

INSPECTION REPORT

ST LOUIS ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newmarket

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124768

Headteacher: Mrs W Lashmar

Lead inspector: Mrs R S Rodger

Dates of inspection: 3- 5 November 2003

Inspection number: 261397

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 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	156
School address:	Fordham Road Newmarket Postcode CB8 7AA
Telephone number:	01638 662719
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Rogers
Date of previous inspection:	28 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Louis Roman Catholic Primary school is situated in the centre of Newmarket in Suffolk. There are 156 pupils on roll, including 34 children who attend the nursery daily for a morning or afternoon session. Pupils attend the school from a relatively wide catchment area which is generally socially and economically advantaged. A well below average proportion of pupils is entitled to a free school meal. The Community provision includes a family learning programme, focusing on mathematics. Most pupils are from white, British backgrounds. Seventeen per cent are from other ethnic backgrounds, including Irish, American, Asian and Black British. There are two pupils whose first language is not English; they speak Spanish and Polish. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or speech and hearing impairment. The number of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual times is high as a result of the high proportion of pupils coming from a nearby American base. Attainment on entry to the school is above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10347	Mrs R S Rodger	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology English as an additional language,
12536	Mrs S Bullerwell	Lay inspector	
21398	Mr T R Gill	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology Music
29426	Mr D Grimwood	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Physical education Personal, health and social education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Louis primary school is an **effective** school. Almost all pupils make good progress and achievement is **good** in the core subjects, history, art and design, physical education and for the youngest children in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and creative development. Pupils are keen to learn and have very good attitudes to school. Most teaching is good and a fifth is very good. Leadership is determined and effective and involves all subject leaders well. Parents have a high degree of confidence in the school. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision in the Foundation Stage¹ is very good.
- Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above average.
- Standards in the non-core subjects of art and design, design and technology, physical education and history are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The quality of learning is good and pupils have very good attitudes to their work.
- Behaviour is good.
- Partnership with parents and the links with the community are very good.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher, senior staff and the governors are good.
- The care, guidance and support provided by the school for its pupils are very good.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has not improved enough since the last inspection and is unsatisfactory.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. Most issues have been dealt with well. Higher attaining pupils now achieve well in mathematics and science and the quality of teaching has improved. Arrangements for the appraisal of staff are now rigorous. Improvements to ICT have not been sufficient.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	C	B	A	A
writing	B	B	A	A
mathematics	A	C	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The table above shows that Year 2 pupils achieved well above average standards in the 2003 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. The school achieved above the national trend. Achievement overall is **good**. This reflects the good teaching and the good climate for learning created throughout the school. Achievement throughout the Foundation Stage is good in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and creative development. By the time they start in Year 1, pupils' attainment is above average. By Year 2, standards are maintained at above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and achievement is good. This good achievement is maintained in Years 3 and 4 in English, mathematics and science. Standards are

¹ This is the stage from the nursery until the end of the reception year

above average in art and design, design and technology, history and physical education by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes are very good and they are very well cared for and supported in the school. Their behaviour is good and there are no exclusions. Attendance is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage. A high priority is given to teaching literacy and numeracy. Pupils learn effectively as a result of the good teaching they receive and their good levels of interest in their work. The use of ICT to support learning in some subjects is under-developed. A good range of out of school activities, clubs and sports events enriches the curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory, although there is no space for a full computer suite. Care, guidance and support for the pupils are very good. Links with the local and church community are very good. Partnership with parents is very good. They support their children well which contributes to their overall good achievement. The spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is very good. Provision for cultural development is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher has a strong vision for the development of the school and has created a good climate for learning with the support of all staff and the governors. The strength of the governors has been maintained since the last inspection and continues to be good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in very high regard. They are confident that the school is doing its best for their children. The school's links with parents are very effective. Pupils hold positive views about the school. They like the outdoor area and are very happy in school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To continue to improve the provision for information and communication technology.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are above average by the time the pupils start in Year 1 as a result of the good achievement made in the nursery and reception classes. This good achievement is maintained throughout Years 1 to 4 and by the time the pupils leave the school standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards achieved in the 2003 national tests in Year 2 were well above average in English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good because the children are very well taught.
- Standards in writing have improved and there is little difference between the standard achieved by girls and boys.
- The school's results were well above the national average for all the core subjects in the 2003 national tests.
- Standards are above average in history, physical education, art and design and design and technology.
- Achievement in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.7 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	17.2 (15.3)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.4 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

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

1. The 2003 national test results showed a very good improvement compared to the previous year for pupils in Year 2. In relation to all schools and similar² schools nationally standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. They were also well above average in the teacher assessments in science. The improvement overall was above the national trend which was very good achievement. Year 4 pupils completed the local education authority (LEA) tests for reading and mathematics. These results showed that standards were above the LEA average in reading and well above average in mathematics. Girls achieved better than boys in reading and mathematics. Pupils from all ethnic groups achieve well, especially the American pupils who may only spend a short time in the school.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught very well. As a result, they achieve well and, at times, their achievement is very good. For example, a four-year old described an illustrator as 'someone who scribbles pictures' and others used very good descriptive words to describe spaghetti, 'slimy', 'smooth' and 'cold'. The children are likely to exceed the nationally agreed early learning goals in all six areas of learning, apart from physical development. Opportunities for the three-year-olds to run, jump, balance and control their movements outside are limited due to restrictions in the use of the outdoor area in the afternoon session.

