

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Maltby

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106940

Headteacher: Ms Catherine McLaughlin

Lead inspector: Mr Trevor Neat

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 260676

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	210
School address:	Muglet Lane Maltby Rotherham South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S66 7JU
Telephone number:	01709 812611
Fax number:	01709 790694
Appropriate authority:	The Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Aden Wass
Date of previous inspection:	5 <sup>th</sup> October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school of broadly average size, situated in Maltby, near Rotherham in South Yorkshire. It draws most of its pupils from different areas within the town. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage identified as having special educational needs is above the national average. The nature of these needs is varied, but the largest group is those with social, emotional and behavioural problems. The proportion having statements of special educational need is above average. The attainment of children joining the reception class is below that which is normally found. Nearly all pupils have a white British racial heritage. There are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language, but all of them are at an early stage of acquiring English skills. Fewer pupils join or leave the school at other than the normal times than in most other schools.

The school is involved in the Sure Start, Single Regeneration Budget and Excellence in Cities initiatives. It has gained the Active Mark, the Healthy Schools award and a Schools Achievement award in the last two years.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20007	Mr T Neat	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language
11072	Mrs S Elomari	Lay inspector	
2433	Mr I Bennett	Team inspector	English Design and technology Geography History Special educational needs
22831	Mr C Lewis	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Mary's is a good school.** It is led, managed and governed well. It nurtures its pupils very well, ensuring that they feel valued. The quality of education it provides is good. These factors help pupils to achieve well. Poor attendance adversely affects the achievement of a small minority of pupils. The school provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are very good compared with similar schools and pupils achieve well
- It is a very caring and inclusive school
- The personal development of pupils is very good
- Leadership, management and governance are good
- Teaching and learning are good overall, with some excellent lessons seen, although there is wide variation in the school
- There is very good provision in the foundation unit
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- More able pupils are sometimes not challenged enough in English and science

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and the issues raised in the last report have been addressed well. Standards have risen, thanks to better teaching and learning and improved pupil attitudes and behaviour. The school now makes more effective provision for promoting pupils' personal development. The care and support pupils receive, the partnership with parents and links with the community now make a greater impact on achievement. Attendance has declined, due mainly to families taking holidays in term time.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils achieve well**, throughout the school. Children make good progress in the foundation unit, but because they enter with below average attainment, most are not on course to achieve the goals set for children by the time they start Year 1. Test results in English, mathematics and science at Year 2 are good compared with all schools and very good in relation to similar schools. At Year 6, pupils' results are average for English, above average for mathematics and below average for science compared with all schools. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress. Standards in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory at both Years 2 and 6. Music standards are better too and are satisfactory at Years 2 and 6. In art and design, geography and history, the standards of both age groups are in line with those expected for their ages. Although the school makes proper provision for teaching design and technology and physical education, it was not possible to make reliable judgements about standards. The table below shows that results at Year 6 have risen significantly over the last few years. The value added to pupils' standards from seven to eleven was broadly average last year.

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

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

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good overall. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, but attendance is poor.**

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. Teaching is good** throughout the school, although its quality varies considerably. Very good teaching in the foundation unit enables children to settle in quickly and make good progress. Lessons are mainly good in the rest of the school. As a result of the good teaching, **learning is good**. Some excellent lessons were seen in the infant and junior parts of the school. Teachers make good use of technical aids, including computers. The assessment of pupils' work is good, but more could be done to involve pupils in evaluating their learning. The very good care and support given to pupils impact well on their achievement. The school's links with parents and the community are good. Links with other schools are very productive.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school's **leadership, management and governance are of good quality**. Good teamwork is generated by the strong leadership of the headteacher. The governors are knowledgeable and very supportive. The Catholic character of the school is reflected clearly in its ethos. The school improvement plan can be made more effective. The induction of new staff is very good and leads to them becoming more effective. The good work of the headteacher and deputy headteacher in regularly checking the quality of lessons and working with teachers to better their performance has helped to bring about the significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Not all statutory requirements are met, since a few items of the required information for parents are not provided by the governing body. Leadership and management benefit significantly from the headteacher's detailed knowledge of individual pupils.

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

The school works well to seek the views of parents and pupils. Parents hold very good opinions of the school. Those who met with inspectors confirmed this. One said, "The education here is really good." A small number had concerns about behaviour and bullying, which were not borne out by inspection evidence. Pupils have positive views of the school. Nearly all are happy to attend. Most are proud of their school. When asked what they would change about it, many replied: "Nothing, it's great".

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- consolidate the improvements in performance
- make more consistent provision to meet the needs of more able pupils in English and science
- improve consistency in the quality of teaching and learning
- provide a suitable covered area to allow the programme for physical development outdoors in the foundation unit to continue in inclement weather

and, to meet statutory requirements the governing body should:

- ensure that all relevant items of information are provided for parents.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is **good** throughout the school. The achievement of boys and girls is broadly similar. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is **good**. Overall, standards in the core subjects are **average** compared with all schools.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in each section of the school
- Standards are rising
- The weaknesses found in the last inspection have been addressed successfully
- Standards are above average in mathematics and art and design at Year 2
- The school needs to consolidate the improvement in its performance

#### Commentary

1. The attainment of children joining the school varies, but is generally below average. Children show particular weaknesses in language, personal and social skills. At the time of the inspection, the attainment of children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> was well below average, with a third already identified as having special educational needs. Thanks to very good teaching, and the very caring and inclusive ethos, children achieve well, but most do not achieve the learning goals set for this age group by the time they begin Year 1.
2. Pupils achieve well in the infant part of the school, with a great deal of progress being made in Year 2, thanks to the very good quality of teaching. Many achieve very well. The results of the 2003 national tests show that at Year 2 standards were above the national average for all schools in reading, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. In comparison with the results of schools with similar proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in reading, above average in writing and in the top five per cent in the country in mathematics.
3. The good achievement of pupils in the junior part of the school is reflected in the 2003 tests. In comparison with schools nationally, English results for pupils in Year 6 were average, mathematics above average and science below. The school's recent focus on improving standards in mathematics has clearly been successful.
4. The results at both Year 2 and 6 are improving at a rate greater than the national trend of improvement. This is due to significant improvements to results for pupils in Year 2 over the last two years and over the last three years for pupils in Year 6. The 2003 results represent a great achievement for the school and the pupils. They provide clear evidence of the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs since four in ten of Year 6 who took the tests had some form of learning difficulty. The school has made good progress recently, but needs to consolidate its performance in relation to the national average for all schools. Last year was the first time in its recent history that pupils in Year 2 had matched the average for all schools in all the tested subjects. Pupils in Year 6 have yet to achieve this. Early indications based on the school's projections for the 2004 tests indicate that the current Year 6 will find this difficult in English and science.

