

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BERNADETTE RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

London Colney

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117489

Interim Headteacher: Mrs H Woodhouse

Lead inspector: Mrs J Coop

Dates of inspection: 24th - 27th May 2004

Inspection number: 262808

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:	231
School address:	Walsingham Way London Colney St Albans Hertfordshire
Postcode:	AL2 1NL
Telephone number:	01727 822489
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Hull
Date of previous inspection:	4 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average-sized school is situated in London Colney, a suburb of St Albans. It is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school and, mainly because of its status, serves a wide area. There are 231 pupils on roll between the ages of four and eleven. Approximately half of the children who start in the nursery transfer to the reception class. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The school's socio-economic circumstances are average. It is a culturally diverse school. Most pupils are of white ethnicity but there are many nationalities represented in the school and 46 percent come from minority ethnic groups. Many pupils are bi-lingual. The main languages that pupils speak other than English are Italian, Mauritian and Filipino. Sixteen percent of pupils receive additional support from specialist staff, and four percent are at the early stages of learning the language, which is below average. Fifteen percent of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties, which is broadly average. No pupil has a statement of Special Educational Need. Assessment data shows that pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average. The school is in a period of transition in its leadership and management. The governing body has made interim arrangements for the summer term, until a new headteacher commences duties at the start of the autumn term. Two members of staff are also leaving the school shortly. The school received an Investor in People Award in 2003 and a Local Education Authority quality standard mark for Foundation Stage education in the same year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
31862	Mrs J Coop	Lead inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Special educational needs
19335	Mrs S Dixon	Lay inspector	
22990	Mr C B Furniss	Team inspector	English Geography History
12997	Mrs C Cheong	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology
21020	Mrs T J Galvin	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Personal, social, health and citizenship education English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory** school, but it has serious weaknesses in the standards achieved in mathematics and science, and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The governing body and staff are committed to the school, but the school has not been rigorous enough in identifying and implementing plans to address some significant weaknesses in key aspects of its work. The school does not provide satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in mathematics are well below average and standards in science are below average at the end of Year 6.
- The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory.
- Standards in reading are above average and well above average in art and design at the end of Year 6.
- There is an unsatisfactory use of assessment information.
- The monitoring and checking of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- Children get a good start to their education in the nursery.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- The school promotes a good degree of harmony and friendship between pupils of diverse cultural backgrounds.

The school has made unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Although the key issues have been addressed reasonably well, there remains an inconsistent approach to behaviour management. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has declined and standards in mathematics and science have fallen significantly. With the support of outside agencies and effective guidance from the interim headteacher, improvement initiatives have recently started. The school is now better placed to improve the quality of education it provides.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 Results

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

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

Pupils' achievements are **unsatisfactory** overall. In the recent past there have been weaknesses in teaching and learning. As a result, pupils made unsatisfactory progress, particularly in mathematics and science, and there are significant gaps in their learning. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are now making satisfactory progress in lessons and

their level of achievement is improving slowly. This reflects the recent improvements in teaching, initiated by the interim headteacher and local education authority. Pupils with special educational needs, and those new to speaking English, make the same progress as their classmates in lessons, and they are also not achieving as well as they might in mathematics and science.

Children start in the nursery with average skills. They make good progress and achieve well in this class because teaching is consistently good. The very few children who arrive with little or no understanding of English make good progress because of the strong emphasis on developing language in the class. Progress is satisfactory overall in the reception class, but unsatisfactory in aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and literacy skills, because teacher expectations are not high enough. By the time they start in Year 1, most are likely to attain expected standards in all areas of learning, except in their communication skills, which are below average. In particular, more able children have not made sufficient progress and their level of achievement in this aspect of their learning is unsatisfactory. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2 standards were below average in reading, and well below average in writing and mathematics. Inspection findings show that current standards are average in reading, and below average in writing, mathematics and science. Standards have risen, but the school's initiatives have not been in place long enough to have had a greater influence on overall standards attained. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6, standards were average in English and well below average in science and mathematics. Inspection findings show that standards are average in English overall, but above average in reading. Standards are below average in science and well below average in mathematics. Standards in art and design are well above average, and standards in physical education, information and communication technology and geography are average.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. Pupils enjoy school behave well and have good attitudes to learning in most classes. Attendance is well above average, but not all pupils are punctual at the start of the day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching is now **satisfactory** overall. Past evidence indicates that it was unsatisfactory, particularly in mathematics and science. Ethnic Minority Achievement teachers, make a good contribution to the learning of those pupils to whom they are providing targeted support. Teachers successfully help pupils in class, but the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Assessment procedures are new, but satisfactory. However, teachers do not consistently make full use of the information to plan activities that are challenging for all groups of pupils and expectations are too low in some classes. Teaching assistants provide relevant support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs, but teachers do not make sufficient reference to their individual education plans when planning lessons and pupils are too dependent on staff for help.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is enhanced by a good range of additional activities. The curriculum for art and design is very good and is one reason why pupils enjoy coming to school. The care of pupils is satisfactory. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The system for referrals to outside agencies is inefficient. As a result, pupils and parents do not receive advice, guidance and support quickly enough. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Partnerships with parents and the community are satisfactory. There are good links with other schools which make a successful contribution to school life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **unsatisfactory**. In the past, the school's systems to monitor and evaluate its work lacked rigour and were insufficiently thorough in terms of evaluating the impact of teaching on learning. As a result, standards fell. The school made insufficient use of test and other data to identify strengths and weaknesses and plan for improvement. The leadership of the interim headteacher is very good. She has worked tirelessly in a very short time to initiate improvements and develop the roles of the newly formed leadership team. There is now a greater awareness of what needs to be done to improve the school. Systems are now in place, but are very new, and need time to become embedded into practice. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are clearly committed to, and highly supportive of, the school. With recent guidance they now have a clearer understanding of their role as 'critical friend' and now have a satisfactory awareness of how to hold the school to account for the standards achieved. They have been steadfast in ensuring that they have made the 'right' appointment of a new headteacher and reception class teacher who will take up their posts in September. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a satisfactory opinion of the school. They are impressed with the nursery, standards in art, and content that their children enjoy school and are happy. They are less happy about the quality of the information they receive and how they are consulted. There are some concerns about inconsistent behaviour management and lack of support for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are happy in school and have a good opinion of it. They think it is a 'joyful' place to be.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in mathematics and science.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school.
- Improve the use of assessment information.
- Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Improve the quality of education in the reception class.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **unsatisfactory** overall. Standards are average in English, below average in science, and well below average in mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics and science are too low and pupils' level of achievement is unsatisfactory.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in writing are below average.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress in their learning in Year 5 and Year 6, but teachers' expectations are too low in other year groups.
- At the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in art and design.

