning Goals. With well-focussed help from the Sure Start language team, the teachers extend vocabulary and develop fluency. The classrooms are rich in role-play areas that stimulate imaginative play and talk. For example, groups of children in the 'igloos' in each class had sustained conversations 'in role' about catching enough fish for dinner! A strength in the teaching is the way teachers take every opportunity to join in and enrich the talk.
29. Most children make very good progress in learning to read, because the teachers are very skilled at teaching the early stages of reading. Many children are reading better than expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Adults in the nursery encourage the children to look at books whenever they can, and to listen to stories and rhymes. When they choose a book, they know how to hold it correctly and turn the pages as they 'read', distinguishing between print and pictures.
30. In the reception class, children read aloud to the teacher or another adult regularly, and records are kept and shared between parent and school. The dialogue between home and school is very good. A variety of reading tasks travel home in a 'reading bag' so that families are able to help the children to learn letters and sounds, and recognise the early key words from the reading scheme, as well as read with their children. The teacher uses the

national guidance on teaching letters and sounds effectively, so that the children are well advanced in their phonic knowledge by the end of the reception year. Already, many can segment unfamiliar short words and blend them together, and use this strategy in their own reading.

31. Writing is also taught carefully, but the children do not make such fast progress. Examination of the writing books from last year's reception class shows that standards in writing are about average, but not as high as in reading. The majority of children achieve the goal of writing a simple sentence independently, write their own names and make simple lists and are ready for the work in Year 1. However, few of the higher-attaining children write more than a couple of sentences, and they are tentative about trying out spellings for themselves, relying for a little too long on under copying from a sentence written by the teacher.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teachers provide a very good range of practical, first-hand experiences in order to ensure a solid foundation for the understanding of number.
- Teachers grasp every incidental opportunity to reinforce children's understanding of mathematical relationships.

### **Commentary**

32. Because of the careful planning, a wide range of activities and good, direct teaching, the children learn well and most are working comfortably within the levels expected for their age. A survey of 'homework' tasks in reception class folders and evidence from lessons suggest that the majority of children are set to reach the expected goals, or beyond. Already, most children are working securely with number up to ten, and can count accurately well into the twenties and thirties. Addition and subtraction are carefully introduced so that the children see the one as the inverse of the other. The teaching is good because it concentrates upon building up understanding rather than rushing into formal recording at too early a stage. Teacher and assistant in the nursery use a selection of rhyming games to help children count, and this approach helps the children to remain interested and enjoy mathematics. The reception teacher adopts a similar style within an adaptation of the 'numeracy lesson' appropriate to a reception class. During a successful lesson, the class improved their counting skills through an enjoyable 'listening game'.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because the teachers provide a good balance of intriguing experiences to arouse curiosity and interest.
- Children show a particular aptitude for ICT because the computers are set up to invite use and all the adults involve themselves in the learning.
- The outdoor area is a good resource, but it is not yet ready for environmental work.

## Commentary

33. Most children achieve well, and are working at the levels expected for their age. In the nursery setting, children achieve particularly well in the cluster of attitudes and aptitudes around the early 'scientific' aptitudes of curiosity and observation. For example, a group of girls stayed to investigate the behaviour in water of little stars released from melted ice cubes, long after the teacher had moved to support another activity. In both classes, there are sufficient resources for small-scale construction, and the new, outdoor surface should improve large-scale activity. Almost all of the children are confident at the computer. In the nursery they use the mouse to control what is happening on the screen, and by the reception year, they open and close computer programs competently. The nursery has a programme of visits out and visitors in to school, so that the children begin to build up knowledge of the locality, and the reception teacher builds upon this effectively with more direct teaching in order to prepare for National Curriculum work in Year 1.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children now have access to very good quality equipment for climbing, swinging, and other adventurous movements.
- The reception teacher's planning recognises the importance of construction activities and more formal hall-based sessions.
- Boys are more competent than girls because they select these activities more often.