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage is the period of education for children aged three to the end of the reception year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.4 (15.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.5 (13.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.0 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 28 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	26.6 (25.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.2 (27.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.2 (29.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. Inspection evidence broadly reflects the results of the national tests. It shows that standards are broadly average in English and are above average in mathematics at Year 2 and average at Year 6. In science pupils are above average at Year 2 and broadly average at Year 6. Standards have risen in information and communication technology [ICT] and are now in line with the expected level in both age groups. In art and design, geography, history and music the standards of pupils in Year 2 and 6 are in line with those expected for their ages. Although the school makes proper provision for teaching design and technology and physical education, it was not possible to make reliable judgements about standards.
6. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well thanks to the close and very effective personal support they receive and the effective provision made for them in lessons. Similar good provision accounts for the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.

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

Attendance is **poor**, but punctuality is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attendance is well below average
- Provision to promote pupils' personal development is very good
- Good behaviour and attitudes to learning boost pupils' progress

### **Commentary**

7. Attendance at the school is poor and well below that typically found in primary schools nationally. The level of unauthorised absence is similar to that found nationally. Registration is efficient and the school follows up any unexplained absences thoroughly. The school makes strenuous efforts to improve attendance and has good procedures in place to promote higher levels. Although most parents support the school well by ensuring that their children attend school regularly, a significant minority does not. Thirty families have taken holidays during term time between September and March. This is a very high number and is the main reason why the attendance rate is poor and has declined since the last inspection. Punctuality is satisfactory. The school has put into place some innovative ideas that have significantly improved punctuality this year. For example, the walking bus has proved very effective in

reducing lateness. The majority of pupils arrive punctually in the mornings and lessons begin on time.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.4
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.*

8. At the time of the last inspection, the behaviour of most pupils was satisfactory, but the conduct of a small minority was sometimes unacceptable. This was partly because not all the teachers applied the school’s policy for promoting good behaviour well enough. Behaviour is now good. No pupils were expelled in the year prior to the inspection. This is due partly to the departure of the pupils concerned, but also to teachers and their assistants abiding well by the agreed guidelines. In nearly all lessons the use of praise and the positive relationships between adults based on mutual respect resulted in good, and occasionally, excellent behaviour. This allowed everyone to concentrate on the tasks in hand and progress increased as a result.
9. Attitudes to learning are good – better than at the time of the last inspection. There is a clear link between the improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils’ response to lessons. In the most successful lessons, the good use of devices to motivate pupils has a very positive effect on their engagement. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, there was a resounding “Yes!” when ‘Mr Maths Wizard’ appeared.
10. The school works very effectively to help pupils to become mature and responsible young people. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. The strong Catholic ethos, close links with the church and the high quality acts of collective worship develop very good levels of spiritual knowledge and awareness. From the time they join, the school works with pupils to ensure a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. The good role models provided by staff and the very effective relationships built with individual pupils through dialogue are key factors in its success. The school does much to provide opportunities for pupils to increase their awareness and appreciation of the diversity of cultures in British society. It is currently concentrating on the multi-faith aspects of religious education as part of its work with other local Catholic schools.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Assessment is **good**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The care, support and guidance pupils receive are **good** overall. The school’s links with parents and the community are **good**. The links with other schools are **very good**.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**, overall. The assessment of pupils’ work is **good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good overall, although there is wide variation in the school
- Teaching is very good in the foundation unit
- Teachers make good use of technical aids
- Some excellent lessons were seen
- The assessment of pupils’ work is good, but more could be done to involve pupils
- The level of challenge offered to more able pupils is not always high enough

## Commentary

11. The table below shows that about seven in every ten lessons observed during the inspection were good or better. In the Foundation Stage more than half the teaching and learning was very good and the rest good. More information about teaching in this part of the school is given on page 17. The teaching in Years 1 to 6 was good overall.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6%)	10 (31%)	10(31%)	9(28%)	1(3%)	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.*

12. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was satisfactory overall. At that time seventeen per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and some of the teaching was poor. The good work of the headteacher and deputy headteacher in regularly checking the effectiveness of teaching and working with teachers to better their performance has brought about this improvement.
13. A strength of the teaching is the extent to which teachers use technical equipment such as computers to enhance pupils' engagement in lessons and improve learning. A good example of this was seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson in which the teacher used a projector linked to a computer to develop the key idea and pupils accessed the Internet to play a multiplication game. In a very good English lesson in Year 2, images of the moon were downloaded from the Internet to stimulate ideas for writing. The very good use of an interactive whiteboard, portable computers, the Internet and a microscope linked to a computer significantly enhanced learning in a Year 6 science lesson.
14. Pupils learn well because of the good teaching. The progress they make is increased by their good attitudes, which are supported by the positive relationship teachers make with their classes. Pupils concentrate and apply themselves well. The teachers' insistence on good standards of behaviour contributes strongly to this. The teaching assistants work very effectively. Teaching assistants are highly motivated in their desire to support pupils with special educational needs. They work closely with the teaching staff and contribute significantly to the good achievement of these pupils.
15. In the excellent lessons observed, the encouragement and engagement of pupils was of a high order. Teaching assistants were deployed very well and made a very effective contribution. The pace of learning was brisk and teachers expected a great deal of the pupils. The teaching was very inclusive – all ability groups and those with particular needs were provided with tasks matched well to their needs. There was much liveliness and enthusiasm.
16. The unsatisfactory teaching was characterized by a lack of clarity in the instructions given to pupils, resulting in many not being engaged effectively in their tasks. The pace of learning was too slow and insufficient progress was made by most pupils.
17. There is wide variation in the quality of teaching across the school, from excellent to unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are best in the Foundation Stage and Years 2, 4 and 6. A few model lessons have been taught by good practitioners so that expertise was shared with other staff. In view of the excellent practice seen in some classes, more of this could be done to reduce the inconsistency in performance. This would have much potential for raising further the standards achieved by pupils.