Commentary

1. Since the last inspection standards have fluctuated considerably each year. Overall standards have declined, and have not kept up with the national trend of improvement. Whilst the school's performance in English, during the past three years, has been above the national trend, the school's performance in the national tests in mathematics has been below average and well below average in science. The school failed to reach the targets it set for mathematics in 2003. With the support of outside agencies, the school investigated the fall in mathematics standards and put in place plans to address this issue. These are too new to have influenced overall standards attained. However, the school did not investigate the decline in science standards and it is only very recently that the school has developed plans to address the weaknesses

FOUNDATION STAGE

2. Overall children's level of achievement in the foundation stage is satisfactory. Their attainment on entry to the nursery is average overall. Children make good progress in the nursery and achieve well overall in this class. Children's overall level of achievement is satisfactory in the reception class but progress in the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills, and in some aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is unsatisfactory. This is because some activities are undemanding, and expectations are too low. Children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning, except in their communication, language and literacy. Children's achievements in this area of learning are unsatisfactory.

KEY STAGE 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.2 (14.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.5 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.3 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

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

- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were below the national average in reading, and well below average in writing and mathematics. The results of teacher assessments in science show that standards were well below the national average. Overall, standards were well below those schools with similar socio-economic circumstances. Standards fell sharply and were the lowest attained for some time, particularly in mathematics and writing. The school has re-evaluated the teaching approach in Year 2 and standards have started to rise as a result. In all subjects, more pupils are now attaining the expected standard for this age group. Inspection findings show that standards in reading are average, and standards in writing, mathematics and science are below average. Standards remain below average because the progress of more able pupils is too slow.

KEY STAGE 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (27.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.4 (28.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.8 (28.2)	28.6 (28.3)

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

- Results in the national tests in 2003 were average in English, and well below average in mathematics and science. In comparison to schools whose pupils achieved similarly at Year 2, pupils' attainment was well below average overall and very low in mathematics and science. English was the most successful subject and has been for some years. This is because many pupils in this subject have benefited from additional support from Ethnic Minority Achievement staff throughout their time in Years 3 to 6. Based on their prior attainment in the Year 2 national tests, and teacher assessments, pupils made good progress in English, but their progress in mathematics and science was well below expectations. Inspection findings show that the pupils' level of attainment in English remains in line with national expectations overall, but standards in reading are above average.
- Pupils' level of attainment in mathematics remains well below expectations and attainment in science below expectations. In both subjects, evidence shows that there is an increase in the number of pupils attaining expected standards, but most pupils do not make the progress they are capable of. Their level of achievement is unsatisfactory, in relation to their capabilities, and their performance in the 2000 mathematical national tests, and teacher assessments in science.

6. Standards in all other subjects inspected in detail, including information and communication technology, are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6. Pupils have made satisfactory progress and their level of achievement is satisfactory in these subjects. Standards in art and design are well above the national expectations and pupils achieve very well in this subject.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly when they are supported in small groups to develop their literacy skills. However, these pupils do not make the progress they are capable of particularly in mathematics and science. Pupils tend to over-rely on support, and therefore find it difficult to work unaided. As a result, their achievements are unsatisfactory.
8. The four percent of pupils, who speak little or no English when they enter the school, initially make good progress. This is because most of these pupils enter the school in the nursery where teaching is good and there is a strong emphasis on developing the communications skills of all children.
9. More able pupils do not make the gains of which they are capable in a number of subjects because teachers' planning does not take enough account of assessment information to effectively plan the next steps in pupils' learning and provide work which is sufficiently challenging. Taking their performance in national tests over the past three years, girls do less well than boys in mathematics and science. While the inspection evidence does not identify any specific reason for this, the school has not effectively used the information it has to investigate why there are differences.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Pupils enjoy school and the attendance rates are **very good**. Their personal development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour have a positive effect upon their learning.
- Pupils' relationships are good. All pupils in this diverse school community work and play well together.
- Pupils' cultural, social and moral development is good. Pupils understand the responsibilities of living in a community well.
- Attendance levels are very good, but some pupils are persistently late.

Commentary

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. Pupils approach all their lessons with equal enthusiasm. They listen and respond well to their teachers and each other, and are interested and curious about learning. The behaviour in school is good and creates a happy and friendly environment for pupils to learn in. Bullying and racist behaviour are not tolerated, and pupils from all the cultures play and learn together well. In lessons where the quality of teaching is good pupils meet high expectations well, and pupils respond with relish and enthusiasm. Where teaching lacks challenge and time is not well managed, there are some incidents of unsettled behaviour. The response to these incidents is inconsistent. This matter was identified in the last inspection and has not been fully addressed. Lunchtime is a happy, social time and there are no significant problems with behaviour or conflict. The relationships are good and pupils are kind and helpful to each other.

11. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. They are encouraged to collect money for people less fortunate than themselves and this is an important feature of the school's ethos. In particular, the yearly residential trip to a school for disabled pupils is a highly valuable event. This successfully enhances the pupils' understanding of the responsibility towards others in different and challenging circumstances, and as one pupil stated, develops a realisation that "these children are no different to us really". All pupils work and play alongside each other in harmony and there are good opportunities for pupils to take part in activities outside lessons. Pupils learn to appreciate their own culture and that of others. They show respect for the many other cultures and lifestyles represented in the school and this is reflected in the good relationships that exist. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. However, opportunities to develop and nurture pupils' spiritual development are sometimes missed.

Attendance

12. Attendance levels are very good. The school monitors attendance very well and good attendance is recognised and rewarded. Whilst the majority of pupils arrive at school on time a significant number of pupils are repeatedly late and miss the start of the school day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year %

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**, but there are some significant weaknesses. Teaching observed was satisfactory overall, but there is an unsatisfactory use of assessment information. The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The school's care of its pupils is satisfactory, as are its links with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **satisfactory** overall. The quality of assessment is unsatisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3 (7%)	16 (38%)	19 (44%)	5 (11%)	0	0

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are mostly good so that pupils try hard and this makes a good contribution to learning.
- Basic skills are taught reasonably well, but in general teachers' expectations are too low, and independent learning could be further developed in some subjects.
- Teachers handle misconceptions well in lessons, but their marking does not consistently focus on showing pupils how to improve.
- Less able pupils are too reliant on help from teaching assistants,
- The use of specialist staff supports learning in the creative arts very well.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to identify learning needs, track progress or plan activities matched to pupils' abilities.
- There are effective Ethnic Minority Achievement assessment procedures in English, but overall the procedures are not systematic enough.