## Commentary

34. The children are in line to meet the expected goals by the end of the year. Teaching is good. The new play area has made a difference to the quality of movement along, across and through large equipment, and improved opportunities to control wheeled toys in a sufficiently large space. In a very good hall session, children in the reception class showed how they could skip, clap and hop in response to music, moving with control and concentration, and using the hall space successfully. The children have good hand-eye co-ordination and manipulative skill because of the consistent access to construction sets and small world activities in both classes. Nursery children showed that they could pat, knead and roll play-dough and shortbread mix, and carefully manipulated serrated cutters to create biscuit shapes. Older children, especially boys, fasten together and build with Lego very competently. Girls select these activities less often, and now require more teacher-direction to give them the same grounding as the boys.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

- Teachers plan for very good links between creative development, personal and social development, and language and literacy.
- Spacious and imaginative role-play areas have a very good impact upon the children's imaginative play, and speaking and listening skills.

## Commentary

35. The range of activities planned for this area of learning again emphasises the way that learning is fostered by the teaching of one area alongside several others. This results in a good standard of imaginative play, and standards of art work and music that are in line with the expected Early Learning Goals. A feature of the good teaching is the way that teachers converse with the children about what they are trying to do or make. This helps them to communicate their ideas and make improvements. As with modelling and using tools, there is better provision for small-scale art work than large scale or three-dimensional works.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school.
- Standards in speaking and listening are good in Year 2.
- Standards in listening are good in Year 6.
- Teaching has a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic literacy skills in whole-class discussions.
- Assessment procedures are good, but the information is not used consistently to track the progress pupils are making or to identify what pupils need to learn next.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting their own targets for learning.
- The subject is well led by the subject co-ordinator.

## Commentary

36. Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. By the end of Years 2 and 6, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level in reading and writing are average. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good in Year 2. In Year 6, although listening skills are good and pupils are very attentive when teachers or other pupils are speaking. However, although most pupils are capable speakers, a significant proportion of pupils lack confidence and need to be encouraged to express their ideas and to take part in discussions. Pupils are fluent and competent readers, but, except for a small proportion of higher-attaining pupils they do not consistently extract the relevant information from what they read to draw conclusions about characters emotions. Similarly, in writing, their descriptions of events and characters are largely narrative rather than exploring how characters may be feeling.
37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there are consistent strengths in many lessons in most classes. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour ensure that pupils listen well, try hard to do their best and behave very well. Learning intentions are shared with pupils at the start of the lessons so pupils are clear about what they will be learning. Opening parts of lessons in all classes are good and teachers try to involve all pupils in the discussion by using good open-ended questions to encourage them to express their ideas and opinions. The pace of lessons is brisk and books and other written texts are used well to illustrate to pupils the point the teacher is aiming to teach. As a result, pupils' listening skills develop well. They make good progress in understanding the basic skills of punctuation, grammar and spelling, although older pupils make frequent errors, and handwriting is variable in quality. The school has recently introduced a whole-school handwriting scheme to address this weakness. However, the links between the opening discussion and the main activities are sometimes tenuous and the variation of tasks is not always adequate to accommodate fully the range of

attainment in the classes. Support staff are used well throughout the school to work with individuals or groups in lessons or on specific programmes designed to develop the reading skills of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, they make good progress, but not enough use is made of the targets in pupils' individual plans by class teachers to provide specific activities to reinforce this work in lessons. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff respond well to pupils in lessons, but marking of pupils' work does not consistently identify for pupils what they have done well and how they can improve their work.

38. The subject co-ordinator has only been responsible for the subject for a short while, but by analysing national test data and monitoring planning she has developed a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. This information has been used well to create a detailed evaluation of the strengths and areas for development in the teaching for each teacher. Individual staff have had support and advice to help them develop their own skills. However, although assessment information is used well to identify areas for development, it is not used sufficiently to track the progress of individual pupils over time or to set specific targets for them to work on. Under the guidance of the previous co-ordinator and with the support of the local education authority's advisor, the curriculum has developed well since the last inspection and, with the current co-ordinator's clear identification of priorities for developing the subject further, provision is well set to improve further.