18. Teachers and their assistants know individual pupils well, personally and academically. Good systems are in place for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and the progress they make. The arrangements have improved significantly since the last inspection. For example, there were no procedures in place then for assessing work in the foundation subjects<sup>2</sup>. The school has implemented the local education authority (LEA) system to correct this. Collections of pupils' work are regularly evaluated to ensure that teachers assess work accurately in relation to the National Curriculum.
19. Some good work has been done to involve pupils in evaluating the success of their learning in ICT, but the school is aware of the need to extend this and to provide more scope for them to do this in the final part of lessons.

## The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory** and provision for pupils with special educational needs is **good**. There is **satisfactory** extra-curricular provision that enriches the curriculum. The quality and range of learning resources are **satisfactory** and the quality of the accommodation is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has succeeded in developing a curriculum to meet the needs of all its pupils
- Much has been done to develop and enhance the learning environment
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- Links with other schools and community groups are good and enhance the learning opportunities for pupils
- Challenge for more able pupils in English and science
- Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory but are not used enough as working documents

## Commentary

20. The school plans the curriculum carefully to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The quality and range of opportunities provided are satisfactory overall. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been thoroughly implemented by teachers and this has contributed to the rising standards attained by pupils in English and mathematics. The school has produced long-term plans for all subjects. This planning has been adapted from the range of national initiatives and guidance and is now being reviewed by subject coordinators to best match the needs of the school. Links between subjects are made regularly and this is a priority identified by the school to enhance the curriculum, so more is being done. The school has a comprehensive set of policies to support the personal, social and health education of pupils and has incorporated issues related to these into the curriculum. The transfer of pupils to the local secondary school is managed well and there are good curriculum links to ensure that the secondary school is aware of the needs of pupils before they transfer.
21. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. These enrichment activities include visits and visitors, the opportunity to play a wide range of sport, play musical instruments and to take part in residential trips to an outdoor education centre. There is also a French Club for pupils run by a member of the governing body. Pupils' learning is enriched through their involvement in these activities. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of ability or gender, have good equal access to the opportunities it provides. This approach is a reflection of the high level of inclusion evident in its work. The support given to pupils by the learning mentor, funded by specific grants and through the school budget, is very effective and ensures that pupils with specific learning difficulties are given targeted help to ensure they are fully supported. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that more able pupils are

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<sup>2</sup> The foundation subjects are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education.

sometimes not challenged enough in English and science. For example, opportunities are missed to give extra depth to their studies because too often they are set the same tasks as pupils of average ability. In science, Year 6 pupils could have been offered greater challenge in the study of photosynthesis.

22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs [SEN] is good overall. The SEN coordinator supports teachers in the writing of pupils' individual education plans. These plans are of satisfactory quality and focus clearly on what pupils need to learn next and the support they will need to achieve their individual targets. Pupils and parents are involved in writing and reviewing the plans and pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
23. There is an adequate number of well-qualified staff to support pupils' learning. Resources are satisfactory and the school has done much to enhance and develop equipment and materials to support learning, particularly in English and ICT. The school's accommodation is satisfactory and much has been done to enhance it since the previous inspection. The new library and ICT suite and the development of the outside environment enhances and supports the curriculum and helps to improve pupils' learning and awareness of nature. High quality displays of pupils' work help to create a pleasant and welcoming learning environment.

### Care, guidance and support

**Very good** attention is given to ensuring the care, safety and well being of all pupils in the school. Teachers and other staff provide **good** guidance, advice and support based on the good, trusting relationships they have with pupils. Pupils are involved **very well** in the ongoing development of the school through the school council. The induction process when children enter the foundation unit is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a very caring school where the well being of pupils has a very high priority
- The induction process supports children and their parents very well
- Pupils are guided and supported well so that they are able to learn effectively and do their best
- The school council makes a very positive contribution to the process of change

### Commentary

24. The school is very committed to the care of all its pupils. Procedures to ensure their safety and well being are very good. Those for child protection meet requirements fully. Teachers and other staff pay very good attention to health and safety. Regular checks are carried out and appropriate action taken. In lessons, such as science and physical education, teachers make sure that pupils understand the importance of working safely. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award and is also part of the Active Schools project. Pupils feel safe in school because they know that there will always be an adult to turn to should they need help or advice.
25. Pupils receive support and guidance of a high quality throughout their time in school. Induction arrangements when children start school are very good. Children and their parents have several opportunities to meet teachers, both through home visits and visits to school, so that children settle in quickly.
26. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal support. Teachers and teaching assistants develop good, trusting relationships with their pupils. Pupils are secure in the knowledge that any problems, such as falling out with friends or bullying, will be sorted out quickly and effectively. Teachers know every pupil very well. They use this to guide pupils' personal development so that they become considerate members of the school community. The school uses outside agencies very well to help pupils in need. For example, a thoughtful display outside the hall promotes the work of the Rainbow project, which supports children who are facing separation through divorce or bereavement.

27. Pupils' academic development is monitored well. The school's learning mentor makes a very significant contribution by helping pupils who may be experiencing problems to learn well. Information from assessments is used effectively to set appropriate targets that pupils know and understand. Teachers mark their work regularly and make sure that pupils know how to improve. Individual education plans are clear and well focused so that pupils with special educational needs can learn well. All pupils are guided and supported well to enable them to make good progress and fulfil their potential.
28. The school council is very effective in achieving changes that make school life better for everyone. Councillors take their responsibilities very seriously and this leads to a wide range of sensible suggestions being raised for discussion. The minutes of the council meetings are circulated around the school, including to the governors. This ensures that everyone involved in school life knows the pupils' views. The council has been actively involved in, for example, the provision of benches, flowers and play equipment for the playground. Councillors were also successful in asking for more opportunities to practise football after school and for more reading books in each classroom. They were asked by the school to choose the Lenten charity. The school regularly seeks the views of all pupils through questionnaires. Pupils are confident to express their views about school because they know that their opinions are valued.

