

INSPECTION REPORT

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Luton, Bedfordshire

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109640

Headteacher: Mrs Jacqueline Lee

Lead inspector: Mrs Catherine Stokes

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th May 2004

Inspection number: 262158

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: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 345.5

School address: Langford Drive
Luton
Bedfordshire
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr J Horsted

Date of previous inspection: 7/12/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Nearly all pupils attending Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School are baptised Roman Catholics and the majority live in the parish. Until August 2003, when the junior school that was on the same site closed, the school was an infant and nursery school. In September the infant school extended its age range and became a primary school, occupying the two buildings that are about 100 metres apart. There are 356 pupils aged 4 to 11 on roll. Pupils' standard of attainment on entry to the nursery is similar to that of others of their age and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Pupils attend the nursery part-time for the first term after their fourth birthday and then start full-time in a reception class. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 children in the nursery and 44 children in the reception classes. Over three-quarters of the pupils are white. Of the 12 ethnic groups represented in the school, the two largest ones are Irish, one pupil in ten, and Black African, one pupil in 25. Twelve pupils are bilingual. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to most schools. Nine pupils, have a statement of special educational need, which is above average. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2001 when it was an infant school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18173	Catherine Stokes	Lead inspector	Mathematics, physical education
10329	Brian Sampson	Lay inspector	
24137	Gail Robertson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, information and communication technology, personal, social and health education
22704	Gary Williams	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, geography and history
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	18
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with many significant strengths. Under the very effective leadership of the headteacher, the infant school has extended its age range and established a one-school community with a very welcoming and inclusive ethos. It is highly valued by parents. Teaching is good overall and in the subjects inspected in depth pupils reach or exceed average standards by the time they leave school. Pupils enjoy school, they form exceptionally strong relationships, work hard and achieve well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the very effective leadership of the headteacher and deputy, who inspire their colleagues and are very committed to inclusion, to meeting the needs of individuals and to raising standards;
- reading and writing are improving aspects of English and pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills in all year groups;
- pupils who are keen to learn, behave very well and get on very well with others;
- its very high level of care, support and guidance for all pupils;
- the development of very good relationships with parents and the community. Parents are kept very well informed about all aspects of the school and they are regularly involved and consulted;
- both boys and girls are achieving well, although test results show that the standards reached by boys are lower than those of girls;
- some satisfactory teaching lacks pace, excitement and rigour;
- the outdoor play for the youngest pupils is not planned to reflect the requirements of the Early Learning Goals;
- the roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators are not clear enough to meet the new needs of the school as a primary;
- the limited range of extra-curricular activities.

The school has **improved well** since its last inspection. It has been very successful in raising attainment at the higher levels in reading and mathematics, and writing is also improving. Standards and teaching in information and communication technology (ICT) have risen and are now satisfactory. The headteacher, leadership team and governors are fully involved in strategic financial and development planning and budgeting. Standards in science remain average, but pupils have good investigative skills.

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	C	B	C
Writing	C	D	D	E
Mathematics	C	B	B	C

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

There are no results for Year 6 pupils as the school had no pupils of that age in 2003.

Overall, pupils achieve well and the standard of writing has significantly improved this year. The work seen during the inspection indicates that:

- children in the nursery and reception classes are on course to exceed the national standards (the Early Learning Goals) in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. In all other areas they are likely to meet the goals;
- by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science and ICT.

Pupils' personal development is very good. Behaviour is also very good and **relationships are excellent** at all levels, everyone is fully included. The school stimulates pupils' desire to learn and they respond with enthusiasm and excitement. Pupils are punctual to lessons and their attendance is satisfactory. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Pupils' spiritual development is fostered well and their moral development is excellent. Pupils know right from wrong, are responsible and totally trustworthy. There is a strong Catholic ethos.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good overall. Temporary teachers have started work in the reception classes this term and, with the able support of additional staff, are ensuring that children make a happy start to their school life. In all other year groups, there is some good or very good teaching particularly in English and mathematics where teachers have expertise. As a result, pupils make good progress and are achieving well. In tests girls are outperforming boys in English and science though no evidence of this was seen in class. Skilled teaching assistants support teaching well. The school has effective systems for tracking pupils' progress from year to year but marking and individual target setting varies from class to class. The curriculum is satisfactory, but the range of extra-curricular activities is limited. The outside play area for the youngest children is not exciting and its use needs to be better planned in order to encourage children's curiosity and enquiry skills. Care and support are very good; pupils are actively involved in the school's work. Links with parents and the community are also very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, who is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, is a highly proficient leader and manager. The governing body, headteacher and other key staff work effectively together driving to raise standards and to establish a whole school approach for the enlarged school. The school is inclusive, supportive and secure for all.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the school and believe it is very well led. They find it approachable and their children are happy at school. Some parents would like more extra-curricular activities. Most pupils say they are expected to work hard in lessons, that there is always someone to go to when they need help, and that teachers are firm but fair.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- take action to help boys attain higher standards;
- use the good practice already in the school to raise the quality of teaching where it is only satisfactory;
- in the Foundation Stage provide more planned outdoor play that reflects the requirements of the Early Learning Goals;
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators to meet the new needs of the school as a primary;
- increase the range of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are good and pupils achieve well. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science and ICT (information and communication technology).

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are rising.
- Throughout the school pupils read well and their speaking and listening skills are of a high standard.
- Standards in science and ICT are average though pupils have good investigative skills in science and use computers confidently.
- Although both boys and girls achieve well, test results show standards are higher for girls than boys in English and science.
- Pupils make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

1. Children enter the nursery with attainment generally similar to others of their age, though they have good speaking skills and their personal and social development is also good. In the nursery and reception classes they achieve satisfactorily, becoming confident, independent learners who enjoy taking part in activities, and who know how to work collaboratively and co-operatively with others. They have good imaginations and use them well in all their play and creative activities. Children have good control of their bodies so they are able to move with confidence, control tools such as scissors and shape cutters; and grip pencils, paintbrushes and crayons correctly. Staff have high expectations of children, encouraging them to behave very well and become independent.

Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage

Standards in relation to the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception in:	
Personal, social and emotional development	Very good
Communication, language and literacy	Satisfactory
Mathematical development	Satisfactory
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Satisfactory
Physical development	Good
Creative development	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

2. In Years 1 and 2 pupils do well, reaching well above average standards in reading and writing and above average standards in mathematics. As the table below shows, inspection judgements are similar to the school's results for mathematics in last year's national tests for seven-year-olds, but in reading and writing there has been a significant improvement. In the national tests the trend has been for reading and mathematics to improve, but writing standards have declined steadily since 2000. Last year pupils attained as well as those in similar schools in reading and mathematics, but well below them in English. This year the school has had a drive to improve writing and the inspection evidence highlights its success.