Commentary

13. Inspection evidence shows that the quality of teaching is improving, particularly in mathematics and science, and this reflects the good quality of the initiatives to strengthen teaching and learning. As a result, although teaching over time in mathematics and science has been judged to be unsatisfactory, during the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed either in these subjects or English. Teaching is more effective in the nursery and in Years 5 and 6, so that pupils are now making more rapid gains in their learning.
14. In the nursery, good teaching and a wide range of carefully planned activities, ensure that children delight in learning and blossom. The teacher, classroom assistant and nursery nurse form an effective team and provide well planned tasks and challenges. Coupled with sensitive, constant discussions and prompting by adults, these features ensure that children of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress and achieve well. The teacher and support staff effectively develop the communication skills of the few children in the nursery who are at the early stages of learning English. As a result, these children achieve well in lessons and initially make good progress in English.
15. Teaching is satisfactory overall in the reception class, but the teaching of communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world, is unsatisfactory. Expectations are too low, and play activities that could be used to stimulate learning are underdeveloped and lead to repetitive and solitary play and too little learning. Time is not always used well enough. While structured activities are generally well thought out, particularly in mathematical and information and communication technology lessons, at other times, time is wasted with low level tasks and progress slows as a result.
16. Teachers generally have good relationships with their pupils. Most teachers use praise and rewards effectively to motivate pupils. When teaching is good or better, pupils are managed very well and teachers have a visible and purposeful rapport with pupils, who respond well to the kind and effective manner in which teachers manage their behaviour. When teaching is unsatisfactory, as in some information and communication technology lessons observed, it is generally because planning does not ensure that all groups of pupils are fully engaged in meaningful learning and this leads to unsettled behaviour.

17. Basic skills are generally well taught in lessons, and clear explanations and modelling by teachers used to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, in general, teachers do not have high enough expectations of the pupils. Too little use is made of investigational and problem solving skills to promote pupils' skills of enquiry, and in the past there has been too much emphasis on completing unchallenging written exercises. There is evidence to show that this is beginning to change and more variety of work is now being planned.
18. Teachers generally provide good verbal support in lessons and handle pupils' misconceptions well. Recently there has been an improvement in the manner in which pupils' work is marked. But this good level of marking is not consistent. There are still too many occasions when work is not marked and often no constructive comments are made over a whole year.
19. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support in many lessons, and staff ensure that they understand what they need to do. However, pupils are too reliant on this help, and lack independence. The school's assessment system does not provide a well thought out vehicle that ensures that any special needs are identified early. The targets on pupils' individual learning plans are varied and often too general. Most teachers do not use them to plan activities, but to identify pupils who need to be withdrawn for additional support. In general, teachers do not have enough opportunities to review the progress of pupils with the special educational needs co-ordinator, so that many pupils get stuck in the system and have to wait too long before specialist help is sought. Pupils are generally expected to complete 'less work', rather than having a range of tasks that they can complete successfully on their own or opportunities to work with more able pupils on a joint project.
20. The use of specialist teachers for music and art is very effective. They plan a wide variety of activities that challenge pupils. Pupils are not afraid to try even more complex work, and as a result the quality of art work in the school is on occasions outstanding.
21. Systems to assess track and analyse progress have just been established, and staff now have access to a satisfactory range of information with which to adapt their planning. However, the information is not yet used by all staff to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' level of ability. Due to recent support and training, teachers now have a better understanding of national curriculum levels in most subjects, and are beginning to monitor the progress of pupils in their class. Individual targets are set with pupils in mathematics and English. However, teachers have a patchier picture of progress in other subjects.
22. The quality of the Ethnic Minority Achievement teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. There is some careful assessment of the pupils' progress in English for some of the specific groups that Ethnic Minority Achievement staff teach. This contributes to the good progress that these pupils make in reading. However, this good practice is not implemented consistently by Ethnic Minority Achievement staff or used widely enough across the school, particularly in Year 1 to Year 2, and this impacts on the overall progress that pupils make.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, and good in the nursery. Resources are satisfactory overall and are well used.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for art and design is very good, and has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and standards they achieve.
- The nursery curriculum is good, but there are some weaknesses in the reception class.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- Good provision of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors enriches the curriculum.
- Outdoor accommodation is good, but there is no access from the reception classroom to the enclosed outdoor play area.
- It is only possible to access some classrooms by going through others, which can create distractions.

Commentary

23. As found at the last inspection, the curriculum overall is satisfactory and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Provision for art is very good and this is seen in the high quality of work around the school and pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. The quality of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage varies. In the nursery class, the curriculum planning is varied, interesting and provides a good range of worthwhile experiences. In the reception class, whilst the curriculum is satisfactory overall, there are weaknesses in curriculum planning that centre on the use of play tasks that are undemanding.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Targets on pupils' individual education plans vary considerably in quality and usefulness, depending upon the experience of the teacher. Most do not provide targets that can be used by teachers to plan suitable work, or monitor progress and achievement. Whilst all groups of pupils have equal access to additional activities and residential trips, several groups of pupils receive additional support for literacy through a specialist special educational needs programme. Pupils enjoy this and make good progress during the sessions, but they regularly miss an hour of the curriculum a week. This is not satisfactory.
25. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Across the school, teachers plan work that is relevant and sensitive to the needs of ethnic minority pupils. There is effective extra support for the few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English, and have the greatest need, in order to help them participate fully in all the activities that the school offers. Ethnic Minority Achievement teachers plan together with classroom staff so that the pupils who learn English as an additional language cover similar work to their classmates.
26. A range of well-planned visits, visitors and clubs enrich the curriculum well. Lunchtime and after-school activities, including football coaching for boys and girls, cricket, choir, French and Italian classes encourage pupils to work and play together harmoniously and support their social and cultural development well.
27. The accommodation is satisfactory. Outdoor accommodation is good, with plenty of play areas for pupils as well as playing fields for sports. There is a good environmental area and use of this has been incorporated into the curriculum well, with a specially written scheme of work. Nursery accommodation is good, but there is no access from the reception class to the enclosed outside play area, so this limits its use. Classrooms are generally spacious enough to provide for the needs of the curriculum, but access to some can only be reached by going through others and this creates disturbance and disruption, even when pupils are quiet.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are **satisfactory**, but the advice and guidance offered pupils are **unsatisfactory** overall. The arrangements for seeking and acting upon pupils' views are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The procedures for child protection are good. The school looks after pupils who are ill or have medical needs well.
- The provision of support, advice and guidance for all pupils is unsatisfactory.
- The referral system for pupils with special educational needs is haphazard and unsatisfactory.