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

The partnership between the school and parents is **good** overall. The school ensures that parents are **very well** informed about its life and the work their children are doing. Links with the local community are **good**. The school works **very well** with other local schools to support its pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school works well in partnership with the majority of the parents
- The school provides all parents with regular information about its work and the progress their children are making
- The links with the local community and the parish are well used to enrich pupils' experiences
- Links with other schools ensure that pupils are supported well when they transfer to secondary school

### **Commentary**

29. The school works hard and with good levels of success to involve parents in their child's education. Parents can readily discuss any concerns they have with the headteacher and other staff. Regular questionnaires are sent to parents so that they are able to make their views known. All parents had the opportunity to be involved in the decision to change the time of year when the consultation meetings are held and were consulted over changes to the way reports are written. Most parents support the school well. They ensure that their children arrive on time and attend regularly. They provide them with the necessary equipment and help them at home with reading and spelling, for example. However, a significant minority does not respond to the school's best efforts to involve them in its life.
30. The school keeps parents very well informed about all aspects of its life. Regular information is sent home about the curriculum so that parents know what their child is learning. The meetings held to inform parents about, for example, the literacy and numeracy strategies and the use of computers in lessons were poorly attended but appreciated by those who did come. Despite the low attendance, the school is planning to hold further sessions. The school newsletter goes out every Friday and contains a wealth of useful information. Parents have a good number of opportunities to discuss their child's progress with teachers and the meetings are timed to allow working parents to attend. Pupils' reports are clearly written and provide a very wide range of information in every subject. Areas for improvement are identified, particularly in mathematics, English and science.

31. The school has good links with the local community and the parish that are used well to provide experiences that broaden pupils' understanding of what they learn. For example, last year a wide range of people came in to talk about their work as part of the 'World of Work' week. Pupils have the chance to visit local places of interest, which helps them to understand what they are learning, for example, in history, when they compare Maltby today with how it was in Victorian times. The parish priest plays an important part in the life of the school and pupils have the chance to help others by raising funds for charity and performing carols for local elderly residents. These activities develop pupils' awareness of the community they live in and the part they play in it. The school works very well with a wide range of support services. For example, through the Sure Start programme, the speech and language therapist now visits the school, saving parents a trip to the local town and resulting in fewer children missing lessons.
32. Links with other schools are very good, particularly with the high school that most pupils move to when they are eleven. Good systems are in place to ensure that pupils are supported very well during the transition period. As a 'beacon' school, the high school supports the school very well in a number of ways. This has a positive impact on pupils' experiences in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and religious education. High school staff have worked with teachers at St Mary's to improve assessment procedures. A new initiative means that the school benefits from weekly visits from a sports coordinator. St Mary's is also working with two other local primary schools as part of the South Yorkshire eLearning Programme on a project about world religions.
33. Good use is made of external agencies to support the school's work with pupils with special educational needs. St Mary's staff work well with the local secondary school to ensure that the transfer of pupils with special educational needs is managed well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is led and managed **well**. Leadership and management are **good**. Governance is of **good** quality overall, although not all statutory requirements are met.

### **Areas of non-compliance:**

A few items of the required information for parents are not provided by the governing body.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- St Mary's is a very inclusive school
- Good teamwork is generated by the strong leadership of the headteacher
- The governors are knowledgeable and very supportive
- The school improvement plan is not fully effective
- The systems for analyzing attainment data do not readily give information about the performance of groups
- The induction of new staff is very good
- Arrangements for managing the performance of staff do not include teaching assistants

### **Commentary**

34. The headteacher is dedicated, hard-working and well respected by all members of the school community. She receives strong support from the very able deputy headteacher and the knowledgeable governing body. The leadership of the headteacher is good. A particular strength is the very valuable work she does in building a cohesive team, committed to improving provision and raising standards. Leadership gives the school purposeful direction and is based firmly on strongly held principles, which inform the school's plans for improvement. The Catholic character of the school is reflected clearly in its ethos. Members of the senior management

team act as very good role models, both as leaders and as classroom practitioners. The leadership of the subject co-ordinators varies in its effectiveness, but is good overall.

35. The school improvement plan is a useful, detailed document. It identifies appropriate objectives, but would be a more effective tool for raising standards if the actions to be taken were prioritized according to their potential impact on standards. The arrangements for monitoring are not defined clearly enough nor focused sufficiently on evaluating classroom practice and the work that pupils produce as the year goes by. For example, it was planned that the English co-ordinator would team teach with other teachers to improve guided writing in lessons. The means by which the success of this initiative and its impact on standards will be monitored and evaluated is not identified.
36. St Mary's is a very inclusive school. Its supportive atmosphere and focus on the needs of individual pupils' growth and welfare are evidence of this. An inclusion register is kept to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy privileges, take responsibility and be rewarded for their efforts. Numerous examples were found during the inspection of the school going to great lengths to give individuals equal opportunities to succeed. The changing of the geography curriculum to help a pupil new to the school to feel valued is a good example.
37. Good management is evident from the effectiveness with which the school reviews its performance, the efficiency of day to day organisation and the clear understanding that staff have of their roles. The performance of most staff is managed well, although the arrangements do not yet extend to teaching assistants. The very clear links established between the assessment of pupils' progress and teachers' performance management objectives increase the effectiveness of the process.
38. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed very expertly by the special educational needs coordinator. The coordinator provides very good support for teachers when they have particular concerns about individual pupils and in the Foundation Stage children with learning difficulties are quickly identified and support given.
39. The induction of staff new to the school is handled very well. The effectiveness of the support for newly qualified teachers is borne out by the quality of their teaching.
40. Analysis of attainment data is good, but the format for recording information about standards is too heavily dependent on information about individual pupils. The system does not readily allow the analysis of the performance of specific groups such as more able pupils.
41. Leadership and management benefit from the headteacher's detailed knowledge of individual pupils and members of staff gained by spending a good deal of time in classrooms monitoring and supporting. This helps her to assist teachers in their professional development and to ensure that pupils are challenged by the targets set for them.
42. Governance is of good quality. Governors have a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are very supportive of the school and are prepared to make difficult decisions. The governing body is organized well and holds the school to account effectively for the standards it achieves. Their work in monitoring the work of the school on site is at a relatively early stage of development. The governing body does not fulfil all of its statutory duties. There are two items of information missing from that which they should provide for parents. The view of the inspection team is that the failure to meet the statutory requirements referred to does not have an adverse effect on pupils' achievements or their teaching and learning.
43. The school manages its resources very well. The costs of meeting the objectives of the school's improvement plan are identified clearly. Financial procedures are very effective. The recommendations of the last auditors' report have been implemented and the administrative staff work very efficiently in assisting financial and general administration.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	503 871
Total expenditure	487 237
Expenditure per pupil	2293

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	21 938
Balance carried forward to the next	16 634

44. The inclusive, caring and supportive ethos of the school, the good governance, leadership and management and the overall good quality of teaching and learning are aids to raising achievement. The very good start that children get in the foundation unit also helps. The lack of support of a minority of parents, especially in ensuring that their children attend school regularly, and the inconsistency in the quality of some of the teaching act as barriers to improving the progress pupils make.