- Standards in science are average with a strength in pupils' investigative skills. Last year teachers' assessments showed that a higher proportion of pupils achieved the expected level than did so nationally, but the proportion achieving Level 3 was below average. Inspection evidence shows that this year more pupils are attaining the higher level.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.8 (15.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.8 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.4 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The school moved to primary status in September 2003 so there were no Year 6 pupils in school for the national tests and there is no comparative information for earlier years from tests or a previous inspection report. Inspection evidence shows that pupils reach well above average standards in English, above average standards in mathematics and average standards in science. The school has set challenging statutory targets for pupils and is on track to meet them. Achievement is good overall.
- Analysis of the test results for Years 2 to 6 shows that overall girls are attaining better than boys in English and science, though overall there appears to be no significant difference in mathematics. In lessons, girls and boys all achieved well and no significant difference was seen. Teachers directed questions to all pupils and ensured they all took part. The school is aware of this difference in test results and has recognised the need to take action.
- Standards are rising in ICT and are now average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were below average in Year 2. The introduction of a computer suite and the good support and guidance provided for teachers, leading to improved confidence and competence, have been key factors in making the improvements. No other subjects are reported fully because insufficient teaching was seen. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. They are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants, who plan in detail for them. Pupils are proud of their achievements and are fully included in lessons.
- Language, literacy and mathematics are promoted well across the curriculum. Pupils successfully write at length in subjects such as history and science. They write detailed reports and accounts, and their speaking skills are enhanced well through class discussions, drama and by pupils making presentations to their classmates. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils worked in pairs using computers to prepare revision summaries of topics that they had found difficult and then presented them to the class. Pupils not only learned about the mathematical topics, for instance algebra or area, but also practised their skills in word processing, working collaboratively, explaining clearly and answering questions from listeners. All teachers plan these good opportunities, though they are not always carried through so effectively.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good** throughout the school. Relationships are **excellent** at all levels and everyone is fully included and supported. The school stimulates pupils' desire to learn and they respond with enthusiasm and excitement. Levels of attendance are **satisfactory**. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The caring ethos of the school promotes excellent relationships, confidence and harmony amongst pupils and staff.
- Pupils love coming to school and are very proud of their work.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils work hard and respond enthusiastically to the school's very high expectations.
- The personal development of the pupils is very good; the school succeeds very well in developing pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural qualities.
- Pupils are confident and have a high level of self-esteem.

Commentary

8. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good and parents agree that this is the case. This is an even better picture than the one described in the previous report. All pupils are very well behaved. They are polite and treat all adults with respect. Pupils behave very well because they want to do so for themselves and their teachers. Pupils reported "teachers are firm, but fair, they help us as much as possible with problems, everyone is treated the same. They help us grow up and we will be like it as teenagers". In their questionnaire, pupils said that they liked the school and knew that the teachers would help them. Pupils quite happily take on responsibility and are confident enough to give their ideas to the staff. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection.
9. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are excellent. This has a positive impact on their learning. Pupils are very happy and secure and enjoy school life. The school stimulates pupils' desire to learn and they respond with enthusiasm and excitement. Pupils enjoy the challenges of learning and their confidence and self-esteem are enhanced when they do well and given praise by their teacher and acknowledgement in assembly.
10. Pupils are encouraged to participate in all school activities. There is a well-established school council for pupils in the juniors. Pupils from each class are selected by their peers and meet regularly. They make suggestions about improvements. The head teacher and staff seriously consider all their ideas. Pupils are proud of the improvements, which include refreshing the toilets, improving the playground environment, and in particular the junior library project. There are opportunities for the pupils to take on jobs in the classroom. Pupils willingly volunteer and take the responsibility very seriously. In addition, Year 6 pupils all have a chance to be prefects and ensure playtimes and lunchtimes operate smoothly.
11. Pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils know right from wrong, are responsible and totally trustworthy. These qualities are promoted from a very early age. Pupils' social and cultural development is very good. They are encouraged to see themselves as part of the school community where everyone has a responsibility to others. Staff are very good role models for pupils. At present the school is developing ideas to bring the infants and juniors closer together. Junior pupils reported that they liked being part of a primary school, but they wished to have more contact with the infants than just the occasional assembly time. Pupils have a very good appreciation of cultural diversity. The school offers an environment that promotes an appreciation of, and great respect for, the world around them. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered well through an enthusiasm for learning, religious education and their acts of worship.

Attendance

12. Pupils are eager to come to school and parents make sure their children attend regularly. They are conscientious about letting the school know the reason when their children are absent, so it is very rare for office staff to have to find out the reasons for unexplained absence. Registration is prompt and families make every effort to get to school on time. Pupils' good punctuality and regular attendance means they can achieve well, because they miss very little learning time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	6.4
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.0
National data:	0.4

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

Exclusions

There were no exclusions in 2002/03.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is **good**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. There is a limited range of extra-curricular activities. The school provides very high levels of care. Links with parents and the community are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. It is good overall in Years 1 to 6 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. The use of assessment is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and teaching assistants have good questioning skills.
- Teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils to work productively and to persevere when work is difficult.
- Teaching staff ensure they include all pupils in lessons and adapt tasks well to match pupils' individual needs.
- In satisfactory lessons, teaching lacks pace, excitement and rigour.
- The assessment and target setting procedures are inconsistent between classes.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	8 (16%)	23 (47%)	17 (35%)	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.

13. Teaching is stronger overall in the Years 1 and 2 classes because it is more challenging overall. There is also some good or very good teaching in all year groups in Key Stage 2, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers have received thorough training in these subjects which shows in their teaching, especially in the way they plan and structure the lessons so pupils make good progress in these subjects.
14. The staff in the nursery and reception classes ensure that children make a happy start to their school life. The two reception teachers have stepped temporarily into their roles this term though the school hopes to appoint permanent teachers from September. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants ably support them and all have the same high expectations of children's behaviour.

15. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of children, encouraging them to work productively and to persevere even when they find work difficult. This starts from the beginning, for instance, a Year 1 teacher used strategies such as giving hesitant pupils thinking time or referring them to learning prompts displayed on the wall, but still expected them all to work their way through and answer her questions. Pupils rise to the challenge and are motivated well by the success they achieve. In this way, pupils grow in confidence so that when a Year 6 teacher sets a challenging question for the lower attaining groups, pupils confidently choose to try it, persevering until they succeed. The same enjoyment of a challenge was seen with the highest attaining pupils in Year 6 when they worked through a mathematical quiz on the computer.
16. Staff have received training in questioning techniques and use them skilfully to encourage and challenge pupils and help them to clarify their ideas and think more deeply. They also encourage pupils to follow their model and ask good questions of their own. Reception pupils use 'what' 'who' and 'why' questions to sustain conversation and older pupils frame sensible questions for research.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The staff work well with pupils individually and in groups and support them successfully when they join whole class lessons. Work is carefully adapted to meet their needs and pupils are able to describe how they are progressing. Pupils' individual learning plans are clear, precise and well linked to lesson plans.
18. Throughout the school, staff expect pupils to behave very well, providing a caring environment in which they make friends and work happily together. Teachers promote this co-operation well by setting work for pupils to do together. They also promote plenty of discussion, effectively reinforcing pupils' good speaking and listening skills. Common shortcomings in lessons which were only satisfactory lessons were a lack of pace so that pupils went off task, a lack of excitement and a failure to carry through what was planned with sufficient rigour.
19. Twice a year the school makes formal assessments of pupils' achievement so that it can track the progress of all pupils in the English, mathematics and science. This assessment information is used well to set overall targets for year groups and to identify pupils who may need additional help. In other subjects, assessment procedures are not yet secure and consistent throughout the school. In physical education, for instance, teachers in Years 1 and 2 record detailed information about children's achievements, but in Years 3 to 6 no systematic assessments have been agreed. Day-to-day assessment, though satisfactory overall, is also inconsistent. In some classes, marking helps pupils to improve their work by giving guidance and targets, whereas in others though work is marked pupils do not receive the same helpful guidance for improvement. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement and joined an action research project to improve assessment.
20. Both assessment and teaching were good in the last inspection. Comparisons with that judgement are difficult because a significant proportion of the very good teaching was in the Foundation Stage, which now has temporary teachers, and there was no Key Stage 2. This inspection judges assessment to be satisfactory and teaching to be good overall.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum that is enriched with a **satisfactory** range of additional activities. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The curriculum for personal, social and health education is good.
- There is good use of literacy across the curriculum.

- The range of extra-curricular activities is limited.
- Outside play in the Foundation Stage could be improved.
- There is no overall co-ordination of the curriculum.

Commentary

21. The school is sensitive to the needs of individual pupils, and teachers are committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are involved in all that the school offers. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and prepares pupils well for the next stage of education. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils receive good support from teachers and classroom assistants that enables them to succeed alongside others in the class. The withdrawal of pupils for group or individual work is carefully planned so that they do not miss the same subject on the days on which they are out of their classroom. Individual education plans are very precise and indicate clearly what pupils with special educational needs should learn next.
22. The school's emphasis on promoting pupils' personal, social and health education, and its teaching about the importance of living and working together, successfully reflects its values. Visitors into the school help the pupils to develop a greater awareness of the world in which they live and the diverse nature of our multi-cultural society. Health related issues also form a regular part of the curriculum and of the pupils' work in science. Pupils have regular, planned opportunities to develop greater self-awareness and confidence by talking over a wide range of general issues and those that they face as part of everyday life. These arrangements successfully encourage the pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour.
23. Literacy skills are used well in other areas of the curriculum. The majority of lessons begin with a session that revisits the work done earlier. During these sessions teachers use good questioning skills to encourage the pupils to talk about what they already know about the subject they are studying. Pupils in Year 2 confidently discussed the textures of building material they had looked at in their earlier lesson. They used words to describe the feel of the bricks and the wood before moving onto the task for the lesson which was to create a pattern. In Year 1, pupils are growing beans as part of their science work and as the beans grow they are keeping a bean diary giving them the opportunity to write with real purpose.
24. A good range of visits and visitors successfully promotes pupils' interest, learning and enthusiasm for school. Visits include a residential trip for pupils in Year 4 which makes a valuable contribution to their personal development as well as extending learning in subjects such as geography and physical education. Visitors include the anti-bullying 'Roadshow' and an author and an illustrator, who visited pupils in Year 2 during the inspection. Although the curriculum is enhanced in a number of different ways, there are a limited range of extra-curricular activities available to the pupils at lunchtime and after school. The school needs to review the provision and seek ways in which it can extend opportunities for more groups to meet across a variety of interests.
25. Although the Foundation Stage children have a large outdoor area, the provision is limited and needs to be extended so that it matches the areas of learning. For example, although there are opportunities for role play within the classroom, there is little in the way of provision outside to encourage this to develop. Some activities need to be planned so that the adults are much more involved in the play and there is a clear purpose to it rather than just giving the children the opportunity to use the various toys and items of equipment.
26. At present there is no overall co-ordination of the curriculum. The school has recognised that as innovations begin to take place in individual curriculum areas it would be of benefit to have someone with an overview of what was happening. They would help to monitor the balance between the core subjects and the foundation subjects, and to identify where subjects could support each other or become more closely linked.

27. The accommodation provides satisfactory facilities for teaching and learning and, although currently there is no library for the older pupils, building work is in hand and this will soon be rectified. The school works hard to overcome the problem of two separate buildings and, since September, has been successful in developing a whole-school ethos.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a **very high level** of care, support and guidance for all pupils. There are **very good** procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety, and for providing support, advice and guidance for them that is based on monitoring. Procedures are also **very good** for seeking, valuing and acting upon pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The child protection and health and safety procedures have significantly improved since the last inspection and are now very good.
- Pupils have very good access to well-informed support and advice.
- Pupils are confident that there is always a trustworthy adult to turn to for help.
- Induction arrangements are very good.
- The pupils say that their views are sought and valued and their suggestions acted upon.
- Very caring and efficient induction procedures help children to start in the nursery with confidence.
- There are broken slabs in the path between the school buildings which are a potential health and safety hazard.