Commentary

28. The health and safety arrangements for pupils are satisfactory overall. The school is a well maintained and attractive learning environment, although a small number of health and safety issues have been raised with the school and governing body. Child protection procedures are good. Lunchtimes are well supervised and staff are alert and responsive to the needs of all. In particular, arrangements for the care of pupils who are unwell, or have medical conditions are good.
29. The personal support and guidance offered to pupils is satisfactory but academic support and guidance is unsatisfactory. Whilst success is recognised and rewarded, pupils are not involved enough in their own learning. Although pupils have developing opportunities to understand and value their achievements in English and mathematics, this is not extended to the other subjects of the curriculum and is not yet consistently used by all teachers. There are however, some good examples of personal support for pupils by the provision of 'buddies' for younger pupils and good procedures for monitoring lunchtime behaviour. Pupils feel that opportunities to discuss issues by coming together in a circle help them to understand each other and deal with problems well. Staff identify quickly the needs of bilingual pupils who join the school other than the usual time of first admission. Classroom staff give the pupils good care and support and the school provides extra Ethnic Minority Achievement support for a few of these pupils. These factors help pupils to settle quickly into school life.
30. The school's arrangements for seeking and acting on pupils' views are satisfactory. Individual views can be expressed in lessons and through the school council, although this role for pupils is underdeveloped and pupils' views are not canvassed across the school as a whole. Pupils are unhappy with the inconsistent systems for behaviour in the school and they are not involved enough in shaping the daily life of the school. The induction arrangements for pupils new to the school are satisfactory. Children joining the nursery benefit from good information about nursery life but parents of children joining the reception class have little information about the work their children will be doing and how parents might help at home.
31. The support advice and guidance to parents and pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The system for referrals to outside agencies for advice and support is unsatisfactory. The system is not well managed, and time not well spent. As a result, there is currently a backlog of referrals waiting to be made. Pupils and parents have to wait too long before advice is sought, in the meantime teachers do not have the necessary skills with which to ensure that pupils are receiving the best possible support and guidance. The system for monitoring and reviewing pupils' progress

towards their targets on their individual educational plans in unsatisfactory. Staff do not have the support with which to identify which pupils may not be making sufficient progress and who may need additional support from outside agencies. Parents have expressed concerns and have not had their queries dealt with efficiently. The system requires an urgent review in order to ensure that all pupils who may need specialist advice and support receive it quickly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents, other schools and the community is **satisfactory** overall. Links with other school are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The links with other schools are good and support pupils' learning well.
- The information provided for parents about their children's progress and learning is unsatisfactory.
- The school does its best to communicate with the parents of bilingual pupils.

Commentary

32. The school has satisfactory links with parents. The 'friends' association works hard to provide additional funds and many parents help in school. Parents are supportive and appreciative of much that the school provides. In particular, they are pleased with the happiness of their children at school. Whilst parents do have many positive views of the school, many have expressed concern about the way the school deals with concerns and their opportunities to support their children's learning. Parents' views are not widely sought and this is reflected in the school's lack of awareness of some areas of concern.
33. The information that parents receive about their children's progress and the work that they do is unsatisfactory. Whilst general information about the school and daily life is satisfactory, information about other aspects is not. Written reports are inconsistent in their quality and usefulness. Little indication is given about the level that pupils are working at, successes and difficulties are not clearly identified and guidance for improvement is not given. However, there are examples of good information in English reports in older classes. Parents have inadequate information about the curriculum and the work their children will be doing. Some parents of pupils with special educational needs do not feel they have received appropriate information, help or support. Parents do not have opportunities to learn about the way their children are taught in order to offer better support at home. The provision of homework and guidance for parents concerning it is inconsistent and varies considerably in its value.
34. The school's links with the community are satisfactory. Pupils make a variety of visits to places of interest in the wider community and members of the local community come in to school to share their skills and experiences. This provides especially good support for personal and social education and history and art lessons in particular. The partnership with other schools is good and has a positive effect upon learning. Pupils benefit from interschool sports and from shared experiences with disabled pupils from a special school. The arrangements for pupils transferring to secondary schools are satisfactory.
35. The school provides information for parents in the main heritage languages that are spoken but, as there is a wide range of heritage languages, it is not possible to

translate the information for all the languages that are spoken. The school does its best to ensure that non-English speaking parents receive support.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **unsatisfactory**. Governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the interim headteacher is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Systems and structures to ensure that staff can monitor the work of the school and its performance are unsatisfactory.
- Monitoring of teaching by leaders and co-ordinators has been ineffective and, until recently, lacked focus.
- The leadership team and subject co-ordinators are developing their skills to move the school forward and manage day-to-day concerns.
- Staff development has not been focused on the development of expertise and good practice.
- Structures to support the induction of new staff are unsatisfactory.
- There is inefficient use of the school's budget to fund extra support from Ethnic Minority Achievement staff.

Commentary

36. The leadership and management of the school are in a period of transition. Following the secondment of the deputy headteacher, and retirement of the headteacher, since March 2004, the school has an interim leadership and management structure in place. A new headteacher takes up post in September.
37. During this time of difficulty for the school, an experienced headteacher has recently been seconded to lead the school until the new headteacher takes up her appointment in September. Under her determined, robust, professional guidance, most staff have focused on improving the school and its standards. At the same time, she has maintained a happy atmosphere for pupils within a Christian ethos, as well as promoting a strongly developmental approach. The school is developing a 'team culture'. However, if the 'green shoots' of improvement are to bear fruit and move the school forward, it is essential that all staff have the same high expectations. The initiatives recently implemented now need to be cultivated and nurtured by all staff if the necessary improvements are to be translated into standards that better reflect pupils' capabilities.
38. Until recently, the school has not faced up to the reality that its performance is falling behind other schools. Despite some improvements since the last inspection the overall pace of improvement has been too slow. Not enough progress has been made to ensure that assessment data is used sufficiently to plan pupils' learning, both by teachers and by senior management. Information has not been used to determine trends and identify what actions need to be secured to make improvements. As a result, many pupils, particularly the more able and those with special educational needs, often have work that is insufficiently geared towards their needs. This restricts the pace of their learning. As a result, since the last inspection standards in a number of subjects have declined, including science, but the subject was not singled out by the school with a view to addressing the weaknesses that are contributing to this decline.