² Similar schools are schools with the same proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal

3. The leadership of English and mathematics has had a good impact on raising standards through the detailed analysis of national test results and the new tracking system introduced by the assessment leader in Year 2 and 4. Teachers work hard to maintain the good achievement made in the Foundation Stage. Higher attaining pupils achieve particularly well. As a result of the average standards achieved in the 2002 national tests in reading and writing a range of effective strategies were introduced to improve achievement. The headteacher was involved in teaching targeted groups in English, new reading resources were purchased and a broader range of writing was introduced through writing assemblies. The same strategies are used this year to help to improve the achievement of boys in Years 3 and 4. Clarity of instruction and challenging questioning in mathematics helps pupils achieve well. Standards have improved overall since the last inspection because of the attention given to higher attaining pupils
4. Standards in English and history are above average in Year 2 and 4 as a result of the high expectations in teaching and the secure literacy skills demonstrated by most pupils despite some variation in the quality of the presentation of work. In Year 4, handwriting is in a well-formed, fluent and cursive style. Powerful verbs and adjectives are used to improve poetry writing. For example, a pupil wrote, 'Through the crashing waves on a dark, stormy night'.
5. Pupils with special educational needs are well-supported to help to develop their literacy skills. They make good progress in developing their understanding of phonics and the meanings of stories in small groups which are taught effectively by a teaching assistant. The bilingual pupils achieve well as a result of the caring and supportive environment in which they work.
6. Standards in physical education are above average, partly as a result of the good range of out of school activities and the good use made of the outdoor area for physical education lessons. Pupils have developed their painting and drawing skills well with the result that standards are above average in art and design by Year 2 and 4.
7. Achievement in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. Until recently, the school had insufficient computers to enable the full programme of study to be taught. There are now more computers and an enthusiastic, knowledgeable subject leader. As a short term measure, a member of the support staff works with groups from each class in rotation in one or other of the mini computer suites in the afternoons. Pupils have reasonable skills, but they are not extended because their teaching lacks challenge due to limitations in subject knowledge. By Year 2, pupils are adept in their use of the keyboard to type, use the space bar and enter and delete keys. Year 4 pupils showed good skills in altering font style and size as they designed headlines. However, achievement was unsatisfactory because the pupils started the lesson showing good skills and their understanding was not extended.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good, overall. Their level of attendance and punctuality is good and no pupils were excluded from school in the previous year. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and their cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes to school.
- Relationships are very good.
- Pupils' personal development is very good.

Commentary

8. Pupils of all ages show very good attitudes to their work and their life in school. This is reflected in their enjoyment of lessons, their participation in the many extra-curricular activities available to them and their above average level of attendance. Children in the Foundation Stage are eager to explore new activities that are planned very well by staff to be both interesting and

challenging. For example, a lesson for nursery children using gymnastic apparatus in the hall enabled them to achieve very well. Pupils throughout the school listen carefully to the teachers and each other and confidently contribute to discussions and group work during lessons. They work hard and concentrate well showing a high level of commitment to learning and achievement.

9. Relationships are very good between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves. In lessons, pupils work together in groups and share resources fairly. The introduction of the school council is promoting very good relationships among all ages as they work together to improve the school community. Pupils are clear about how they would like lunchtimes and the playground to be improved by the provision of more to do.
10. Pupils' very good personal development is a result of the opportunities they are given to learn and understand Christian values and beliefs, such as respect, honesty, and forgiveness. Pupils put what they learn into action and the school is a happy, caring community where pupils understand how to be responsible, know the difference between right and wrong, show respect for people, property and the environment and contribute positively to the school and wider community. For example, the pupils raise funds for a number of charities. The school gives very good support and guidance for pupils' personal development through the very good provision for their spiritual, social and moral education, which results in their very good attitudes and relationships. An awareness of other cultures is effectively promoted through religious education and personal, health and social education.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.6
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.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
101	0	0
5	0	0
19	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
6	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good

Teaching and learning

Overall the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teaching, learning and assessment in the Foundation Stage are very good. Subject specialist teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The management and organisation of lessons and well-established routines are good.
- The use of teaching assistants to support less able pupils is good.
- The use of questioning to challenge pupils is very good.
- Informal assessment by teaching assistants in lessons is very good.
- The teaching of phonic skills in Year 2 is very good.
- Assessment in English, mathematics and science is good.
- Marking of pupils' work is variable, but generally lacks detail of how pupils can improve.
- A slow pace, low levels of challenge and difficulties controlling a few pupils were features of unsatisfactory teaching.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7 (18%)	18 (46%)	13 (33%)	1(3%)	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.

11. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. At times, children are enthralled as a result of the inspirational demonstrations and very practical and well-targeted activities to motivate and interest the children. For example, high levels of discussion resulted from the children's observations of themselves in a range of mirrors. There is an effective balance in the Foundation Stage between adult-led activities and activities selected by the children. The children learn very effectively because they have a wide variety of activities, both inside and outside, although lack of adult supervision restricts the use of the outdoor area in the afternoon nursery session.
12. Lessons are generally well managed and pupils know what to do. Learning intentions are displayed and help to ensure there is appropriate consistency in pupils' learning day-by-day. Routines are well established. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in their support of small groups of pupils especially in English and mathematics.
13. All teachers effectively recapitulate on what pupils have learned before at the start of lessons. Generally, pupils achieve well through their lessons. Year 2 pupils, for example managed to write several sentences of a story independently. Pupils question teachers confidently to help clarify their understanding. In science, Year 3 pupils concentrated well and showed good levels of collaboration and independence as required in the lesson.
14. The teaching of English and mathematics is very securely based on the guidance provided by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in most classes. At times, in English the

content of a commercial scheme is too much at the forefront of the planning of work, irrespective of whether the activities are appropriate. The teaching of phonics is very good.

15. Assessment procedures throughout the Foundation Stage are very good. Records of pupils' achievement are good. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to record significant achievement in whole class sessions. Assessment procedures in the rest of the school are good in English and mathematics. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have targets for writing in their books. However, these are not challenging enough in Year 4. Assessment in the foundation subjects, for example history, is very good, involving teachers keeping detailed notes of how individual pupils respond to topics with particular references to those who have exceeded the learning objectives and those who have not yet achieved them. The marking of pupils' work is variable but overall pupils are not given enough suggestions on how they can improve their work.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. A good range of curricular opportunities meets pupils' needs and they make good progress. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is organised to give good coverage of all relevant National Curriculum subjects and includes all pupils equally well.
 - The curriculum is enriched by a good range of out-of-school activities.
 - The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
 - Good quality assistance from members of the support staff promotes the teaching and learning of all pupils.
16. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and there are now good programmes of work for each subject. This has led to an improvement in standards in some areas, including mathematics in which pupils' abilities to use and apply mathematical skills have improved. The introduction of schemes of work for history, art and design, and design and technology has been influential in improving standards. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and this includes the provision of good quality acts of collective worship, which help to promote the strong Christian ethos of the school. The Foundation Stage curriculum offers a wide range of learning opportunities and is planned very effectively in line with national guidance.
 17. The curriculum is broad, includes areas such as swimming, which are beyond statutory requirements, and places good emphasis on the humanities, aesthetic and physical subjects. History and geography are planned on a two-year rolling programme to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes have a full coverage of these subjects. Pupils' studies of history, for example, are enriched and given relevance by well-chosen trips to museums and places of historical interest and by visits from a range of outside speakers. They are also enhanced by the use of the specialist skills of teachers who teach the same subject to more than one class. The school tries to ensure that the full curriculum is available to all, taking particular care, for example, that pupils in mixed age classes are not disadvantaged by comparison with those in single age classes. Care is taken to plan work for pupils of all abilities and this theme has been extended in the teaching of mathematics where, for part of the week, pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are taught in groups selected on ability.
 18. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school identifies the needs of pupils at an early stage. Individual education plans contain clear and achievable targets for progress.
 19. The range of extra-curricular activities has improved since the last inspection and these now offer pupils sporting opportunities and allow them to practise their skills in competitive

situations. A good number of pupils join the school choir, which performs at a number of venues and offers pupils the opportunity to model their behaviour in a variety of circumstances as well as improving their singing.

20. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The spacious outdoor area provides a good resource to enhance the curriculum as well as providing good facilities for physical education. The library area is very large and classrooms offer ample room for practical activity. Teaching assistants have a significant impact on learning in the school. They help teachers with day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning and directly help pupils, particularly, but not exclusively, those with lower ability or special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' are very well cared for, guided and supported. The school effectively ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides very good support, advice and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school is good in seeking to involve pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good support and guidance is provided for pupils' well-being.
- High regard is paid to the safety of pupils as they move around the school.
- The school actively seeks the views of the pupils.