Commentary

28. Several of these aspects have improved since the previous inspection and now, overall, enhance the success of the pupils' learning considerably. All pupils are looked after very well and this is a significant strength of the school. There are very effective child protection procedures and all staff are now regularly brought up to date with them, remedying a weakness found in the last inspection. There is very good liaison with local social services.
29. All decisions about health and safety are based on regular, rigorous risk assessments to ensure that pupils and adults work in a safe and hazard-free environment, this also remedies a weakness in the previous inspection. The school is aware that there are broken slabs in the path between the two buildings, which makes it a potential health and safety hazard. Teachers and support staff work together to secure pupils' welfare. Very good use is made of the police, school nurse and other various outside professional help. The Internet Safety Policy is effective and approved of by parents.
30. All pupils are confident that they have someone to whom they can turn for advice and consolation and there is a trained welfare person in each area. The pupils set their own targets, particularly in Years 2 and 6. In the Foundation Stage children and parents are fully informed about the targets. Targets, including those for national tests, are also discussed and set at annual report meetings, which children and parents attend together.
31. Home visits are made before the children join school. Then, parents are shown around the school on their own followed by a visit with their child. Six weeks after starting school 'settling in', meetings are held to ensure that children are commencing their school life with confidence.
32. The pupils are confident that through the school's council, questionnaires, personal interviews and airing their views generally, the school is taking note of their suggestions. As a result, recently, the children have influenced the refurbishment of their toilets, improvements in playground marking and the purchase of extra indoor play equipment.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good partnership** with parents and the local community. There are **good** links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good information to parents about the standards and progress of their children.
- The school involves its parents very well through seeking, valuing and acting upon their views.
- The school has very good procedures to ensure parents' satisfaction and to deal with any concerns and complaints quickly.
- There are good transfer arrangements with other schools.
- There are no significant weaknesses in this aspect of the school's work.

Commentary

33. From talking to parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in school and from reading returned questionnaires, it is clear that a very high percentage of parents think that this is a good school. The inspection confirms this.
34. All parents receive an updated prospectus and a copy of the annual governors' report. Both documents currently comply with all statutory requirements. In pupils' annual reports, teachers comment on all subjects, saying what a child can do and giving realistic improvement targets. The reports are individual and easy for parents to understand. There are two parent meetings a year, and an invitation to discuss reports. Teachers also hold curriculum evenings when they explain aspects of their work to parents, for example, literacy, national assessment tests and visits out of school. The parents appreciate the very informative and regular newsletters, a specific, curriculum letter every term and the open door nature of the school.
35. The contribution of parents to children's learning is good. The school has many volunteers who help with all subjects of the curriculum, visits out and running football teams. At home parents appreciate the communication offered by the home/school diary. Parents are keen to help their children with projects and topics by going to museums, using the Internet and taking photographs. The school is indebted to its Parent and Teacher Association (The Friends) which has raised considerable funds. Links with parents are now very good and have improved since the previous inspection when they were described as effective.
36. Since changing to primary status, the school has regularly consulted parents to ensure they are fully involved and their views taken into account. It has found parent questionnaires very effective and is taking action on the opinions gathered. As a result, parents are now having a say on what the school's extra-curricular provision should be. The procedure for dealing with complaints is caring and efficient, so concerns rarely need to go further than the head teacher and are usually settled amicably on the spot.
37. Links with the community are very good, having improved significantly since the last inspection, and those with other schools and colleges are good. The church plays a very big part in the children's lives and there are regular school Masses for children, staff and parents. Neighbouring firms help out at Summer Fayres and have sponsored new football kit and playground markings. The pupils regularly support CAFOD, Mission Together and Diabetes UK. At Christmas the pupils entertain elderly people in the locality.
38. Most pupils go on to the same high school and transition arrangements are good. Teachers from the secondary school visit to get to know Year 6 pupils and pupils attend familiarisation days at the high school. A mentor from the high school also works with a small group of pupils throughout Year 6 to ensure they start secondary school confidently. The school is part of a

local cluster of schools and shares professional expertise with them. Trainee teachers and work experience students are welcomed. More significantly, successful arrangements have been organised with a neighbouring special school to enable several pupils from both schools to benefit from shared academic and social experiences.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher, who is particularly well supported by the deputy headteacher, is **very good**. The leadership of the senior management team is **good**. Management throughout the school is **good**. The governing body, led by a committed, competent and professional chair of governors, is efficient.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body, headteacher and staff work well together as an effective and efficient team in their drive to raise standards, within an inclusive, supportive and secure environment.
- The headteacher displays clear vision, is purposeful and committed, and is a highly proficient leader and manager.
- The senior management team is enthusiastic, committed and well focused on school improvement.
- The strategic plan for school improvement is based on accurate self-evaluation and is being implemented with energetic determination.
- The governing body takes an active role in all aspects of the school and is led by a very able chairman

Commentary

39. The headteacher has a very clear and accurate view of what needs to be done to raise standards achieved by the pupils since the school extended its age range in September 2003. Governors and staff of the school share her sense of purpose. The headteacher and deputy headteacher together make a formidable team, whose experience and expertise complement each other. Together they have striven to establish a whole-school approach since the increase in numbers, establishing a committed team from the staff of the two schools and making the most effective use of the two buildings. They have worked to create and maintain an atmosphere of caring, sharing and support for the needs of each person for the benefit of all pupils. There has been full consultation with staff, as there has been with parents and pupils, so that individual staff needs are met and joint approaches agreed.
40. Under the skilled leadership of the headteacher and the fully involved governing body, the school is providing a good quality of education. The senior management team is enthusiastic and committed to fulfilling the ambitions of the whole-school community, including parents and pupils. They share the high expectations of the headteacher, and her determination and commitment to providing education where improving the quality of life for all underpins its philosophy.
41. The subject co-ordinators have a satisfactory understanding of their roles in terms of looking at the standards pupils are achieving, the work that they are covering and the teaching they are receiving. However, whilst for example, the English co-ordinators have worked together, organised staff training, monitored work and successfully driven improvement forward, there has not yet been the opportunity for co-ordinators of some other subjects to work together and develop consistent approaches in the same way. The school has identified this as an area for improvement next year, when five new teachers will be appointed to the team and subject responsibilities will be re-organised. Support and provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is progressing well, though not yet fully embedded, to dovetail the previous systems of the infant and junior schools and to link the work of the two special educational needs co-ordinators.

42. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher collects a great deal of information about how pupils are doing and uses this well to identify the priorities for improvement. Strategic planning is now very good and the improvement plan is significantly improved since the last inspection. It identifies the right priorities and staff and governors are closely involved in developing it and monitoring its impact. Standards of writing are a focus for improvement this year and the inspection finds that standards have risen as a result of the action taken.
43. Governance is good and the governing body is led well so that it works effectively to support and challenge the school. Members of the governing body are well informed and have a good view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and what action needs to be taken. They have a clear understanding of the achievements of the school and decisions made are objective, based on first hand knowledge and their aim to be an inclusive school. Strategic financial planning has also improved since the last inspection. The governors, headteacher and senior management team all play their part effectively and financial planning is closely linked to improvement planning.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

The finances for the year are shown as part year for the infant and junior schools' separate budgets and part year for the primary school. Governors were prudent for the first year whilst the costs of running an enlarged school were carefully assessed, resulting in a large carry forward. Governors have firm plans to spend this, for example on equipping the building that is currently under construction and buying books for the library.