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

45. At the time of the inspection, children's overall attainment on entry was well below the levels normally found and a notable number had been identified at a very early stage as having significant special learning or social needs. However, due to very good teaching and support children make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1, overall attainment has improved considerably although it is still below expected levels overall.
46. Provision in the recently-opened and renovated foundation unit is very good and this constitutes a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching and planning are characterised by a very strong focus on developing children's personal and social skills and their communication, language and literacy skills. As a result of this, very good teaching, children achieve well from low starting points in most areas of learning and from particularly low levels of attainment in language and personal and social skills. At the time of the inspection, the local education authority's new foundation entry regulations and the foundation unit, consisting of two classes, had only been in operation for one full term. One class, termed 'F1', consists of younger children, the youngest of whom are only three years and a few weeks old, who attend either for morning or afternoon sessions only and enter school at three stages during the school year. The other is a reception 'F2' class consisting of 19 children, several of whom were five at the time of the inspection, who entered the school in September and attend full time. However, due to the very good teamwork between staff, both 'classes' regularly work and play and are taught together in various age and ability groups throughout the day.
47. Teaching, which ranges from very good to good, is very good overall in all areas of learning. All adults work very well together as a team to set high expectations for the children and to provide a very good and imaginative curriculum, which meets children's needs very well. Staffing levels are good and all children are supported very well, and, as a result of very good relationships, the children's personal skills improve rapidly. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides very good leadership, managing change and improvements skilfully through very good procedures for planning, monitoring and assessment. Informal assessments of progress and achievement are constantly being made by all staff and are used very well to plan work at the correct level for all children, including those with significant learning or social needs. The newly-renovated accommodation is good overall - the foundation unit classes are spacious and are attractively-decorated and stimulating places to learn, and there is spacious, secure, well-utilised outdoor accommodation. However, there is currently no covered area which would allow the very well-planned outdoor curriculum to take place throughout the year, even in inclement weather. There are very good induction arrangements for children starting at the school. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator and the Senior Nursery Nurse visit children at home prior to them starting school and children attend school with their parent or carers for one or two short visits before starting. At the start of each day, parents come into the classrooms with their children and spend a few minutes working with them in the class. This system ensures very effective links with parents since it allows informal discussions between staff and parents to take place, as well as providing parents with both an insight into the work that goes on in the foundation unit and how best they can help their child to learn.

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

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good relationships between children and adults and the clear routines create a highly effective learning environment in which children feel secure and make very good progress
- Planning is very good and involves the whole foundation unit team

## **Commentary**

48. This area of learning, of necessity, receives a particularly high profile when children start in the foundation unit and this focus continues throughout their stay. Due to very good teaching, the very good relationships and a very well-planned and ordered environment into which children quickly settle and feel secure, most children make rapid progress in developing their personal and social skills. However, it is likely that by the start of Year 1 a significant proportion of the current cohort will not have attained the learning goals for personal, social and emotional development due to their poor levels of attainment on entry to the school. In the F1 class, a minority of newly-arrived and younger children are still heavily dependent on adults, but others, having been encouraged to take responsibility, are now confident to work independently on their tasks. For example, they take turns being monitors by helping to clear up sensibly after activities. In the F2 (reception) class, many children are beginning to show appropriate levels of confidence and independence when they tackle new learning, and are starting to make choices and decisions about their work. Most are able to work together as a group, and are developing an understanding of the need to listen to the contributions of others, to take turns, and to share resources. Because staff are highly skilled in knowing how young children learn effectively, they plan a very good range of activities, which lead to sustained interest and concentration from the children and a developing desire to learn.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for the development of communication, language and literacy skills is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Every opportunity is seized upon, by all Foundation Stage staff, to enhance children's communication skills
- The very good planning and assessment procedures

## **Commentary**

49. In all activities, there are very good opportunities for the children to develop their language skills, which are exceptionally low when they start school. On entry to the unit, a significant proportion of children demonstrate very delayed speaking and listening skills and, at the time of the inspection, six children were receiving speech therapy support. These weaknesses in language skills, in many cases, continue to have significant negative effects on their progress throughout their school life. All children achieve well, but despite the very good teaching, attainment is likely to be below the expected level by the time the children join Year 1. Staff provide challenging and stimulating activities that are matched well to the needs of all pupils. The sharing of books, listening to stories, playing games and singing rhymes are meticulously planned so that children learn letter sounds and a few simple words. Skilled teaching ensures that their learning is fun and highly effective. Very good focused support is given to help the children improve the way they form letters. Staff explore words and sentences from stories such as 'The Gingerbread Man' in a stimulating way, keeping children engrossed in their learning. Children have their own reading books and bags which they take home regularly and frequent opportunities are provided for them to practise in class. There is very good promotion of early writing skills and children are encouraged to 'write' in a variety of contexts.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and their assistants place a very high emphasis on learning through practical activities
- Planning for mathematical development is very good

### **Commentary**

50. The high quality teaching of practical activities helps children to achieve well from a very low starting point although, despite this good achievement, a significant proportion are unlikely to attain the learning goals for mathematical development by the time that they start in Year 1. For example, in a mathematical activity with older children in F2, although most were able to identify the numerals 1 to 9, only a minority were confidently using language such as 'more than' or 'less than' to compare two numbers. The teacher very skilfully, through very good relationships and very good questioning, led the children from what they knew to new understanding, using calculators to motivate children very well and to further reinforce the concepts. Mathematical skills are extended well across all areas of learning and the reception staff are constantly reinforcing number concepts and vocabulary - during registration, when lining up to go out to play or to go home, during story time and during singing activities.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching provides children with a very good range of opportunities to learn about the world around them
- Planning and teaching are very good