39. There are a number of other areas that the school had not identified for improvement, such as the provision for special educational needs and aspects of the foundation stage. The monitoring of teaching and learning, and the school's analysis of its performance, did not bring about improvements in pupils' learning. Subject leaders have only recently received guidance about how to fulfil their roles. Some, such as the mathematics and literacy co-ordinators have begun to analyse the school's performance and have identified a relevant plan of action. However, other subject leaders have little information about standards in their own subjects or what standards are like across the school. They have been hampered in this task because until recently, the school's 'paper' tracking system was too complex and not a useful tool to monitor learning and analyse progress. Many do not have sufficient non contact time to carry out their subject management responsibilities, whilst some do not make effective use of the time made available to them.
40. Recently, there has been a clear focus on improvement, and staff are more aware of what needs to be done. With the help of the interim headteacher and outside agencies, staff are beginning to move the school forward. Appropriate systems, such as self-evaluation, a rigorous system for the monitoring of teaching and learning, and a tracking system, have been put in place, but have not yet had time to influence overall standards. The school is very much aware of how much more needs to be done if the newly established systems are to be an effective influence.
41. Until recently, staff development was not focussed sufficiently on driving forward school improvement. Newly qualified staff had very few opportunities to observe teaching and learning and attend appropriate courses, and the new assessment co-ordinator had no training in the new electronic tracking system. This is now being addressed. The newly formed leadership team is part of a local education authority leadership project, and team members are receiving advice and training. They are more aware about how to fulfil their brief. They are providing satisfactory support to the interim leadership, but they are at the early stages of developing their skills. As a result, they have not yet been able to make a significant impact on school development.
42. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors form a committed and supportive team for the school. They have taken on board the advice and guidance from the local education authority and have developed their skills quickly in the past few months. They now have a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what the school needs to do. They have taken an active part in the recent appointment of a new headteacher and supported the interim headteacher in her appointment of a new reception class teacher. They have been steadfast in ensuring that the new staff have the necessary expertise and skills that will benefit the school, yet maintain its Catholic ethos. They are now much more aware of how to monitor the work of the school and find out for themselves what is happening, and now have the skills to act as 'critical friends'. They visit regularly and report back on their findings. As a result, the special educational needs governor agrees that the school's provision requires development.
43. Financial management is unsatisfactory, but the governors have appropriate strategies in place to reduce the current overspend. Until recently they have not compared and challenged their expenditure patterns with similar schools, and not ensured that all grants, such as the special educational needs funding, have been used effectively. The budget deficit has meant that funds for much needed staff development have been limited. The Ethnic Minority Achievement grant, is used appropriately to fund the Ethnic Minority Achievement staff and their deployment is reviewed regularly. This is targeted mainly towards the academic needs of pupils who learn English as an additional

language in Years 3 to 6 where most of the pupils are competent or fluent in English. In addition, the school uses money from its own budget to fund additional Ethnic Minority Achievement support. The support includes the teaching of national 'catch-up' programmes that are designed for trained classroom assistants to teach. This is not a cost effective arrangement. Currently, the school does not provide value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	652 631
Total expenditure	670 400
Expenditure per pupil	2 640

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	19 299
Balance carried forward to the next year	1 530

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 **satisfactory overall**. The standard of education in the nursery is **good**. There are some weaknesses in provision in reception.

44. Children start in the nursery with average skills. They get a good start to their education in the nursery where activities are well structured as a consequence, achievement and progress are good. However, progress slows in reception. In this class achievement is satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and elements of creative development. This is because of a lack of sufficiently high expectations of what children can achieve. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
45. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. With recent improvements in place, assessment and record keeping in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Teachers and teaching assistants observe and question children regularly and record their findings. But results are not well used to set the next most urgent learning targets for individuals and small groups. As a result, reception children are unsure about what they need to do to improve and activities are not challenging enough. Initial assessments, to set starting points for the year, are undertaken in the nursery but not in the reception class. This leads to children who may have special educational needs not being identified.
46. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory. Too little has been done in the way of monitoring standards and practice to ensure that children are learning as much as they should. The teachers meet regularly, but too little is done to ensure that the quality of the provision is consistent. Recently the school has identified the weaknesses in the reception class, and a relevant action plan has been developed. As a result, there is now the potential to improve the quality of the provision.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are keen to come to school, are happy and confident to join in with activities and behave well.
- In the reception class, opportunities are missed to nurture co-operative play.

Commentary

47. Children are encouraged to feel confident in their work and achievements. They are friendly and keen to take part in all that is offered. In the nursery, teaching and learning are good and staff provide a good range of activities that encourage co-operation. In the reception class the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but too little is provided, to encourage co-operative play. Children are given a good understanding of right and wrong by all staff. As a result, behaviour is consistently good in both classes. In the reception class, group-teaching times, are used satisfactorily to help children to

examine their own lives and emotions when they discuss what makes them excited. As a result of satisfactory teaching overall, the overall level of achievement is satisfactory, and most children are likely to attain the expected goals when they start in Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **unsatisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in the nursery gives children a good introduction to writing and the world of books.
- Time is not sufficiently well used and expectations are too low in the reception class.

Commentary

48. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery, but unsatisfactory in the reception class. The nursery staff provide good opportunities for the development of speech and vocabulary and this is built on satisfactorily in the reception class by the provision of a few good role-play situations. However, in the reception class, opportunities for speaking and listening are sometimes missed or hurried, so progress is unsatisfactory and vocabulary is not reinforced enough. The nursery teacher uses her detailed assessments well to tailor teaching of the very early stages of reading and writing. As a result, many children can find their name on a display and are beginning to write it and know a few initial sounds. This good start is not maintained in the reception year. Teacher expectations are too low. As a result, too many children finish the year with incorrectly formed handwriting. Most are unable to write for themselves, without specific instruction. In the reception class, while some reading methods are appropriate, too little progress is made by the more able in all aspects of learning. Time is not well used, for example, sessions when the whole class look together at a big book are hurried and not thought through sufficiently well to develop children's reading and writing skills. At other times, some groups carry out unchallenging and unproductive tasks. Overall, most children will not attain the expected goals when they start in Year 1 and achievement is unsatisfactory.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the reception class there is a good emphasis on counting and understanding numbers.
- Every opportunity is grasped in the nursery to develop mathematical vocabulary and understanding.

Commentary

49. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. When they start in Year 1 class, the majority of children are on target to achieve the expected goals, especially in counting where many are likely to exceed the expected level. This is because of the good, lively teaching methods employed and the high expectations of staff in both settings. Staff in both nursery and reception use chanting and singing well, which reinforce children's

understanding of number and learning to count. Other aspects of mathematics, such as shape and capacity, are satisfactorily taught.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **unsatisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in the nursery ensures a very wide range of experiences support learning well.
- In the reception year, planning does not extend children's understanding consistently, except in information and communication technology.

Commentary

50. Overall, children make satisfactory gains in their learning and the majority are likely to attain the expected goals when they start in Year 1. Children's achievement overall is satisfactory. However, this is because of the good provision and wide-ranging experiences and good and often very good teaching that children receive in the nursery, rather than in reception, where teaching is unsatisfactory overall. In the nursery, painting their "house", choosing colours, and ordering and delivering the paint all add constructively to the learning experience, with good and very good input from the adult team, to help the children's understanding of how the world works. In the reception class these experiences are generally not sufficiently extended. Direct teaching is hurried and not well developed, and child-chosen activities lack high expectations, clear teacher direction, and are not well structured. However, good teaching of information and communication technology ensures that children have a good start in their understanding and use of computers.

Physical development

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no free access for the reception class to the newly enclosed outside area.
- When outside sessions take place in the reception class there is a lack of focus and insufficiently rigorous planning and challenge.

Commentary

51. Achievement is satisfactory and most children are likely to attain the expected goals when they start in Year 1. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the reception class and good in the nursery. In the nursery, many good activities are provided. Staff use the enclosed play-space well to provide a rich selection of well directed physical development opportunities. By contrast, in the reception class the provision does not develop sufficiently from the nursery, with tasks in the reception class sometimes less challenging than in the nursery. The outside learning environment is not well developed to enhance physical development and children generally use this time for 'free play' without guidance or direction. Some suitable activities are provided with tools such as paintbrushes and glue, but these are not challenging enough. In the hall, apparatus is

used safely and satisfactorily and in these sessions teaching is satisfactory, so that children are confident and move with suitable control.