Sacred Heart Infant School April 2003 to August 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	217,143
Total expenditure	186,475
Expenditure per pupil	1,123

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35,972
Balance carried forward	66,640

Sacred Heart Junior School April 2003 to August 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	268,177
Total expenditure	248,311
Expenditure per pupil	1,139

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	4,288
Balance carried forward	24,154

Sacred Heart Primary School September 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	631,062
Total expenditure	661,322
Expenditure per pupil	1,863

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	90,795
Balance carried forward to the next	60,535

44. The school has agreed the recommendations of the most recent audit report (in draft form) and has already identified strategies to implement them. The day-to-day administrative and financial operations are effectively managed by the administrators and bursar, who present a friendly, welcoming and efficient 'front of house' image, which is very much appreciated by parents and visitors alike.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The **good** overall provision in the Foundation Stage has been maintained satisfactorily since the last inspection.

- Children of all ages and abilities, including those with special education needs achieve satisfactorily overall.
 - Curriculum offered is mainly in the classroom; insufficient use is made of the outside environment.
 - Induction arrangements are very good and ensure that the children have a very secure start to their education.
 - Parents are very supportive and appreciate the care the school gives to their children.
 - Leadership and management are good, the co-ordinator has very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage learning.
 - Teaching is satisfactory and nursery nurses and classroom assistants ably support teachers.
45. Children start school by spending a term in the nursery, attending for the mornings only. A qualified nursery nurse and a teaching assistant work with the 19 nursery children. For their second term, children enter full-time into one of the two reception classes. The induction of children to the school is very good and home visits from the staff ensure that the children feel confident about starting school and reassure the parents. From September 2004 there will not be a nursery class – all children will enter reception classes in the September when they are four years old.
46. Children's attainment on entry is average and spans the full range. Because of the teaching, the secure warm atmosphere and the children's own positive attitudes to learning, the children settle quickly and achieve satisfactorily. Children with special educational needs are given good support, and as a result, their achievement is similar to that of their classmates.
47. Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is a balance of activities between adult directed and child chosen ones. Teachers teach basic skills of literacy and numeracy as the year progresses through formally recording activities, so that children are prepared for their work in Year 1. In one reception class there were more structured play activities that promoted literacy and numeracy learning through enjoyment and fun. Teachers and support staff work closely together. Volunteer parent and grandparent helpers regularly support nursery and reception children's learning and children enjoy the experience
48. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Activities in the nursery and reception are purposeful and well prepared to support learning. On occasions too much is planned by the teacher and learning is then rushed. Assessment is satisfactory and information gathered is used to plan further experiences for the children.
49. The Foundation Stage is well led by a keen co-ordinator. She has taken on the role temporarily. She has made major changes to the organisation and management. Both reception teachers at time of inspection were temporary staff, who had only been in the classes for two weeks, replacing two teachers on long-term illness. It is hoped that stability will be resumed in the new academic year so that Foundation Stage will be further developed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children show very good levels of independence and maturity.
- The children achieve very well and respond very well to the high expectations of their teachers.
- The children show very good levels of kindness in their dealings with others. They are well behaved and love coming to school.

Commentary

50. Staff very effectively promote the children's personal, social and emotional development, and are very successful in the way in which they encourage children to become more independent and to take increasing responsibility for aspects of their learning. Teachers and other adults have very high expectations of the children in terms of their behaviour, and the way in which they relate to others, and the children respond very well. All are polite, helpful and enthusiastic in their learning and know and observe the classroom routines and rules. Children throughout the Foundation Stage are very kind and show concern if one gets hurt or doesn't have a friend to play with. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most children have attained well beyond the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development, and are confident, independent learners who enjoy taking part in activities, and who know how to work collaboratively and co-operatively with others. All children will exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn well to become confident speakers and listeners.
- Consistent support by parents at home develops children's good attitudes to books.

Commentary

51. Teachers are good at helping children develop their speaking and listening skills. Nearly all children listen extremely carefully to each other's contribution at the start of the day and at story times, and pay close attention to instructions so they settle to their tasks with confidence, knowing what is expected of them. They are developing good questioning skills, following the very good models set by staff, asking 'what', 'who' and 'why' questions politely, and sustaining sensible conversations. Several write their first names correctly. They are beginning to practise how to write letters properly by copying the teacher's letters and the more able children are learning how to write a sentence helped by their teacher.

52. Most children are effectively developing their reading skills. Children are very keen and willingly take their book bags home each night. They are proud to show the remarks that their parents have written in their home-school diaries. A few children have started to read with adult support. All children enjoy listening to stories. The majority will reach the Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good meaningful links between numeracy and other subjects throughout the school day.
- Children are encouraged well to use mathematical vocabulary properly.

Commentary

53. Teachers are good at promoting children's understanding of mathematics in day-to-day events. For example, during registration and group discussions in class, teachers identify how many are present and absent, recite the days of the week, and draw children's attention to the time. Children learn to count from zero to ten, using their fingers. They count forwards confidently, and are practising counting backwards with increasing accuracy. In the nursery they persevere in matching coloured beads. The teacher helps them to count the number of beads in each set, and identify which is the biggest and smallest. Children in reception enjoy an exciting mathematics game introducing them to the idea of adding one more. This activity helps to develop their personal and social awareness because they work well together, sharing equipment and checking each other's calculations. They use computers well to match numerals and sets, making good and accurate use of the mouse. At the end of the reception year, most children will have achieved the Early Learning Goals.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are curious and ask questions to find out.
- The outside area isn't developed or used well enough to support learning.

Commentary

54. The sound teaching and organisation give children many opportunities so that they learn satisfactorily, developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. The school meets statutory requirements for religious education. Children play and explore confidently and use tools carefully. Many are able to use adhesive neatly and cleanly and can skilfully use the computer mouse. Children's keyboard skills in the reception classes indicate that they are confident for their age in using computers. Teachers plan good opportunities for children to learn through role-play, for instance, in the Beach Café. The classes are well staffed, which allows children to make satisfactory progress because they have the attention they need to guide and help them. Children show interest in learning about their senses as they play in the grounds. However, adults do not consistently extend this. The outside play area is unexciting and does not fully promote children's curiosity and enquiry skills. This impedes their progress. The majority of children will attain the goals for their learning by the end of the reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside play area does not have sufficient challenging apparatus.
- Children's fine hand control is good.

Commentary

55. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are on track to exceed the goals for their learning by the end of the reception year. Children in the reception classes learn to run, stride, walk, jump and turn. They really enjoy controlling their bodies when playing. Nursery children push prams and use their developing physical skills well to construct wooden structures. By the end of the reception year, the children are achieving well overall and are able to move with confidence, show a good awareness of space and have an appropriate understanding of safety. They handle tools such as scissors and shape cutters with increasing control. They have correct hand grip when using pencils, paintbrushes and crayons.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planning of creative development links closely with other areas of learning.
- Staff work closely with the children developing their skills in a very relaxed atmosphere.