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

39. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use their reading skills in other subjects and most teachers insist on good standards of written presentation. There is scope for improvement, however, as the lack of a whole-school system of monitoring subjects limits class teachers' awareness of how they can link literacy lessons and other subjects. Consequently, opportunities are missed to reinforce and consolidate pupils' skills. This particularly affects pupils' capacity to write in different styles and contexts.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good and very good teaching for Years 1, 2 and 6 results in above average standards from the pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The very enthusiastic co-ordinator is leading the subject well and provides a good role model. This is contributing much to the above average standards.
- The teaching of number is good and this contributes much to the standards attained by the pupils.
- There is insufficient development of the using and applying aspect of mathematics, the relationships of shape and space are not explored in depth and data handling is not developed fully.
- The use of mathematics in other subject areas is undeveloped.

### **Commentary**

40. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are above expectations. This represents continued improvement in attainment from the satisfactory results of the 2003 national tests. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls and pupils achieved well at the higher levels of attainment. This was not the case for pupils in Year 2. Inspection evidence finds that some very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 and some good teaching in Years 1 and 2 is having a significant impact on pupils' learning and they are achieving well overall. The majority of class groups in Years 3 to 6 are achieving satisfactory standards and it is the impact of 'booster' classes that is securing the good standards at the end of Year 6.

41. Satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection has maintained standards and they continue to be in line with those of schools with pupils of similar ability. Most pupils in Year 2 are working above the expected level for their age. They are confident with number and can read and write numbers to 100. They know that the '3' in 35 means '30' and higher-attaining pupils use good reasoning to explain why 15 is not an even number. Pupils in Year 4 work at a level of attainment that is satisfactory overall. Their work on number is above expectations. They make calculations with numbers to 1000 and when adding 38 to 73 they confidently add 40 before subtracting 2 to reach 111. But their awareness of the properties and relationships of shapes is weak and the use and application of their knowledge is not well developed. Year 6 pupils work at or above the expected level of attainment and number skills are particularly well developed. Average attaining pupils were able to use place value well when multiplying decimals such as 23.4 by 10 or 100 and many were able to mentally divide 376 by 200 and correctly obtain 1.88 for the answer. However, their use of their knowledge in practical situations is not well developed.
42. Provision in Years 3 to 6 has been significantly disrupted over the past few years due to staffing changes, but the teaching staff is now settled and consistent developments in teaching are possible. The co-ordinator is a very accomplished mathematics teacher and sets a very clear role model for others to follow. However, there is no clear structure to monitoring procedures. This means that whilst there is support and advice for teachers, there is no programme for raising expectations and increasing challenge in lessons. Similarly there is no clear development of teaching the using and applying aspects of mathematics or the use of relationships in shape or the organisation and representation of data.
43. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and very good teaching that contributes much to standards. The very good teaching offers high challenge and moves the lesson along at a demanding pace. Good subject knowledge means that the teacher sees a purpose to the learning and can interpret plans to gain maximum benefit for the pupils. Praise and encouragement are used to give pupils confidence and encourage them to trust their judgement. Learning is planned well and practical illustrations of number help pupils to gain understanding of the relationships involved. The lesson begins with a clear statement of what pupils are about to learn and ends with a celebration of how successful the learning has been. Where teaching is less successful, lesson plans from the National Numeracy Strategy are not sufficiently adapted to the needs of the pupils. Opportunities for developing greater understanding are missed when tasks do not test the understanding of pupils of different levels of attainment and encourage the use of the relationships involved in the learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

44. Pupils are provided with a few activities to use their mathematics skills in some other subjects, for example simple tables in science and time lines in history but there is little other use of numerical skills. However, the skills of using graphs, tables and charts to represent and interpret information are seldom used and this contributes to the pupils' lower standards in these aspects of mathematics. There are no planned links with subjects such as science and geography that would place mathematical learning in a practical and meaningful setting.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Standards in science are satisfactory, although test results remain stubbornly below average.
- There is insufficient emphasis placed on the systematic build-up of scientific enquiry and investigative skills, and this is holding back achievement, especially for higher-attaining pupils.

- The school does not have a rigorous system for assessing and tracking the progress of pupils so that teachers do not always pitch their teaching at the right level.
- The co-ordinator knows what needs to be done and has the expertise and management skill to succeed.
- There are no systematic procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning so that the co-ordinator can check upon the impact of new developments in every classroom.