Commentary

21. Pupils have immediate access to a range of staff for effective support, advice and guidance. A particularly successful example is a project which runs through the year to give pupils access to trained counsellors who offer them support and guidance in particularly difficult or stressful times. Pastoral care is based on teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils through the effective partnership the school has with parents and links with the church. Parents say school is like an extension of home because of the quality of care provided by staff.
22. This large, three-storey Victorian building has many staircases. Pupils travel down to the basement where the cloakrooms are and up to the classrooms on the top floor at least four times every day and it is a reflection of the quality of care and pupils' response to teachers' expectations that there has never been an accident while pupils are moving around the school. Parents say the level of fitness shown by their children and their success at sports is partly due to the daily exercise these stairs provide.
23. School council members take a thoughtful and responsible attitude towards the school. All pupils have completed a questionnaire as part of a school-wide consultation on the development of the school. Pupils are very keen to receive good behaviour rewards and affirmation certificates. Daily assembly acts as a reminder to pupils that they have promised to help to make the school a good place. Induction arrangements are very good and children get off to a flying start when they join nursery.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very effective links with parents and the community and good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with all aspects of the school's work and are confident the school is doing its best for their children.
- Parents' involvement with the school is very good.
- The school has effective links with other schools.

Commentary

24. Parents are very happy with every area of the school and its work. Most annual written reports are of very good quality. They tell parents how their children are getting on in all subjects, what children can do and are good at and whether achievement and progress are good enough. They include targets for the next steps in pupils' learning and incorporate pupils' views. However, some reports just list what is covered in class rather than the standards pupils are achieving. Parents appreciate they can come into school at any time and the headteacher and school staff are available after school. They enjoy the many opportunities to share in special occasions, such as class Mass and coffee afternoons, the opening of the environmental garden and Christmas productions.
25. The monthly Parenting Group set up a year ago and funded as a community education project is effectively helping parents understand how they can support the work of the school at home and also gives them support in 'How to be successful parents', discussing topics such as 'problem eaters'. The provision of a crèche enables parents with younger children to attend. A mathematics course aimed at Year 1 parents resulted in some parents receiving GCSE equivalent achievement certificates. This plays a very effective part in helping parents understand and support their own children's learning at home. The school website is being developed in conjunction with parents and as part of a Beacon school project; this acts as an effective means of communication between home and school and is valued by parents. The school association organises events to raise funds to benefit the pupils.
26. The school has effective links with other schools, including some with a local school of nationally acknowledged expertise, which has helped to improve the teaching of English. Links with the middle schools, to which its pupils transfer after Year 4, involve introduction days, starting work which is to be completed at the new school and a pilgrimage to Walsingham with Year 4 pupils from other Catholic Schools and Year 5 pupils from the middle schools. These initiatives are very effective in helping to provide a smooth transition from the school to the next stage of education. Events such as workshops on light, organised by a local middle school and attended by Year 4 pupils, help pupils' learning in science, widen curricular opportunities and make the transfer to middle school as seamless as possible.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are good. The strength of the governors has been maintained since the last inspection and is good. Leadership by the headteacher is firmly focused on raising standards. She has put effective structures into place to give subject leaders a greater stake in improving their subjects. Management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's agenda for improvement is well-focused on raising standards.
- Governors play a supportive and effective role in the development of the school.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics have made a good impact on improving their subjects.
- Monitoring of teaching does not identify targets for development.
- There is a lack of clarity in the priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

Commentary

27. The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff, including the deputy headteacher, is good. Firm and decisive leadership was evident in the way the headteacher tackled falling standards in writing last year. The impact of this was very evident in the improved 2003 national test results. She takes responsibility for teaching music in Years 3 and 4 to enable her own skills and the specialist skills of science and history subject leaders improve the quality of teaching and learning in those subjects. The recently appointed assessment leader has analysed

assessment results to identify pupils who exceed expectations and those who have not met the expected levels. This useful information is used to target specific pupils for support. All these actions are helping to create a good climate for learning.

28. All members of staff, but especially the senior management team, make an effective contribution to the development of the school. They work hard and are very committed. To give all subject leaders a stake in developing the school, the headteacher expects them all to submit an action plan and requests for funding. This process sometimes clashes with the priorities of the school improvement plan with the result that there is a lack of clarity about what the main priorities are and how they are linked to the budget. The headteacher is aware of this and plans to make the links between improvement planning and the budget more robust in the future.
29. Management is good. All members of staff are clear about their roles and discharge their responsibilities with a good degree of professionalism. Arrangements for performance management are secure and well managed. The deputy headteacher takes efficient responsibility for professional development. Team leaders meet and review performance objectives in line with the yearly timetable. Individual performance objectives are linked to school as well as personal priorities. There is a programme for checking the quality of teaching by the senior management team as part of school self-review. This is well spaced throughout the year to include checking the quality of pupils' work and observing teaching in each subject during the review week. However, the reviews of teaching do not include targets for improvement.
30. The governance of the school continues to be good. Governors are well informed. They meet in various committees prior to the full governing body meeting. Individual governors have recently linked with a subject leader and are involved in overseeing the work of their subjects in a systematic way during the review weeks throughout the year. Financial management is prudent with effective steps taken to reduce the under-spend in the budget last year.
31. Systems to achieve best value are systematic and effective. There is consultation with all bodies involved, especially the governors, parents and pupils. Governors are well informed of the performance of the school compared to other local schools and are rightly proud of the success of the school and its links with the local community. The school provides good value for money.
32. The school has no significant barriers to improvement. The very good attitudes of the pupils, their eagerness to learn, the very good start children have in the Foundation Stage and the supportive parish and parent community are considerable aids to improvement.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	403,816
Total expenditure	397,170
Expenditure per pupil	2,230