### **Commentary**

51. Teaching and learning are very good and help to ensure that all children achieve well. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world. For example, during the inspection, children were planting potatoes in the Foundation Stage garden - which with luck they will be able to harvest and taste before they enter Year 1. Although the majority of children are likely to achieve most aspects of the learning goals by the time they leave F2, a significant proportion will not. The imaginative play areas, both indoors and outdoors, are changed regularly to keep interest levels high and computers are used regularly to support learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good quality of teaching and planning
- The very good relationships
- Opportunities for physical development outdoors are limited by the lack of a covered area

### **Commentary**

52. Children's attainment when they enter the school is below expectations but they make very good progress and, by the time they begin Year 1, the majority of children are likely to have attained

some aspects of the learning goals for physical development, particularly in terms of 'gross motor skills'. A very good programme of outdoor activities contributes strongly to children's progress, although the lack of a suitable covered area limits opportunities in inclement weather. Children's skills in handling pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools remain below expected levels. When preparing for a hall 'gym' lesson, most pupils undress and dress independently and, once in the hall moved freely, with pleasure and confidence. However, a small minority of children move and behave with considerably less confidence and have little or no contact or interaction with others. This is also the case during 'free choice' activities; a number of children either work quietly by themselves or work in a group without initiating conversation.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very effective teaching of direct skills is combined with very good opportunities for children to learn through play
- Children are provided with an exciting range of activities that enriches their learning

### **Commentary**

53. Staff plan a wide range of stimulating adult-led and independent activities and, with this very good teaching and high levels of support, the children achieve well with many attaining the learning goals by the time they begin Year 1. As in most areas of the curriculum, however, the children need a lot of help to learn important skills when they first start school and therefore, the direct teaching of specific skills is the focus of many activities along with very good opportunities for play. They are taught, for example, the skills needed to mix paint and learn how to use scissors and glue. The majority of the children in F2 are achieving some of the goals for creative development. There is a very good range of opportunities for imaginative play in classroom areas. Children in the foundation unit benefit from a weekly lesson with a music specialist who, in conjunction with the class teacher, is successfully building up their skills in music from a low level.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **English**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good in most classes and pupils achieve well
- The subject coordinator does not provide clear leadership in defining what colleagues need to do to further improve standards
- There is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils
- There is an appropriate focus on improving standards in writing
- Teachers make imaginative use of technical aids to enhance learning
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and their assistants and make good progress
- Marking of work does not always give a clear picture of what pupils could do to improve their work
- The learning environment in classrooms is organised well and supports learning

## Commentary

54. Standards in English are rising because of the school's focus on improvement in the subject. The national test results over the past few years show that the school's focus on improving pupil's writing skills has led to higher standards but also that more needs to be done to improve the work of more able pupils. Work seen in lessons during the inspection indicates that the current improvement is being maintained.
55. Standards in speaking and listening are good, helping pupils to achieve well. Most pupils speak confidently and show good understanding of the conventions of discussion in classrooms. Staff encourages pupils to discuss issues related to lessons. Support staff give good support to pupils with special educational needs and encourage them to participate in discussions.
56. Standards in reading are satisfactory and are improving. Pupils like reading because the school successfully promotes it as an enjoyable activity. They read a wide range of fiction and are equally interested in non-fiction texts. Pupils take home both fiction and non-fiction books. The school library is being developed and provides pupils with a range of books to choose from. Many pupils also belong to local libraries, and are supported well by their parents at home. All of these factors help to promote pupils' learning and the standards they attain. In lessons, adults act as good role models. They provide effective support for pupils that focuses clearly on how they can improve. Pupils talk confidently about the books they are reading and can clearly explain why they enjoy them.
57. Standards in writing are now satisfactory and improving due to the appropriate focus on this by teachers. In some classes standards are high as pupils are very aware of the purpose of their written work and organise it very well and as a result, their achievement is good. In Year 5, as part of a history lesson on the Second World War, pupils were taking the role of evacuees and wrote letters home to their parents. They showed great enthusiasm for the activity and used a variety of writing styles to enhance the letters. The organisation of pupils for literacy lessons ensures lower attaining pupils receive appropriate levels of challenge and support that enables them all to achieve well, but the more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and their achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils enjoy writing and are very productive.
58. The school continues to work for further improvements in writing as results from the national tests indicate that insufficient pupils are attaining high levels of attainment. In order to achieve this the school could focus on:
- Greater challenge and support for the more able pupils;
  - Clearer marking of pupils' work that identifies what they need to do to improve their work;
  - Working to improve pupils' spelling.
59. In the lessons observed, teaching ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory and was good overall. The best teaching is found in Years 2, 4 and 6. Good teaching has been maintained and the quality and use made of assessment information has improved since the last inspection. Pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs receive good support from teaching assistants and the Learning Mentor, ensuring that their attainment is good. They are supported in their learning through the creation of classroom environments that provide them with a wide range of relevant resources and learning aids. These strategies are very effective and help pupils to feel secure, with the result that their confidence grows, they work very hard and achieve well. Pupils of higher ability are not yet sufficiently challenged and supported and as a result, they do not achieve as well as they could. The marking of pupils' work does not always provide guidance as to what they need to do to improve their work or, where advice has been given, comment on how well the pupil has done when the next piece of work is marked. Most teachers have good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and make effective use of the good resources and skilled teaching assistants to promote pupils' learning. In some classes the use of information and communication technology greatly enhances lessons and promotes high

standards of work. Pupils' attitudes are good; they behave well in lessons and are very productive.

60. The subject coordinator works with the headteacher to analyse and interpret data about pupil performance. She has put in place monitoring systems, including looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work to guide developments in the subject. However, there has not yet been sufficient emphasis on the monitoring of teaching or on the impact of policies developed to improve pupil performance. A clear vision has been established for the future provision of the subject based on continuing improvement, but more needs to be done to systematically evaluate its impact.