## Commentary

45. Standards are broadly average in the current Years 2 and 6. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection, but better than in recent years. In the 2003 national tests, more pupils in Year 6 reached the basic expected level than in most other schools. Most pupils achieve steadily across the school in terms of acquiring the scientific knowledge and factual information required of them, because of conscientious teaching of these aspects of science. However, pupils' ability to think as scientists and to explain what they observe in scientific terms is much weaker. This means that too few of the most able pupils achieve the higher levels, either in lessons or in national testing. As a result, overall test results remain below the national average.
46. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils take lessons seriously. Teachers look for ways to catch the interest of pupils in the introduction to lessons, and try to include a practical or real-life element to lessons when they can. Pupils in Year 2 were enchanted by the carefully planned visit of a mother with her nine-month old baby. They were highly motivated to listen, observe, ask and learn, and gained good understanding of a young child's growth and developmental needs. In the older classes, teachers also try to include a visual or practical way of introducing new concepts. However, the teaching is often dominated by teachers talking, so that pupils lack the chances to clarify and build up their own thinking about scientific ideas. Younger pupils in particular, often have to record what they know using a set worksheet and in most classes, pupils' developing literacy skills are not being used to help them explain their work. This limits them in making connections and in strengthening their understanding.
47. The task of helping pupils to think for themselves is made more difficult because the school does not have in place a sufficiently rigorous assessment scheme for science. Teachers therefore sometimes misjudge what pupils already know or do not know, and lower-attaining pupils may struggle to understand the basic content. Year 5 pupils found it very hard to grasp the relationship between the sun, planet earth, and the moon, and Year 4 pupils had problems with refining their basic definitions of materials as a liquid, solid or a gas. At the other extreme, tasks are too rarely made more challenging for the most capable 'scientists' in each class. The co-ordinator has plans to put in place a comprehensive set of assessment and recording procedures. It will be important that teachers use this to track the progress of individuals and groups, and to set challenging but realistic targets in lessons and across the terms.
48. The other main weakness in teaching also relates to ensuring systematic progress across the school, in terms of the investigative skills of observation, prediction, fair testing, use of data and so on. Although teachers include investigations in their planning, they often over-direct, so that the pupils' skills are not moved on. They do not isolate and build up the separate skills in a step-by-step and continuous way so that older pupils are ready to apply them independently. For instance, lower-attaining pupils in Year 6 had difficulty in controlling the various variables that came into their testing of forces of different objects. A scrutiny of science books shows that the average pupils in Year 6 do not readily draw conclusions from their investigations, or often enough explain their findings in terms of scientific knowledge. They have had too little experience of thinking and planning for themselves earlier in the school. There is some use of ICT for researching factual material, but little use it for collecting and organising data, seeking patterns, or raising further questions.

49. Leadership and management of the subject are sound, and have the potential to become good or even very good with better definition of the role. The co-ordinator has high aspirations and good plans for development and has already begun to improve resources.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The commitment of the teachers means that pupils have experience of the full ICT curriculum.
- The good leadership of the co-ordinator sets a good example for teaching ICT.
- Insufficient use of ICT skills in other subject area such as literacy and mathematics significantly reduce the standards achieved by the pupils.
- Provision of hardware and software is currently insufficient to support the raising of standards in the subject.