Creative development

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good specialist teaching for clay enables children in the reception class to achieve very well for their age.
- Work planned is too teacher directed, and this restricts children's creative potential.
- In the reception class, imaginative play activities lack challenge and focus.

Commentary

52. By the time children start in Year 1, most are likely to attain the expected goals for this age, and their achievement is satisfactory but varies greatly. When taught by a talented specialist teacher, expectations are high, so that children's achievement increases considerably, and they produce high quality work such as 'clay vessels' which are of a high standard. At other times the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Progress is varied because when taught by class teachers, in both the nursery and the reception class, the work is often too prescriptive. Materials given to children too often lack enough variety to provoke sufficient interest or novel approaches. Play opportunities are good and sometimes very good in the nursery and children's imaginations develop well as a result. In the reception class, imaginative play activities often lack sufficient challenge or educational focus, with the provided equipment leading to routine and repetitive play, such as rushing around on bikes, so that children's creativity is not consistently developed and promoted.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- There is good progress in reading through the school.
- Writing is developed well in Year 5 and Year 6, but planning is not challenging enough in some classes.
- Marking lacks consistency and is not always used to target the needs of pupils, particularly the more able.
- There are improved procedures for monitoring of teaching and learning but they have not yet had time to raise standards of attainment and improve teaching.

Commentary

53. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were below average in reading and well below average in writing. Inspection findings are that overall standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and have improved due to better teaching, but attainment in writing is below the national average, because few more able pupils are attaining the higher level 3. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were in line with the national average, but lower than those found at the previous inspection. Although the proportion of pupils who attained the higher level 5

was above the national average, standards in English were not higher because there was a 'tail end' of pupils who did not reach expected standards. Inspection evidence shows that standards remain in line with the national expectations at the end of Year 6.

54. Overall, the achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory, but achievement in reading is good at the end of Year 6. This is because of good parental support and better teaching of these skills. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are given appropriate support so that they progress at the same rate as other pupils in lessons. More able pupils are not always sufficiently extended and could sometimes achieve better if the work were matched more clearly to their needs.
55. All pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening through the school. This is because most teachers recognise the need to develop these skills and build up their vocabulary across a range of subjects, but this is not done consistently. Pupils are making better progress in Year 6 because pupils are encouraged to use exciting and interesting language. The Ethnic Minority Achievement staff in particular support teaching and learning well in this respect.
56. Progress for all groups and abilities in reading is good throughout the school, and pupils achieve well in this aspect. All of the pupils spoken to, say that they enjoy reading, and they read regularly at school and at home. This has a positive influence on the standards they attain. Pupils regularly use the Internet for research and basic reading skills are taught well throughout the school, so that at the end of Year 6, most pupils read fluently and with understanding and expression and most are attaining above average standards.
57. Progress and achievement in writing are satisfactory overall. Pupils are given many opportunities to write extensively in a variety of ways but the more able pupils are not always being challenged sufficiently to move them on to the higher levels particularly in Year 2. In Years 5 and 6, progress in writing is good as there is more consistent challenge to all pupils and many pupils achieve the higher level 5.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but the picture is inconsistent. A review of the work done over the past year indicates that there has been unsatisfactory teaching in some parts of the school, but evidence shows that this has improved recently, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Relationships are good and generally motivate pupils well and pupils have positive attitudes to lessons and to teachers. Where teaching is good lessons are well focused and pupils are given lucid explanations with clear expectations of what is expected in terms of behaviour and work. Where teaching is satisfactory, explanations were sometimes confusing and pupils were not sure what was expected of them. Work is regularly marked but the quality of marking varies. The better marking recognises good work and also identifies clear ways in which pupils can improve, but some teachers tend to make rather vague comments. In recent weeks teachers have begun setting targets for individual pupils and from time to time the better marking refers to these targets. This practice is not yet fully established in the school so it has not yet had time to help raise standards by making the learning better focused.
59. The leadership and management are satisfactory. Recently a much more rigorous approach to monitoring of teaching and standards has been adopted, so that the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to move the subject on. The subject action plan is relevant and the co-ordinator has begun to implement it with some success, but many initiatives are new and it will take some time for any

improvements to show. The quality of the provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. This is satisfactory, and there is an improving emphasis on developing literacy skills across all subjects. The Year 6 work, for example, on the sinking of the Mary Rose produced some high quality extended writing.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities have been too teacher directed in the past so that pupils lack confidence to tackle problems independently.
- The system for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress is satisfactory, but not yet used consistently to plan work matched to pupils' abilities.
- More able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- The marking of pupils' work has improved recently, but remains inconsistent.

Commentary

61. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2003 were well below the national average. Standards have declined significantly since the last inspection. Due to recent initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning, all groups of pupils are more enthusiastic about learning, and standards at the end of Year 2 have started to rise. Inspection findings indicate that a larger proportion of pupils are attaining the expected level 2. However, few pupils are attaining the higher level 3. As a result, standards at the end of Year 2 are below national expectations and pupils' level of achievement is unsatisfactory in relation to their capabilities. This is the same for all groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language.
62. Inspection evidence indicates that standards at the end of Year 6, despite some improvement in the number of pupils attaining the expected level 4, are well below the national average. This cohort attained below average standards in their Year 2 national tests in 2000. Pupils have not made sufficient progress since then, and their level of achievement is unsatisfactory. Over time, girls have performed less well than boys in the national tests at the end of Year 6, but during the inspection there was no significant difference observed between the attainment of girls and boys. Recently, evidence shows that in Year 6, all groups of pupils, including those speaking English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, have made good progress in lessons, because of improved teaching and good quality support from Ethnic Minority Achievement support staff. However, this has not had time to affect overall standards attained, as pupils have significant gaps in their learning.
63. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Over time, in all year groups, pupils' work has been too closely directed by teachers who have been too reliant on commercial schemes of work. Marking has not been supportive of learning, and activities have not been challenging or well matched to pupils' level of ability. In addition, there have been too few opportunities for pupils to undertake and develop their

own investigational skills, as most work is in the form of workbooks or sheets of exercises, which requires the pupils to record their answers formally using one method, rather than developing a more practical approach that uses a range of methods. As a result, pupils of all abilities have had very few well planned opportunities to devise their own methods and so improve their own problem solving techniques. Consequently, many pupils find it difficult to complete mathematical questions that involve analysing and understanding problems expressed in words. This is the weakest aspect of their learning.