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	55,968
Balance carried forward to the next	61,985

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and a strength of the school. It has improved since the last inspection. The children are taught in a single age group in the nursery but the older children are taught with Year 1 pupils. The teaching and learning are very good and, as a result, the children achieve well. Planning is very good and all the areas of learning are developed effectively alongside each other. As a result, the activities the children are given provide them with a rich variety of interesting and related experiences. Assessment is thorough; it is used well to set challenging work for all the children. The provision is well led and managed by the subject leader who is very knowledgeable and has created a very good, effective team. All the adults are very good role models and relationships between the staff and children are very good. Consequently, the children are confident and this helps their learning and is reflected in their good achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching and challenging expectations set by the staff.
- The very good, trusting relationships between staff and the children ensure the children settle quickly into the routines and become confident learners.
- A rich variety of learning experiences means that children are likely to exceed the nationally agreed early learning goals.

Commentary

33. In both the nursery and the reception classes, the very good teamwork of the staff produces a calm, challenging environment in which learning prospers. The children co-operate well, are good at sharing equipment, helping each other and taking turns. When making kites the children helped each other to measure the kite string, cut the adhesive tape and position it. The children are very interested in the work, concentrate hard and talk confidently to adults about what they are doing.
34. The quality of teaching in the nursery and in the mixed age reception and Year 1 class is very good. All children are encouraged to take responsibility, for example, the three-year-olds change before using the apparatus in the hall. Older four-year-olds effectively used their throwing skills to play a skittle game outside. Children with special educational needs are always included.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very high priority is given to developing the children's language skills
- Children are very effectively encouraged to think and to give answers to questions in sentences.
- Children's speaking skills are very good as a result of very good teaching that helps to develop their vocabulary.

Commentary

35. Virtually all the children are on line to meet the expectations of this area of learning and many will exceed them because of the very good teaching and support they receive, coupled with the rich variety of experiences they are offered. The children like books and listen attentively to stories. When the story about Oliver and the mirror is read some very good discussion follows as the children talk about mirrors using words such as, 'reflection' and 'magnified.' Many of the children have their own reading book and the more able can read simple sentences and are developing a good recognition of common words. Many of the children are writing their names recognisably and with capital letters through being given opportunities to trace, copy, paint and make prints of their name. They can hold a pencil correctly and take great pleasure in showing you what they have achieved. Children talk confidently and in considerable detail. Three-year-old children outside building a helicopter talked about what jobs they were doing, what else needed doing and then spent a considerable time discussing whether it would be better to fly to Greece or Spain giving reasons why they preferred a particular country. Good teaching inspired the four-year-olds to make suggestions about what to do to make a sandwich. They clearly and confidently recalled the steps as a result of the very effective instruction and demonstration by the teacher and teaching assistant.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The area of learning is very well-resourced so that children learn to count, use and become familiar with numbers.
- The children achieve very well.

Commentary

36. The majority of pupils will meet the expectations in this area of learning and many will exceed them because of the very good teaching and the way in which no opportunity is missed to promote the children's mathematical understanding. Members of staff make effective use of puppets to motivate and interest the children. For example, a Winnie the witch puppet 'talked' to the children who were able to tell her how much money she will have left when she has bought a new magic wand and how much less she now has since she started shopping with her 10p. The 'shopkeeper' in the 'fruit shop' counted out the fruit and added amounts up to 10p and gave appropriate change. The more able children in the mixed age class can add accurately beyond 10 and most children are confident with numbers up to 5 and many to 10. The children recognise simple shapes, such as squares and triangles and more complex shapes, such as a pyramid. To help the children, the shape table is full of different sizes of coloured pyramids. All this learning is a consequence of the good and very good teaching, especially the use made of observational assessments by the teaching assistants.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The variety of very good activities that is planned to help the children learn well.
- The very good way the children are encouraged to be independent in their designing and making skills.
- The very good information and communication technology skills of the children.

Commentary

37. The majority of pupils will meet the expectations in this area of learning and many will exceed them because of the very good teaching and support they receive. As in other areas, the very good teaching is characterised by the very good challenging questions that make the children think about what they are doing and trying to achieve. When a group of children are helping plastic fish to escape from a hollow cylinder by adding water, questioning leads to the explanation why it gets more difficult to help the fishes by adding water when more cylinders are added. 'When there are three cylinders the water escapes faster than I can add it. ' When the children are making kites they are given various sizes and pieces of card to choose from and are free to design their own shape. They can decide what decoration they will put on it and what they will use and can also select a number of ways to secure the string. Many of the children are confident in using the computers. They control the mouse reasonable well and can explain what the icons are on a phonic program, say what they will do and then select them appropriately.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the hall sessions to build the children's confidence, skill and body control.
- A good range of activities help to develop the children's dexterity.
- There is limited access to the outdoor play area in the nursery in the afternoons.