### **Commentary**

50. Although provision overall for ICT is unsatisfactory and improvement since the previous inspection is also unsatisfactory, the main reason for this is the unsatisfactory provision of resources. There are insufficient ICT units in classrooms for pupils to develop skills and there is no central resource that would provide access for whole classes or groups to learn these skills. As a result, standards are below expectations. The commitment of the teachers has given the majority of pupils experience of all aspects of the ICT curriculum. But this takes considerable time with only two units per classroom and does not leave opportunities for the development of these skills.
51. It was not possible to observe sufficient use of ICT during inspection to make judgements about teaching or standards in Years 1 and 2. Incidental observations of the use of ICT and discussions with pupils in Year 6 form the basis of the judgement about provision and standards.
52. Standards in Year 6 are below those expected for pupils of this age. A group of pupils showed an awareness of the full range of the curricular requirements and expressed an enthusiasm for their work in ICT. They currently use a search engine to find information linked to their history topic on Britain since the 1940s. Display shows a range of presentations using the basic PowerPoint skills and a range of computer generated patterns. Two pupils found specific detail about a village school and constructed a document with picture and text together with their own heading. All were aware of the basic editing techniques of word processing and could refer to previous learning about spreadsheets, control and graphics. But the skills had not been used since and they were vague in their understanding of the procedures.
53. The subject is led well. The school has recognised the need to develop the use of ICT in other subject areas and to make more use of ICT in lessons such as literacy. As a result, a major building programme is due to start soon that includes provision for a properly networked computer suite linked to all classroom units. The co-ordinator works hard to deliver as much as possible for the pupils and sets a good example for others. Staff development is planned to make full use of the opportunities provided to teach skills in class groups and then to develop these skills as a tool for learning in other subjects.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

54. Although pupils in Year 6 made good use of ICT in history and science lessons, there was little evidence of the use of ICT as a tool for learning in other classes. Software was used in other classes that involved number skills or artistic techniques but there was little evidence of ICT being used to support learning in aspects such as graphical representation or extended writing. As a result, pupils' skills in ICT are not consolidated and learning in other subjects does not benefit from the possibilities available from ICT.

## HUMANITIES

**Geography** was not a focus for the inspection and, as only one lesson was seen, there was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about provision. Planning documents indicate appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum requirements in the subject. However, samples of current and previous written work show that opportunities to link activities in this subject to literacy and numeracy in order to reinforce and develop pupils' skills are missed. In addition, the opportunities they have to use ICT to present their work are limited.

### History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of topics ensures that pupils develop a secure understanding and knowledge of a broad range of periods of history, including their local culture and heritage.
- Teachers use discussion well in lessons to involve pupils.
- Opportunities for pupils to use their skills of literacy and ICT in lessons are missed.

### Commentary

55. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers use class discussions well to interest and involve pupils in lessons. As a result, pupils are very enthusiastic, behave well and have good attitudes to learning. However, follow-up tasks are not consistently varied to take into account the full range of attainment in the classes. Pupils' written work is satisfactory, although the quality of presentation is variable owing to the inconsistencies of pupils' handwriting. Their work shows they have a secure understanding of what life was like for people in different periods in the past and in different places around the world. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use a broad range of literacy skills. For example, the opportunities they have to write about life from the perspective of different people, to compare their life with the past or other cultures and to research topics on their own either in the library or using the internet is limited. In addition, pupils have very few opportunities to use their ICT skills to present their work in different ways such as through graphs, charts or pamphlets.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

In **design and technology**, only one lesson was seen and there was very limited additional evidence owing to the current topic plan. Consequently, there was insufficient evidence to make judgements on teaching, learning or standards. In the two short lessons seen, pupils showed secure skills of construction and discussed how they could improve their work and older pupils showed secure skills of design.

## Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in art are higher than at the last inspection, and the work of pupils in Year 6 is about average for their age.
- Despite the weaknesses found at the last inspection, improving the provision in art has not been given a sufficient priority.
- The co-ordinator does not have sufficient time or responsibility to develop her role.