Commentary

56. Nursery and reception staff plan good opportunities for children to use their imagination, explore a range of materials, respond to music and express themselves. These are linked to themes and topics, which make them meaningful to these youngsters. For instance, when the children learned about going on holiday, the staff encouraged them to buy ice creams at the imaginary beach kiosk and to paint sea pictures. Good links were encouraged with other areas of learning such as communication, language and literacy. For example, the children were provided with paper and telephone to write receipts make phone calls to order provisions at the Beach Café. Children love to sing and play instruments. In the nursery they made their own shakers and listened attentively to the recorded sound they made.

57. Resources are all clearly labelled and made accessible to the children. This enables them to progress in their learning and develop independent skills. Children's imagination is very good and they use this well in all play and creative activities. The majority will reach the Early Learning Goals and some exceed them at the end of the reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above average.
- Standards in writing have been successfully raised.
- Literacy skills are used well in other areas of the curriculum.
- Target setting and marking of pupils' work are inconsistent.
- Expectations need to be raised for boys.

Commentary

58. Year 2 pupils performed well in the 2003 national tests in reading, with standards above national averages and in line with similar schools. In writing, standards were below the national average and well below similar schools. There are no comparable statistics for Year 6 as the school only acquired Years 3 to 6 in September 2003. Findings from the inspection indicate that standards are well above the national average in reading and writing in Year 2. This indicates a good improvement since the time of the last inspection. Standards are also well above average in English in Year 6 and pupils are achieving well.
59. Standards in writing have been successfully raised during the last year. The school identified this as an area for improvement in all year groups and the two co-ordinators focused on raising standards in writing. They provided a very good lead and managed the subject well. Every aspect of writing was monitored and evaluated and an action plan put in place. Opportunities for extended writing were identified as being limited within the existing literacy hour and so specific time was planned into the timetable where this could be developed.
60. The work pupils produced in their literacy books was monitored to ensure they were covering all the different aspects of writing and the results of this scrutiny were reported to the governors. Folders containing assessed pieces of writing were piloted in order to track the progress pupils were making. Targets have been introduced for pupils and parents informed of the targets set for their children. In every classroom, the emphasis in displays is on good writing in a variety of styles. The writing action plan will continue into 2005, but already it is having a significant impact. In Year 6, pupils produced a newspaper report on four missing people. Using a writing planner, they worked with a partner to produce a vibrant and interesting report. They had a clear understanding of the essential elements of a report and their work was of high quality. Year 2 pupils had been looking at the story of Jack and the Beanstalk and were writing an invitation to the giant to come to tea. Writing for a purpose, or writing linked to another activity such as a story, is giving the task a real meaning and driving up standards.
61. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are above average and pupils achieve well. Speaking and listening skills are used well at the beginning of lessons to talk about earlier work and set the scene for the tasks to follow. Before writing a letter from the boy to his mother explaining how he had got so dirty, pupils in Year 1 shared ideas with each other and discussed what they were going to write. Reading skills are widely used to encourage pupils to read out aloud to the whole class, encouraging confidence, clear diction and the ability to put expression into their reading. Older pupils show a high standard of reading when asked to read paragraphs out of 'The Journal of Gloria Arkwright'. By encouraging reading in a variety of contexts the standards are being continually improved and pupils see a real purpose to the activity. Writing is used well in a number of other curriculum areas to extend the range of writing the pupils cover. In science pupils produce a design for a new hair dryer and then use

their skills in persuasive writing to put together an advertisement for the product that will encourage people to buy it. History is a subject that lends itself to the development of writing, pupils write accounts of the lives of people such as Henry VIII and recall what life was like in Victorian times. In art, investigations into the lives of great artists such as Picasso are recorded in their sketchbooks to provide a working background to their works of art. By using the pupils' literacy skills in a variety of ways they become increasingly confident and the quality and standard of their work improves.

62. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school. Lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives, resources are identified and key words for the lesson are clearly stated. Work for pupils of different abilities is planned into the lesson and the responsibilities of support staff identified. Pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes have a positive effect on their progress. Although target setting has been introduced to help pupils to raise the standard of their work it varies from year group to year group. Where it is done well, the pupils' targets appear in the front of their literacy books, and when the teachers mark the pupils' work, they indicate very clearly in which areas the pupils can make improvements in their next piece of work, and the progress they are making towards their targets. There are, however, year groups where the targets do not appear and when work is marked it receives only a tick or a supportive comment such as 'Well done' or 'A good piece of work'. The school needs to ensure that there is consistency in the marking and target setting through all age groups and build on the good practice that exists in a number of classes.
63. Although standards have improved for both boys and girls, the girls are still performing at a higher level than the boys are. Some work has already been done in Year 6 to find texts and pieces of work that appeal more to the boys and this needs to be extended further. Preliminary investigations reveal that the boys enjoy writing of a more factual nature and if this is found to be the case then this is an area for future development. In lessons, there was no evidence of the boys performing at a lower level than girls, but statistics from test results show that this is the case. The school needs to carry out further investigations to find the cause of this discrepancy in the results.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. Teachers actively seek opportunities to develop all aspects of literacy and, as described above, this is a strength of the school's work. All teachers plan opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills. Pupils' speaking skills are promoted well, through drama, class discussions and by pupils making presentations to their classmates. Pupils' good reading skills enable them to conduct effective research, using both books and the Internet.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and a higher proportion than in most schools are attaining the higher levels.
- Improvements in national test results at Key Stage 1 have been better than the national trend.
- Teachers have confidence in mathematics and use their expertise to plan well structured lessons, to give clear explanations and to question pupils effectively demanding the most from them.
- Target setting and marking of pupils' work are inconsistent.