64. There is evidence that some of these weaknesses are now being addressed, so that the quality of teaching and learning during the inspection was satisfactory, with some good teaching observed. The recently introduced system for checking and tracking pupils' progress is providing teachers with a useful tool with which to adapt their planning, and there has been a move away from commercial schemes. As a result, teachers are now better able to adapt their teaching approaches to make learning more interesting and relevant for pupils. However, in some year groups teachers' expectations are still too low, so that more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged, while in most classes, less able pupils remain too reliant on support.
65. The leadership and management of the subject are now satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has sought advice and a more rigorous analysis of assessment data has provided the school with a good range of information with which to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. A detailed audit of the subject has recently been undertaken and improvement initiatives established. These are slowly having an effect on raising standards but have not yet been in place long enough to have influenced overall standards. The school is now in a better position to effect further improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. There are a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects such as information and communication technology, geography and design and technology. As a result, pupils are beginning to recognise how they can use their mathematical skills as a tool to make learning more meaningful in other subjects. However these opportunities are not yet consistently planned or developed.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory teaching over time has led to unsatisfactory achievement and standards gradually falling.
- Pupils are interested in the subject and keen to learn. They are given some good opportunities to co-operate and work together.
- Systems for assessment and record keeping are unsatisfactory, as are systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for individual children and groups.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is ineffective.

Commentary

67. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below national expectations. Inspection evidence indicates more pupils are likely to achieve the expected levels in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, and in national tests in Year 6 this year. As a result, standards are likely to be higher than those in 2003 tests which were well below national expectations. This reflects the recent improvement to teaching and learning. During the inspection no difference was found between the standards of attainment of boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The achievement of all groups of pupils is unsatisfactory. Provision and standards have deteriorated since the last inspection. This is because the school has not monitored the provision in order to identify why standards have fallen and to affect specific improvement initiatives.
68. Although teaching over time has been judged to be unsatisfactory, all teaching seen as part of the inspection was at least satisfactory, and many lessons observed were good. This is a direct result of rigorous monitoring by the interim headteacher. In the good lessons there is a strong emphasis on practical work and clear explanations. In lessons where the strongest learning takes place teachers challenge pupils well to think for themselves, such as to work out a way of carrying out their own investigation, or plan their own questions. In these lessons, work is well matched to the particular needs of pupils and more-able pupils are given good challenges and opportunities to plan their own work. In spite of the current improvements in teaching and learning, inspection evidence reveals significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and investigation skills. Over time there has been a high degree of teacher direction. Work has not been sufficiently challenging and there has not been a systematic development of pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. There has been too much reliance on copying out, and teacher prepared written exercises in some classes, that not only limits their opportunities to write for themselves, but were the same for all abilities of pupil. Marking has been superficial and has not focussed on moving learning forward.
69. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. This is because too little monitoring and analysis of teaching standards or pupils' work has regularly taken place and weaknesses have not been tackled. Systems for assessment and record keeping have been confused with too little regular testing to be able to compare pupils with national norms or track their progress precisely. With recent support and guidance the co-ordinator has started to plan improvements. A comprehensive testing and record keeping system is ready to be put in place along with a monitoring system. The co-ordinator, has good subject knowledge, and is a good practitioner. However, she does not have sufficient non-teaching time to fully evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, provide model lessons, and to ensure that the new systems are being consistently applied.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology lessons in Year 2 and Year 5.
- More able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.
- Computers in classrooms are not used sufficiently and this hinders progress.

- Pupils confidently use a variety of computer programs.
- There is unsatisfactory use of assessment.

Commentary

70. As found at the last inspection, standards meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make satisfactory progress and their achievement is satisfactory overall.
71. Standards are rising in Year 2 and Year 6 because the teachers have expertise in the subject and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Across the school, most pupils are motivated by the work and concentrate well. Many pupils use computers at home and this supports positively their computer skills. Pupils who learn English as an additional language, and pupils who have special educational needs achieve at the same rate as their classmates in relation to their earlier learning and capabilities. However, the more able pupils are not always given hard enough work and on these occasions they do not make as much progress as they could.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although some unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The shortcomings were unsatisfactory organisation in one lesson and work that was too hard for pupils in another lesson so pupils needed a lot of individual support. As a result, time was wasted and pupils did not learn enough in these lessons. However, effective subject guidance and training from the local education authority has raised teacher confidence. Thus, most teachers have secure expertise and this ensures that teachers and support staff give clear instructions and effectively help pupils overcome difficulties they encounter with computer programs. Teachers make regular and efficient use of the computer suite so most pupils cover a good amount of work in these lessons. The suite is only large enough to hold half a class so the remaining time for information and communication technology is provided through the use of computers within the classroom. These are not used as effectively as they could be so the rate of learning and coverage of some elements of the curriculum slows down to satisfactory.
73. A well-structured assessment system was introduced this year, but teachers are not yet using assessment to match work closely to pupils' different abilities when they work in the computer suite.
74. The leadership and management of information and communication technology are now satisfactory, although the subject currently does not have a designated co-ordinator. Effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the subject, including teaching and learning have not taken place in the past. The interim head teacher is caretaking the role. She has quickly audited the subject and as a result she has a clear view of how to improve it further. There are plans to delegate the subject co-ordination to two teachers. The teachers have expertise in the subject and are keen to develop the subject further. As a result of the recent initiatives there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the time of the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. There is satisfactory use of computers to support pupils' learning in most subjects. In mathematics, Year 6 pupils created spreadsheets and graphs to further their understanding. In science, Year 5 pupils produced graphs and pie charts linked to their work on insulators and electricity. Pupils' learning benefits from the considerable funds that parents raise for information and communication technology resources.

HUMANITIES

76. **History** was sampled. Only one lesson was observed so it is not possible, to make secure judgements about the quality of provision. However, an analysis of work indicates that standards through the school are satisfactory, with some examples of good work. In the one lesson observed, teaching was good. It was well planned, and resources and artefacts about World War 2, supported learning well. Pupils used the Internet effectively to research information about various topics on the war. Personal and spiritual development was effectively promoted as pupils sensitively considered the effects on the family, following the death of a local man during the war. The Year 6 work on the sinking of the Mary Rose has brought together a variety of subjects well. However, although both geography and history have appropriate schemes of work, there are no consistent procedures in the school for assessing and recording how well pupils' subject skills are progressing. This makes it more difficult for teachers to effectively plan work aimed at the different needs of pupils. Currently teachers plan lessons to develop 'topic knowledge', rather than to ensure that pupils' subject skills are progressively developed.