### Commentary

56. Quite rightly, the school has focussed in the last two years on raising standards in English and mathematics so, despite the examples of satisfactory teaching and learning, many of the key weakness in art and design noted at the time of the last inspection linger on.
57. Standards in art are broadly in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, and no portfolios of work were seen, and so it is not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of work, achievement, or the teaching in art and design for the younger pupils. The judgements about standards and teaching in Years 3 to 6 were based upon a scrutiny of wall displays and portfolios of work, discussion with pupils and observation of two lessons.
58. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have gained enough artistic skill and knowledge to achieve a level of competence expected for their age. They occasionally use sketch books to create preliminary designs and sketch books in Year 5 reveal evidence of observational drawings done in soft pencil to a satisfactory standard. A portfolio of completed work in Year 6 from the autumn term shows good progression of skills and effective teaching. The work centres on the theme of 'people in action' and charts the development of the project from initial sketches to completed individual compact, three-dimensional collage pictures in card, tissue and fabric. A good number of these are sensitively composed, and combine colour and texture to give a delicate effect.
59. Of the two observed lessons, teaching was satisfactory in one, good in the other. The pupils clearly enjoyed their lessons, because the teachers gave clear explanations of the techniques to be used, and had prepared the materials carefully. Pupils co-operated well in their use of materials, and worked thoughtfully. The imaginative, exploratory element was less strong, because of the emphasis upon a completed product. The school has adopted the nationally recommended scheme of work for art and design, and takes note of the local education authority's guidance on the range of materials and processes to be included. Nevertheless, there is still too much art work of the 'drawing and colouring' variety and too little of the multi-dimensional, multi-media work, as reported in 1999. There continues to be an over-reliance upon art as an illustrative backcloth to other subjects and a school audit of resources reveals shortfalls and gaps. Even given the timing of the inspection, early in the term, the variety of art work on display was narrow.
60. The co-ordinator has other key responsibilities that take up a lot of her time. To date, as art coordinator, she has been able to audit resources, revise the art policy and advice on approaches and planning. She has also involved gifted and talented pupils in local art workshops. With the head teacher, she intends to prepare the school for the 'Artmark' award but is realistic about what remains to be done. This includes much more systematic systems of monitoring and support than are in place at present, in order to bring standards more firmly into line across the school.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The enthusiasm of a specialist co-ordinator creates a wide range of sporting opportunities for pupils.
- Development of the physical education curriculum through involvement in the Sports co-ordinator project and the achievement of the Sports Active Mark Gold in 2003 are strong features of the provision.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the personal, social and health education of the pupils in developing a sense of fairness, teamwork and following of rules leading to confidence and good self image for the pupils.

### **Commentary**

61. As a result of the good leadership of the co-ordinator, the teaching of physical education is good overall and standards are in line with expectations. The commitment of the teachers and their improved skills in the subject have been gained from their involvement in the sports co-ordinator project. Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject grows out of the quality of the teaching and the variety of extra-curricular activities that are available. The school is very successful in its sporting activities and has won sports festivals and championships at rugby, swimming and netball during the past year. Access to the sports activities is open to both boys and girls throughout Years 3 to 6. There is however, little provision for younger pupils.
62. Where teaching is good, clear subject knowledge and very good class management means that the challenge of activities in lessons matches the developing abilities of the pupils. The less successful teaching does not follow some good coaching demonstrations with sufficiently focused activities and specific challenge so that pupils' practice is less focussed and did not improve skills in a structured way.
63. The school takes part in a very full programme of competitive activities and the pupils gain much benefit to their personal development as they develop abilities and skills other than those required in other subjects of the curriculum. This results in them gaining in confidence and developing self-esteem. Pupils took a great interest in the results, for example, of the series of chess matches that took place at lunchtime during inspection.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHE)**

Provision in PSHE is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The relationships between pupils and adults are excellent.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes make very good progress in developing their personal skills.
- The good range of activities that enrich the curriculum prepare pupils well for living in a diverse community.

### **Commentary**

64. The school does not have a formal PSHE curriculum, but the very positive attitudes and good behaviour of pupils shows that the school makes good provision to develop pupils' personal skills and qualities. Throughout the school, staff place a very high priority on developing

pupils' personal skills. From a low starting point, staff in nursery and reception build on children's personal skills very effectively by encouraging them to work, play and communicate with each other so that by the end of the reception year their skills in this area of learning are better than those expected. This good progress continues as pupils move through the school, based on the very good relationships in the school between adults and pupils. All staff, including the lunchtime supervisors and catering staff, contribute well to the provision. In science and physical education lessons, pupils begin to learn about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, having a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. The good opportunities pupils have to experience the contributions of visitors to school and the visits to other places and schools develop their understanding of the wider world and prepare older pupils very well for moving on to the next phase of their education. However, the range of opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding and appreciation of being part of a community by contributing to the work and development of the school are limited.

## 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	3
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	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<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	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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