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

61. Opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across the curriculum are good overall. Discussions are a regular feature of lessons and promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. Reading is also a regular feature of pupils' work in other subjects. Effective links are made to other subjects that help to give pupils' written work a real purpose. The use of information and communication technology to enhance the subject is good and the provision of interactive white boards in two classrooms has provided additional opportunities.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good leadership of the subject co-ordinator
- The good progress made by most pupils
- Year-on-year improvements in standards
- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching as pupils move through the school

### **Commentary**

62. At Year 2, standards are above national averages. This is due to the very good provision in the foundation unit and the excellent teaching in Year 2. This constitutes very good achievement. Standards at Year 6 are in line with national averages and results have improved significantly in each of the last three years' national tests.
63. Teaching in mathematics, which ranges from satisfactory to excellent, is good overall throughout the school. In most instances teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and have good classroom and behaviour management skills, allowing most lessons to progress at a good pace. They match tasks well to pupils' abilities and learning needs. This was demonstrated very effectively in a Year 2 lesson, where, through very well-levelled and appropriately challenging work, very effective step-by-step teaching based on very good subject knowledge and very good use of resources, pupils maintained a very good focus on their work throughout the lesson and achieved very well. However, as was noted in the scrutiny of pupils' work, there is some inconsistency in teaching. In some lessons the pace of learning was only moderate and the teacher's explanations were not sufficiently clear. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and their assistants and make good progress.
64. The subject-co-ordinator has achieved a good deal in a relatively short space of time and is providing good leadership. School test results are analysed in detail and amendments made to the curriculum in the light of what is revealed. Assessment in the subject is good. In addition to the detailed analysis of test results and trends noted above, pupils are tracked individually as they move through the school and now have individual and group targets. However, a weakness in co-ordination is that, although she is aware of differences in the quality of teaching from class to class, the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to formally monitor standards of

teaching in the subject. With her excellent teaching, given appropriate opportunities to do so, she could provide a very good role model for other staff.

65. Although the judgements about achievement and standards are broadly the same, the curriculum provision, the use of assessment, the quality of subject leadership and results at Year 6 are significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. This constitutes good improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

66. Pupils make appropriate use of their mathematic skills in subjects such as design and technology.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well
- Teaching and learning are good
- Opportunities are missed to challenge more able pupils

#### **Commentary**

67. Achievement is good, because most of the teaching and learning is done well. Pupils enter with below average skills and make good progress as they pass through the school, so that by the time they leave standards in relation to similar schools are above average. At Year 2, pupils' skills in testing are well developed. They make careful observations, predict what may happen and are beginning to record their findings in an organized way, although some do not describe effectively what happened in their experiments. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of physical processes, recognizing, for example, that applying one's foot to slow a bicycle wheel is a kind of force. In investigations, Year 6 pupils are able to explain what constitutes a fair test. They understand the way in which plants and creatures depend on each other, but do not often use the correct scientific terms in recording their work.
68. The observation of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that teaching and learning are of good quality. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. At that time some poor lessons were seen. All the teaching observed during this inspection was at least satisfactory. The monitoring of lessons by the science co-ordinator and the headteacher has helped to bring about this improvement. The good emphasis placed on gaining and using enquiry skills enhances pupils' achievement. Good practice was seen in a Year 3 lesson, in which pupils were required to come up with their own ideas for testing magnets. Teachers use resources well. In all the lessons observed computers were used effectively. In a good Year 6 lesson about micro-organisms, very good use was made of the interactive whiteboard and a microscope linked to a computer. Portable computers were also employed for Internet research. The very good relationship teachers and their assistants have with their classes empowers pupils to be proactive as learners – asking questions, making suggestions and commenting. This has a positive effect on their progress. Teachers, however, do not pay enough attention to developing pupils' literacy skills when marking written work.
69. Effective use of the national planning guidance results in teachers knowing what can be expected of pupils of varying abilities. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that opportunities to extend more able pupils are sometimes missed. For example, in work about the life processes of plants more able pupils recorded the same information as those of average ability, rather than being asked to study at more depth.

70. The subject co-ordinator is conscientious and understands her role well. Her monitoring activities have helped to raise standards.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Work in this subject was sampled. Evidence was gathered from the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and records. Discussions were held with pupils and the subject co-ordinator. Time constraints resulted in only two lessons being observed.

### **Commentary**

71. At Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain in line with the expectations for their age. This is a clear improvement since the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory throughout the school. Given that relatively few pupils have access to appropriate experience of computers at home, pupils achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 show strengths in framing questions and finding the answers from databases about their class. They search compact discs for information about topics such as the Great Wall of China and devise instructions to control the path taken by a floor turtle 'Roamer'. Year 6 pupils organize and present information using different media, including sound, about self-chosen themes such as 'mountains'. They present information in different graphical forms, including pie charts showing the number of tries scored by different rugby football teams. They do not have sufficient experience of emailing because the school is in the process of providing broadband access. They lacked confidence in talking about the use of information and communication technology [ICT] outside school.
72. The very good improvement in provision and the rise in standards are due in large part to the very good leadership and management of the subject co-ordinator. She acts as a very positive role model for other members of staff, showing very good subject knowledge and teaching skills, and an excellent commitment to using ICT in as many lessons as possible. In an inspiring English lesson, her impressive use of a variety of technical aids, including a projector linked to a computer, led to pupils making very good progress in writing portraits of characters. Too little teaching was observed to make an overall judgement of the quality of teaching and learning, but one of the two lessons seen was of very good quality. In discussions pupils showed very positive attitudes to working with computers.
73. The provision of computers and related equipment has been boosted greatly since the last inspection. At that time there was only one computer of a satisfactory standard. The school has made very good use of funds available from government initiatives to promote the use of ICT, the South Yorkshire eLearning Programme and other sources to bring about improvement. The school is well on its way to creating a wireless suite of rechargeable laptop computers which can be moved easily and used flexibly around the school. The overall provision, including recently installed interactive whiteboards and ancillary equipment such as microscopes linked to computers, is now good.
74. Other very constructive aspects of the co-ordinator's work include the raising of teachers' confidence. Teachers spoken to confirmed that she provides excellent support to colleagues. This has significantly reduced the inconsistency in pupils' experience of ICT as they move through the school, noted in the last report. Her introduction of arrangements to enable pupils to take responsibility for evaluating their own learning, such as the ICT 'diary', is also helping to raise standards further. The co-ordinator's very good quality action planning is also driving the development of the subject at a good rate.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

75. ICT is used well by most teachers in a range of subjects. In Year 2 pupils use an art program to create pictures of the Fire of London as part of their history work. They use a word processor to develop their writing skills. Year 5 pupils were observed constructing a spreadsheet to further their geography studies of traffic problems in Maltby. In Year 6 pupils compose music in imitation of West End musicals using computers.