Commentary

38. The children are on line to meet the expectations in this learning area and many will exceed them. The children use large apparatus in the hall confidently showing a good understanding of their own capabilities and a willingness to experiment and find new ways to use it. Most children have a good control of their movements. Throughout all the areas of learning, good opportunities are planned to enable the children to develop their manipulative skills and a good emphasis is placed on developing their dexterity. When making puppets, scissors are carefully used to cut out the shapes and the puppet's eyes are carefully placed and glued. In the afternoons, fewer children attend the nursery and the subsequent reduction in staff means in it is not possible to have safe, continuous access to the outdoor play area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning.
- The children achieve well because of the very good teaching and the high, challenging expectations set by the staff.

Commentary

39. The children are in line to meet the expectations in this learning area and many will exceed them. Very good opportunities are provided to develop imaginative role-play and the adults, through skilful questions, encourage the children to develop their play and extend their imaginative situations. For example, the 'fruit shop keeper' went into a lot of details about what had been the bestsellers that day when prompted through a question. When using Guy Fawkes as the starting point for dance, the children are good at linking their movements to the

music as they weave their way through the streets first as Guy Fawkes, then as Guy Fawkes and his shadow. The children have a good knowledge of colour and enjoy painting and printing which they do well and with considerable care. The quality of teaching is very good. Very effective questioning and innovative interpretation of exciting creative activities means that children are very productive and keen to learn.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- The subject is very well led.
- Actions taken to improve boys' achievement have been successful.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well.
- Assessment and record keeping are very good.

Commentary

40. The results of the 2003 national tests showed that Year 2 pupils achieved well above average standards in reading and writing compared to similar schools and all schools nationally. Girls still achieve slightly better than boys in writing, but the difference overall is much less than it was two years ago as a result of the effective steps to help raise boys' achievement. Standards in lessons are above average by Year 2 and Year 4. Standards in speaking and listening are good. Year 4 pupils, for example, showed good skill levels as they discussed play scripts with confidence, took on roles and used technical vocabulary accurately. American pupils sometimes stay for a short time in the school and may have had no or little pre-school experience prior to coming to the school. Nevertheless, they make good progress as a result, partly, of their good attitudes to learning.
41. The teaching of basic skills is very good. Learning objectives are shared with pupils as well as being displayed. In effective lessons, the teacher returns to these to help keep pupils on task and to remind them what they are learning. Good encouragement to pupils to contribute in whole class lessons effectively contributes to their learning. Good assessment records for guided reading help teaching assistants supporting guided reading groups. The weekly assessment targets mean that there is a strong focus to the guided reading in some classes, covering attitudes to reading, grammatical awareness, interpretation, and the use of context and phonic understanding. Pupils also have individual reading targets. All these worthwhile initiatives are having a good impact on pupils' learning in the classes in which they are used regularly. Targets to encourage pupils to achieve even more are lacking in challenge in Year 4 where the presentation of work is sometimes unsatisfactory.
42. Leadership of the subject is very good. Several innovative strategies have been introduced to improve writing. A regular writing assembly is organised by the subject leader. For example, the editor of the local paper spoke to the whole school about her job. Afterwards, all pupils had to produce a newspaper report. Year 3 pupils used the computers to design their reports and others learned how to use headlines and to write crisp reports. This activity resulted in a much richer range of writing around the school and much less use of worksheets. There has been insufficient monitoring of the subject in recent years by the subject leader because of other priorities. Consequently, the areas of weaker teaching are not as well supported as they should be. The subject leader is aware this is an area for improvement. Key priorities for the subject

are to improve the quality of the presentation of pupils' work and further improve boys' reading and writing.

43. The attitudes and interest shown by boys has improved. Books and writing activities to interest boys have been introduced. The headteacher works with targeted groups of pupils. Learning objectives are clearer and the results of a survey completed by the subject leader have all contributed to improvements in standards. The impact of all these actions has led to good improvement since the last inspection. Information and communication technology is used to support practice in basic skills reasonably frequently.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Good use is made of literacy skills to support descriptive and report writing in history. There are no planned opportunities to do this in other subjects at present.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 4.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject is well led.
- Assessment arrangements are good, although the marking of pupils' work is not as good.