Commentary

65. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment are above average at both Years 2 and 6 and a higher proportion of pupils than in most schools are attaining the higher levels. The standards are higher than at the last inspection and the needs of higher attaining pupils are being met well. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection, when too few pupils in Year 2 attained Level 3. The 2003 test results show that pupils reach above average standards and achieve as well as in similar schools. This is the first year the school has had junior age pupils so there are no previous inspection or national test results for comparison.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers encourage and challenge pupils and, as a result, they work hard and acquire knowledge at a good rate. Many staff have had extended training in the teaching of mathematics which has given them confidence and expertise. They use this well to structure lessons. Staff have had training on questioning techniques and now teachers and teaching assistants use questions skilfully. Through questions they encourage and challenge pupils, helping them sort out ideas and take forward their thinking. Teachers ensure there is good emphasis on mental calculation throughout lessons and on the variety of methods children could use to solve the same problem. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher expected pupils to explain the addition strategy they were using e.g. counting on from the largest number and then to try a different approach e.g. using doubles or near doubles. Throughout the school, pupils are expected to be aware of the strategies they are using and to explain their calculations. They are able to do this very well.
67. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively, sometimes in groups and sometimes in one to one situations. Teaching assistants adapt the work where necessary and are thoughtful about the activities they provide so that pupils are interested and keen to learn. Occasionally, teachers have not thought through with the teaching assistant the best approach to the activity they have planned, slowing the pace so children do not cover as much as they could in the time.
68. Pupils are set in the junior school and this arrangement works well. Teachers successfully plan work on similar topics at different levels of demand for pupils. This ensures that the work is covered at the right level for all pupils and they are able to keep up with their peers. Analysis of test results shows that overall there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls: no difference was seen in lessons.
69. Pupils behave very well. From Year 1 they are good independent learners and also co-operate well in small groups. This has a significant impact on their ability to learn and the variety of tasks that teachers can set. Homework is linked to work undertaken in class. Though most work is marked and there are some supportive comments the quality of marking is inconsistent and in some classes pupils gain little from it. Similarly, target setting is inconsistent. In some classes pupils know the targets they are working towards but in others pupils are not clear what they should be working towards next. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There are effective arrangements for evaluating the progress of classes and year groups and the recently appointed co-ordinator has identified that further improvement can be made in assessing the progress made by individual pupils during the year.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is good. Pupils use graphs and tables and measure accurately in science, for instance recording the distance vehicles travelled when investigating friction. There are also good links with ICT, as seen in Year 2 when pupils learning about binary trees used mathematical vocabulary such as 'digit' 'odd' 'even' when composing questions with 'yes' or 'no' answers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' skills in scientific investigation indicate that the school is continuing to raise standards.
- Teachers pay good attention to all aspects of science, especially using and applying scientific methods of investigation.
- Management of science is sound with clear indicators that more rigorous monitoring will impact positively on raising standards.
- More use could be made of ICT to assist pupils' scientific knowledge and research skills.

Commentary

71. Inspection evidence indicates the school has maintained its provision and average standards in science at Year 2 (no previous information for Year 6) since the previous report and confirms results in national tests. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 6 pupils are attaining average standards. This represents satisfactory achievement from their starting point at age five. The school has carefully analysed data from a variety of sources including the fact that girls out perform boys. However, this situation was carefully monitored during the inspection and no significant differences were identified. The school's focus on numeracy and literacy strategies is good, and the effective use of these areas is a key aspect when recording findings and analysing data. However, the use of ICT skills to support science is a developing area, which the school is addressing. The promotion of investigative skills through 'hands on' experience is a positive feature in all classes, ensures pupils learn well and promotes the use of scientific vocabulary. Pupils often work in pairs or small groups, prompting good scientific discussion and the use of appropriate vocabulary. The strength of scientific enquiry, together with the very good working relationships between teachers and pupils, are critical elements in the school's attempt to raise standards. This promotes very positive attitudes and quality social development in most classes.
72. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, which enables them to explain confidently and clearly to pupils of all levels of ability. In better lessons, teachers provide an effective balance between directed teaching and independent learning. Pupils are appropriately challenged and extended through probing questioning and tasks well matched to ability. This helps teachers evaluate the level of understanding and knowledge acquired by the pupils. In almost all lessons seen, pupils worked hard, concentrated and collaborated well. When lessons are only satisfactory, they do not proceed at a brisk pace, thus allowing time for pupils to go 'off task'. The expectations of teachers are not as high as they could be and the assistants are not used as effectively as they might be, and these weaknesses limit the progress pupils make. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and achieve similarly to their peers.
73. Leadership of science is sound. The co-ordinator, who is currently leading the subject without the support of a Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, acknowledges the need for more systematic monitoring of planning, teaching, learning and standards. Marking in some classes is good, celebrates success, and indicates how the pupil may improve. It often leaves the pupil with a question to answer, providing valuable assessment information. However, this practice is inconsistent and is not followed by all class teachers so pupils are not clear how to improve their work. Resources are good overall and data from national tests are analysed to provide information, which will inform future teaching and planning for individuals and groups.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been significant improvements in achievement, standards, teaching and resources since the last inspection.
- There has been very good improvement in staff confidence through training and support from the ICT co-ordinator and ICT technician.
- Pupils are confident and competent users of technology.

Commentary

74. Standards in information and communication technology are average in Years 2 and 6. This situation is a significant improvement over the unsatisfactory position at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily throughout the school. The main reasons for such improvements have been the huge increase in resources, including a computer suite where pupils have frequent lessons. Many pupils have access to computers at home and they make very good use of them to complete projects. Few pupils said that they used the Internet at home, although all were aware of the possible dangers. The school keeps a register of pupils without computers at home, but no club is run for them to practise the skills they have learned in lessons. All pupils are confident and competent users of technology.
75. Pupils access their work quickly and junior pupils describe well how they completed their own multi-media presentations. In conversations with pupils in Year 6, they explained how they use the Internet regularly for research and how they save information for topics in their own class folder. They know how to use digital cameras and use their photographs as part of the presentation of their work.
76. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Where pupils achieve well good teaching builds on pupils' understanding of the vocabulary they need to make good progress and check pupils' understanding of the task before setting them off on the computers by themselves. In one of the satisfactory lessons, although some pupils were competent enough to work out how to successfully change field using the insert key, most pupils needed the opportunity to go through the process step-by-step with the teacher before setting off on the task. This was not done and their approach was one of trial and error with consequently, only satisfactory progress. Lessons were supported well by the ICT technician and learning support assistants.
77. The co-ordinators have good subject knowledge, set a good lead and work well with class teachers to develop their competence in using the interactive whiteboard and in teaching the information and communication technology curriculum. Overall management of ICT throughout the school is good. The support of the ICT technician in lessons, and especially in the computer suite, has been central to the speed with which teachers have become more confident in their use of ICT with pupils. This has led to the improved standards since the last inspection. Teachers are trialling a scheme of work for the LEA and need time to evaluate the impact on standards and levels of confidence.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. The school is aware that more can be done to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils use technology to complement work in other subjects, notably English and art and design. For instance, in Year 2 pupils wrote about fruits and vegetables in design and technology and then drew them using a painting program, where wonderful pictures of pineapples and grapes were produced. As they move through the school, pupils begin to have

a good understanding of the use of multi-media to enhance presentation. Pupils in Year 6 designed eye-catching posters to warn about the Internet's dangers and used their literacy skills well to attract people to read them. A pupil used an acrostic poem, which was accurately typed and beautifully presented.