## **HUMANITIES**

There was insufficient evidence seen by inspectors to make a firm judgement on the provision made in this curriculum area.

76. Work in **geography** and **history** was sampled and analysed, with only one lesson seen in each subject. Therefore it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.
77. Discussions with teachers and pupils, and the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning form the basis of judgements made for these subjects. The evidence from pupils' work in books and on display indicates that standards are in line with that expected in both subjects.
78. There has been a clear improvement in planning for geography since the previous inspection. The weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed well. A scheme of work has been put into place and teachers use this to plan effectively
79. In both subjects the curriculum is enhanced through a range of visits and pupils are very enthusiastic about these. Teachers make the work both interesting and relevant. Pupils use the Internet to research topics and information and communication technology to produce interesting and relevant work. Discussion with pupils indicated great enthusiasm for the subjects.
80. Planning of the subjects by teachers is good and is monitored by the coordinators who have created portfolios of work indicating the expected levels of work to be produced by pupils of different ability. The school has adopted a national scheme of work to ensure that all pupils get appropriate coverage of the subjects. It has developed a wide range of relevant resources to support both subjects and teachers make good use of them to enthuse and engage pupils.

## **Religious education**

Provision and standards are reported as part of the Section 23 inspection.

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

Subjects in this curriculum area were sampled and there was insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on provision.

### **Art and Design**

81. Standards at the age of seven and 11 are satisfactory. Two art and design lessons were observed during the inspection, one in Year 6 and one in Year 2. Some of the pupils' work undertaken during the previous term/year was scrutinised.
82. In the Year 2 lesson observed, pupils learning about the work and style of L. S. Lowry made very good progress and produced work of a good standard due to very good teaching. Pupils were learning about different kinds of art, craft and design and about visual and tactile elements such as colour, texture, line and tone in the world of L. S. Lowry. The teacher made very good use of information and communication technology in the lesson – several pupils worked on computers to produce 'Lowry landscapes' of a good quality. Another group went outside to sketch the landscape and others used a restricted palette to paint 'Lowry-style' townscapes. The Year 6 lesson was led by an art teacher from the local secondary school and provided very good links with the school to which most of the pupils will move at the end of the year. Having compiled visual information in a visit to the countryside in the previous week by sketching and taking digital photographs, pupils were learning about the tactile properties of clay. They did this in order, in a later lesson, to design and make a tile (which will be 'fired' in the secondary school kiln) based on their observations of natural forms.

83. A whole-school scheme of work for art and design, based on government-recommended schemes of work, has now been adopted and ensures that pupils gain skills, knowledge and understanding progressively as move through the school. Portfolios of work assessed in relation to National Curriculum levels of attainment are available for most years and provide a useful resource for teachers.

### **Design and technology**

84. In design and technology there has been improvement in provision since the previous inspection. Discussion with pupils indicates great enthusiasm for the subject and they demonstrate good knowledge, including the need to be careful when using sharp tools. From the evidence provided, pupils in each year group show good skills in developing, planning and communicating ideas. They have good knowledge of materials and their suitability for the tasks they are pursuing. In Year 6 pupils had completed a project on slippers and the finished articles on display showed good assembling, combining and joining of materials.

85. Designing skills are good. This was evident from work produced by pupils in Year 2 related to a history topic on the Great Fire of London where they had designed and made model houses demonstrating how the building material aided the spread of the fire. Teachers' planning for a breadth of experiences and progression of skills to improve finished products is satisfactory and the school has adopted a national scheme of work to ensure that pupils get a comprehensive range of experiences.

86. The subject coordinator has recently begun to review the school policy and is developing a portfolio of work to assist teachers in the development of the subject.

### **Music**

87. Two music lessons were observed during the inspection, one in Year 6 and one in Year 2. These confirmed that standards in both year groups are satisfactory – an improvement on the situation described at the last inspection, when attainment at Year 6 was deemed to be unsatisfactory. A part-time, specialist teacher takes all classes for music lessons during one very hectic day in school each week. She demonstrates good subject skills, moves lessons along at a good pace, changes activities frequently to gain and maintain interest, gives very clear instructions and exhibits genuine enthusiasm for the subject. As a result, pupils respond well and enjoy their music lessons. They understand what they need to do to improve and achieve well from a low level of attainment on entry. This was observed in a Year 6 lesson at the very start of the school day – pupils arrived directly from the playground in the room used for music with their coats and bags and, due to the teacher's lively manner and enthusiasm, quickly settled down and made good progress. They improvised rhythmic phrases as part of a group performance and developed their understanding of how pitch, dynamics, duration, tempo, timbre and silence can be structured to create varying moods and effects. Good use was made of information and communication technology in all the music lessons observed. In the lesson described above, pupils were using a music program to devise and play back rhythm sequences and the teacher used the newly-installed 'active' whiteboard well to display song lyrics.

88. A scheme of work for music, based on a government-recommended programme with additions to suit the school, has now been adopted. This provides secure progression in learning as pupils move through the school and ensures all aspects of the subject are addressed appropriately. A good feature of all the lessons observed is that class teachers remain with their classes during the music lessons and thus gain confidence in teaching the subject. In addition, they make assessment notes on pupils' progress which are used by the music co-ordinator to plan the following week's activities.

## **Physical education**

89. The only lesson seen was of very good quality and the Year 4 pupils worked above the level expected for their age. The very effective links made with the pupils' work in history added considerable interest. The teacher's very good use of a portable computer to set the scene and act as a stimulus heightened pupils' engagement to a high level. A combination of good modelling by the teacher and concerted, direct coaching led to pupils understanding more about the composition of their dances on a Celtic theme. Pupils worked hard, collaborated well in their groups and synchronized movements with precision and control. They established a clear contrast between strong, attacking and yielding, defensive actions.

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

90. It is not possible to judge the provision or the standards that pupils attain in this subject since no lessons were observed.

91. The school achieved the Healthy Schools award in 2003. The school promotes healthy lifestyles well. The curriculum in subjects such as science contributes strongly to provision, through work on topics such as foods and teeth.

92. The knowledgeable and very committed co-ordinator has recently taken up her responsibilities and is in the course of developing a programme of work for each class. She has worked well with other staff to devise this. She recognizes the importance of work in this area to the school's Catholic ethos and has a clear vision for its development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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	3

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