Commentary

45. The 2003 national tests results showed that Year 2 pupils achieved well above average compared to similar school nationally, which is a good improvement on the previous year's results. Standards in lessons are not as high as this but they are above average by Year 2 and Year 4. The underachievement of higher attaining pupils identified at the time of the last inspection has been eradicated. Improvements have been achieved to some extent as a result of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Brisk lessons, especially the oral and mental starters, provide higher attaining pupils with a good level of challenge. For example, they tackled double digit divisions and understood how to use co-ordinates in the first quadrant. Investigative approaches to the subject are now more common-place. At times, pupils are grouped on the basis of their prior attainment to provide more challenging activities.
46. Teaching and learning are good. Good use is made of the programme of work to plan activities for pupils of different abilities. Teaching assistants are having a good impact, especially when they assess pupils' responses in oral and mental sessions and work with small groups. Oral and mental sessions are generally well organised, have a brisk pace and challenge pupils well. At times, this session can be too long which leads to pupils losing concentration and having insufficient time to complete independent work. Good use is made of games to consolidate learning in the review session. An increase in investigational and practical work means that less attention is given to the presentation of work which leads to unnecessary errors. Information and communication technology is used to enhance learning. For instance, Year 2 pupils were helped to develop their understanding of the properties of various numbers through the use of the interactive whiteboard.
47. The subject is well led. The subject leader has quickly realised how important it is to analyse assessment data. As a result, there is an effective tracking system in place that shows the rate of progress made by groups of pupils and importantly identifies those pupils in need of additional support to help them to improve their work. Observations of teaching have taken

place and teachers have been given written feedback. This has had a good impact on the quality of teaching which is better now than it was at the last inspection.

48. Assessment is good overall. The progress of individual pupils is tracked. Review sessions are used effectively to check what pupils have learned orally. Pupils' work is marked, although this is not yet fully effective as pupils rarely know what they need to do to improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. Links with science are sound. Pupils are given the opportunity to record their findings in graphical form. The use of time lines in history is strong; they become increasingly complex as the pupils get older.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The specialist teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good.
- Lower-attaining pupils have effective support and, as a result, achieve well.
- Assessment and its use are good.
- Information and communication technology is used insufficiently to support work in science.

Commentary

50. The results of the 2003 teacher assessments showed that standards by Year 2 were well above average. Pupils in Year 4 are likely to achieve above the expected standards by the end of the year. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because of the good teaching and support they receive that ensures they are fully involved in their work and able to complete the tasks.
51. The quality of teaching varies from good to unsatisfactory. In an unsatisfactory lesson, too much time was taken up with the introduction and although what the pupils had to do was appropriate, they were given too much time to do it and the lesson lacked pace. As a result they became restless and the quality of the work was not good enough. However, teaching and learning are good overall. A good feature is the use of specialist teaching in Years 3 and 4 which is having a good impact on the pupils' quality of learning and their achievement.
52. The teachers have a good subject knowledge, lessons are well planned and there is a good insistence that the correct scientific terms are used; pupils mostly do this confidently. Good opportunities are provided across the school for pupils to carry out experiments but there are few opportunities for pupils, particularly the more able, to plan their own investigations. There is little evidence that ICT is used in any regular or systematic way to support teaching and learning.
53. There have been several improvements since the last inspection:
- Planning is now good and the two-year rolling programme ensures that all parts of the subject are taught to the mixed-age classes.
 - Assessment is good and used well to plan work and track pupils' progress.
 - The subject manager gives a clear direction to the subject.
54. There remain some areas for development:
- The monitoring of teaching needs to be more frequent.
 - Presentation in some books is untidy and not good enough.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**. Although standards are average, achievement could be better.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been satisfactory improvements in standards since the last inspection.
- The pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- The teaching of ICT skills is not always as effective as it could be.
- More use could be made of ICT to develop work in other subjects.

Commentary

55. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. By Year 2, pupils can open a program using the mouse, save a file and open a previously saved file with reasonable levels of skill. They are confident in the use of an art program to draw and save their work. The level of challenge in the work completed by older pupils is less secure and achievement is limited. Most of the teaching in the suite is by an untrained member of staff who, although willing to learn, lacks the necessary skills to extend pupils' learning and, as a result, pupils make limited progress. A recently introduced scheme of work is effectively ensuring there is continuity and progression through the school, although the times allocated for individual classes to use the computers make it unlikely that the scheme of work for each year will be covered. Use of the two mini suites at the same time has not been explored and would go some way to addressing the limited time pupils spend using computers.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. The use of the subject to support learning in other subjects is limited to English, mathematics and some use of a research program in Year 4. The recently acquired interactive whiteboard is a good resource but as yet the members of staff are not confident in its use and need training in this.

HUMANITIES

57. In humanities, work was sampled in **geography**, as only one lesson was observed. It is not therefore possible to form an overall judgement about provision in this subject. From the lesson observed and the pupils' work available there is every indication that standards are above average and improved since the last inspection. Year 1 pupils learned how to view a map from a 'bird's eye' point of view and to see that three-dimensional buildings are represented as flat. They understand that features in the environment may be fixed or temporary. Religious education was not inspected.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by Years 2 and 4.
- There is some very good teaching and learning.
- A good programme of work is enriched by trips to museums, places of historical interest and a range of visitors.

- There are very good assessment procedures but teachers' marking of work offers pupils few hints for ways to improve.