Geography

Provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Some good links with other subjects and field trips make the subject more relevant to pupils and make more effective use of time.
- Marking and assessment are not used consistently to target work aimed to meet the needs of groups and individual pupils
- The procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are unsatisfactory

Commentary

77. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with examples of good work being seen. Pupils' progress and level of achievement are satisfactory overall, but some pupils, especially the more able, are not consistently challenged so that progress is patchy across the school. Pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of support from Ethnic Minority Achievement staff and teaching assistants.
78. In Year 2, pupils show a good knowledge about foods that grow in Mexico and can make useful comparisons between cooking in their own homes and the way that two generations cook in the town of Tucuaro. Teaching is challenging so that most pupils are developing skills of interpreting evidence. Over time pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their mapping skills, but progress slows when maps and the instructions are not clear. Progress is more rapid when effective links with information and communication technology and numeracy are planned and all groups of pupils are challenged. Field trips support pupils' progress well.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching observed. This reflects the recent advice and guidance that teachers have received about their practice. Learning objectives are now shared with pupils, so that they have a better understanding of what is expected. Teaching as a result is more focused. Links with other subjects are being fruitfully developed, to make learning more relevant and

interesting. However, the scrutiny of work shows that in the past there has been unsatisfactory teaching with lack of progress in some areas of the school. Weaknesses remain. Although the work is marked, the marking is not helpful in identifying how pupils can improve. Teachers do not consistently use marking and assessment information to set work aimed at the needs of different pupils.

80. The leadership and management are now satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and what needs to be done. Recently improvements have been made which have had a positive impact on teachers' planning. However, the co-ordinator's role has not been well developed in the past and the procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are not yet effective. The quality of the provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education was inspected in depth because it was an area of weakness in the last inspection and the school has improved the provision. **Art and design** was also inspected in depth because it is considered to be a strength of the school. **Design and technology** and **music** were sampled.

81. In **music**, only two short lessons were observed. It is therefore not possible to make judgements on teaching or overall provision. However, from these lessons and from talking to pupils, evidence indicates that standards of performance are above average at the end of Year 6. The school uses the expertise of a learning assistant well, so that all pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 learn to play the recorder. As a result of careful teaching, pupils' grasp of technical language is impressive. Pupils in Year 4 can follow a musical score well, and most can use correct breathing and finger techniques. In the one music lesson observed, teaching was very good. Detailed and careful planning, coupled with high expectations, ensured that younger pupils delighted in learning about how symbols can be used to describe changing sounds. All pupils played un-tuned percussion instruments well, and could follow the conductor to change the dynamics of their playing. Pupils at the early stages of speaking English and those with special educational needs were sensitively supported and fully involved in the lesson, so all groups of pupils made very good progress.
82. In **design and technology** only one lesson was seen, so it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching or overall provision. Discussion with groups of pupils shows that they are gaining suitable experiences such as designing and making a box and packaging for home-made biscuits. An examination of displayed work and pupils' books in both Year 6 and Year 2 indicates that pupils are given a good range of projects to undertake and skills are systematically being built up and extended. This is an improvement since the last inspection. From this evidence, indications are the standards are in line with the national expectations at the end of Year 6. There is currently no school-wide system for assessment and record keeping, and no monitoring of the subject.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils work creatively with a very wide range of visual and tactile materials and their work is of a very high standard.
- Standards in ceramics are excellent.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

83. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average, and by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6 they have made very good progress and attain standards that are well above average. The skills of the specialist part time teacher are ensuring that provision is very good. Her knowledge of the subject, her very high expectations and her very good thoughtful teaching style enables her pupils to achieve very well overall. She teaches all classes in rotation and much of the time she teaches ceramics with stunning results. Standards in this element are excellent, and the quality of some pupils' work would do justice to much older pupils. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection. The provision adds much to pupils' spiritual and cultural development and has a very positive influence on pupils' enjoyment of school. Most pupils state that art is their favourite subject. In particular, pupils with special educational needs, or those new to speaking English, who may find it difficult to express themselves in lessons, also achieve very well and delight in their achievements.
84. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Pupils' individual style and creativity are developed and nurtured as they move through the school. Pupils are adept at researching, practising and refining their skills using their sketchbooks very well to develop their ideas. Direct teaching includes work on composition and placing objects on the page as well as techniques for using a particular medium, such as pastels. As a result of this thorough teaching, pupils are able to use the correct language to describe their work and are beginning in Year 2 to be able to say sensibly what they feel is good about their work and what could be improved.
85. The subject is very well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator, with support from the specialist teacher. Together they form a very effective team whose work inspires both teachers and pupils to 'reach for the skies'. Visits such as to Henry Moore's work are well used to develop pupils' interest in the subject and it is evident that these visits result in some thought provoking work.

Physical education

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy physical education and try hard in lessons.
- The evaluation of learning by pupils is not consistently used to improve their performance.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is not yet fully developed.

- A good range of additional activities supports learning well.
- There has been no monitoring of teaching and learning.

Commentary

86. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment matches the national expectations and their level of achievement is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds enjoy the subject and try hard in lessons and this has a positive impact on the progress they make. In Year 2, pupils enjoy learning to play cricket. They work well together and most are gaining satisfactory control of balls and can bowl underarm with increasing accuracy. However their batting techniques are more enthusiastic than accurate. When using apparatus, they demonstrate satisfactory control over their movements and are beginning to sequence movements both on and off the apparatus because of careful teaching of basic skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils' games skills have improved since the previous inspection. New resources, the support of outside coaches and an improved range of additional activities, have been influential in this improvement. Teachers are more confident to teach games and dance skills and because basic skills are taught well, pupils are rapidly developing in confidence and ability. Standards are not higher because older pupils have only recently benefited from the improved provision.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In all lessons good attention is paid to ensuring that pupils warm up and cool down, and there is a good emphasis on working together safely. Good emphasis is also made to ensure that key subject vocabulary is used and understood by all pupils, and this supports those pupils at the early stages of speaking English well. However, whilst teachers evaluate learning in lessons and use this to make coaching points, opportunities for pupils to critically evaluate their own work and that of others are not fully developed by all teachers. This is a missed opportunity for pupils to take on board these ideas and try to improve their own performances during the lessons.
88. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard to improve the number of activities on offer, and the school now uses a range of specialist coaches, and additional activities well to enrich the learning opportunities available. Participation in local competitions and residential trips with an interesting range of outdoor pursuits, add much to the quality of the provision, and pupils' social and team building skills. However, teachers currently do not monitor pupils' progress closely enough so that they can adapt their planning. In addition, the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning and so help improve the quality of the provision further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

89. Only one lesson was seen so no secure judgement can be made about the quality of the provision. The development of personal, social, health and citizenship education is an ongoing priority for the school. It is working towards the *Healthy Schools Award*. The development of pupils' self-esteem through Art is a vital part in this aspect of the school's work. The very good "art nurture" group meets weekly. Working with a small number of specially selected pupils over a few weeks, it develops both their artistic flair and makes a very significant contribution to their self confidence and self esteem. Pupils also have regular opportunities to discuss issues, and learn how to make informed choices through the 'Here I Am' programme. There is a sound approach to sex, relationship and drug awareness education. This, together with the good

relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves, helps to promote positive attitudes and well-behaved, sensible pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4);

unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).