Stay away from adult sites only
Ask permission to go on the Internet
For safety, do not give your details
Ensure you do not go on chatrooms
Think before you type
Your safety is in your hands

HUMANITIES

History and geography

79. Insufficient evidence was available to support overall judgements on provision in history and geography. One lesson was seen in each subject, teaching in one of these lessons was satisfactory, in the other it was good. Work in pupils' books was also examined.
80. From the one lesson observed in **history**, the scrutiny of planning and pupils' work, it appears that the curriculum in history is satisfactory. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with them show standards are broadly in line with those normally expected. Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills of enquiry through using a good range of books, pictures, videos, artefacts and computers. In Year 6, pupils investigated events in Great Britain from the 1930's. These included the Jarrow Crusade, aspects of World War II including the rationing, evacuation, the Blitz and the Battle of Britain. In discussion with Year 6 pupils they displayed good knowledge and understanding of the topics they had studied and chatted about them with enthusiasm and interest. Pupils in Year 5 studying the Tudors are able to use portraits as a way of finding information about people and can determine how reliable different sources of evidence are. They had a good sense of chronology.
81. From the scrutiny of work, secure planning, the one lesson observed and the interest with which pupils discussed their historical learning, it would appear pupils are achieving satisfactorily and enjoying their work. Resources overall are satisfactory. Pupils competently used computers for research, for example finding information about 'Twiggy' in the world of fashion of the 1960's. Leadership and management appear to be satisfactory.
82. From the one lesson sampled in **geography**, the scrutiny of planning and pupils' books, and from discussion with pupils, it would appear that standards are broadly in line with those expected. In the lesson observed, pupils used atlases to locate seaside resorts that they had visited. They used atlases well and built upon their previous knowledge to identify the difference in physical features found at the seaside that were not in their home location, for example, sand, sea, rocks and cliffs. By the end of the lesson, pupils became familiar with the word erosion, which was used frequently in their groups by the teacher and teaching assistants. The teacher provided good opportunities for the pupils to develop their research skills and pitched the work at the right level for them. In discussion with Year 6 pupils, they displayed good knowledge about continents, rivers and oceans and gave a very detailed account of the water cycle using appropriate vocabulary, such as evaporation and condensation.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83. Design and technology, art and design, music and physical education were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. No lessons were

seen in design and technology. Two lessons were seen in each of art and design and physical education and three lessons in music.

84. The scrutiny of planning and pupils' work in **design and technology** indicates National Curriculum requirements are met. In all classes pupils complete design sheets, identify materials and discuss how completed models could be improved. All teachers complete risk assessment sheets for all projects and the models seen are of good quality. Resources appear to be good and are well stored and easily accessible. The co-ordinators are experienced, committed and encourage cross-curricular activities, such as the use of electricity being used to control traffic lights and lighthouses in Year 4 and the use of literacy skills when evaluating their food technology project in Year 5.
85. Displays around the school indicate that a satisfactory range of topics are taught within **art and design** and that pupils learn a variety of skills and techniques, including some use of computers. In Years 1 and 6 there are examples of work of high quality. In Year 1 the pupils have produced some excellent pictures of a foggy day using paper and pastels. In the same class different coloured fabrics have been used to produce an exciting and colourful piece of weaving where the pupils have explored the use of colour. In other classes, work is linked to other areas of study. Year 2 pupils make African masks using felt, hessian, wool and beads. Observational drawing is regularly used to record different aspects of their work. Pupils in Year 6 make excellent use of their sketchbooks not only to experiment with texture and drawing but also to record information. Several pupils, in their own time, have investigated the lives of great artists such as Picasso and recorded their findings in their sketchbooks. This is a clear indication of the good level of interest they have in their art activities.
86. In **music**, pupils sing regularly and have a wide repertoire of hymns, which they sing tunefully and with good expression. The school is fortunate to have the services of a specialist music teacher, specialist peripatetic teachers and a computer technician who is willing to offer his services to the school playing the piano. As a result the school has an excellent choir and the beginnings of a good, albeit small, school orchestra. During a visit by the Mayor pupils performed a range of songs and dances that were of a high quality. Pupils learn about music from other cultures through events such as the visiting African musicians and the World Dance Day. In the computer suite pupils in Year 3 access Composer World and thoroughly enjoy the experience of using this programme to compose their own pieces of music. They are then able to play their compositions to the whole group and discuss the various pieces.
87. The scrutiny of planning and discussion with the subject co-ordinators indicates that the National Curriculum requirements for **physical education** are met. Games, gymnastics and dance lessons take place regularly, and all pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a block of nine swimming lessons each year. The two spacious halls and large grounds provide good accommodation. The quality and quantity of gymnastics and games equipment has been improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, teachers assess and record pupils' achievements and in the country dance lesson seen pupils were reaching high standards as a result of the very good teaching. They showed fine co-ordination and very good control of their movements. They confidently evaluated and improved their work, remembering the complex sequence of steps and dancing in time to the music. This good body control was also seen in the well-attended and popular after-school gymnastics club for this age group. The school is committed to ensuring pupils have physical exercise and have increased time for it in Years 1 and 2 to nearly 2 hours a week. Both of the observed lessons, one at each key stage, were physically demanding and ensured pupils exercised thoroughly. The older pupils suggested the 'warm-up' activities that would be most suitable for the athletics skills they would be practising and they all followed their individual routine of stretches. Nearly all pupils in Years 3 to 6 reach the expected standard in swimming. The curriculum for older pupils is enhanced by some competitive activities, mainly in football, but overall, the number and range of extra-curricular activities is insufficient to meet and extend the interests of pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88. Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**. All teachers plan weekly sessions very carefully to support the needs of pupils and the school places a high emphasis on pupils' personal development. It is very successfully enabling pupils to become mature, independent and responsible. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss sensitive issues; for example, in circle time. They have the confidence to talk very comfortably about a wide range of topics and to express their feelings about issues. They are taught the importance of looking after themselves as well as respecting others. The arrangements for sex and drugs education are well established.
89. Pupils gain an understanding of citizenship and an appreciation of their own contribution to the school community by helping with the daily routines of school life. There is a very good school council that meets regularly, helping to improve the environment of the school and affecting the way it is run. However, only pupils in the junior years are represented in the school council.
90. The provision is strengthened by the excellent relationships that adults have with pupils and the positive role models they provide.

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	2
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	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	4
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	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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	2
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).