Commentary

58. Standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils in Year 4 now achieve levels which are above average. A thorough programme of work has been introduced since the last inspection and this has helped to ensure that pupils' skills are systematically developed and that nearly all pupils achieve well. Pupils develop their sense of chronology through the use of quite detailed timelines and older pupils are able to locate various civilisations quite accurately in time. Year 4 pupils have a wealth of detailed knowledge, for example, of Saxon dyeing techniques. They make interpretations of life in the past through studies of artefacts.
59. The subject is organised on a two year rolling programme so that all pupils experience the full curriculum. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and there is some very good teaching. Teachers adopt a very lively approach to history, enriching the programme with visits to local museums and places of interest and through visits from theatre groups and speakers. In a very good lesson for Year 4 pupils, the teacher dressed up to play the role of a Saxon woman and held the pupils entranced with her detailed knowledge, use of artefacts and the skilful use of questions to challenge their thinking. Pupils had the opportunity to spin and dye material themselves later in the lesson.
60. The school is beginning to make good use of teachers' specialist skills so, for example, the history co-ordinator teaches history to classes in Years 3 and 4. Teachers make good use of history to support skills in other areas, particularly literacy, pupils throughout the school being given opportunities to write their own accounts using a variety of styles, rather than merely completing worksheets. Aspects of assessment are very good. Teachers keep quite detailed notes on the extent of pupils' learning and older pupils have assessment tasks, which are closely evaluated to assess the standards they reach. One aspect of assessment not so well covered is the marking of pupils' work in their books. Marking is often perfunctory and there are few examples of teachers' suggestions on how pupils might improve their learning or extend their studies. There are a few examples of pupils using computers to help their research but this remains an area for further development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

61. There was not enough evidence to report on any of these subjects in full, apart from physical education. In **art and design**, an examination of the good range of work and the teachers' planning shows that standards are above average and achievement is good. The curriculum is well covered. Techniques and skills are developed in a systematic way and are used to help the pupils respond to a variety of stimuli. In Year 1, there are some good observational drawings of fruit. Year 4 pupils drew wax and paint pictures based on the Hippocrump poem. They show good detailed emphasis on the eyes, some of which had a piercing quality to them. The pupils' paintings show a good use of colour and the ability to mix colour well. The finish is good and well -controlled. There is some evidence of computers being used to support art and design work but they are not used consistently. These standards represent good improvement since the previous inspection.
62. No lessons were seen in **design and technology**. An examination of work on display, pupils' previous design plans and teachers' planning show that standards are good and the curriculum fully covered. A good range of materials is used by the pupils with a suitable emphasis on the finish of the product they are making. In some classes, the design process and evaluation of the finished product are good and feature prominently in class displays. For example, Year 2 pupils designed and made picture frames. The frames were well made and there was good attention to the finished product.

63. Only one lesson was observed in **music** in Year 1 though the whole school was heard singing in assembly and the choir was observed during a lunch-time break. The singing was good and mostly unaccompanied. The words were clear, the pitch well controlled and the pupils were having an enjoyable time. School concerts, performances in church supporting worship and in the wider local community contribute to the pupils' overall musical and personal development. Apart from a recorder group, there is no other instrumental teaching.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by Years 2 and 4.
- There are a good range of learning opportunities, including swimming, supported by out of school clubs and competitive sporting occasions.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Facilities are good.

Commentary

64. Standards have improved since the last inspection and standards are above average by Year 4. Pupils work collaboratively, interpreting music in a sequence of high quality, expressive movements. Year 3 pupils followed through a sequence of controlled movements, moving fluently between balanced and travelling actions. Pupils achieve levels in swimming close to those expected of pupils by Year 6. This is good achievement.
65. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use the good programme of work to plan lessons thoroughly, ensuring a careful progression in the development of pupils' skills. Good planning also ensures that lessons proceed at a good pace and that pupils have a good level of physical activity. Teachers dress appropriately for lessons, emphasising the importance of the subject, and setting an example followed by virtually all pupils. Good management techniques mean that pupils, of all abilities, concentrate and achieve well. Teachers demonstrate well, showing good quality movements. They make good use of pupils' demonstrations, evaluating pupils' performance for the benefit of others. However, opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance and then incorporate ideas to improve it are relatively rare.
66. A good range of extra-curricular clubs including football, tae-kwon-do and country dancing enriches the programme for physical education. Pupils also have the opportunity to represent their school at football, cross-country and athletics and so are able to develop their skills in competitive situations. Physical education is well used to support work in other areas. Teachers constantly try to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. A Year 2 pupil asked how it felt when he was in a tightly curled position replied it felt like being wrapped in a pillowcase; another likened it to a snail in a shell. Year 4 pupils support their historical studies on invaders and settlers by working on dance routines depicting Roman soldiers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

67. The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is **good**. The school's programme of work is well planned and although personal and social development is timetabled as a discrete subject, a lot of this work is covered in the programme for religious education. The school has appropriate policies for handling matters concerned with sex and relationships and the use of drugs. Pupils are encouraged from an early age to work collaboratively and independently. Activities such as the school council enable its democratically elected members to make decisions involving aspects of school life.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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