

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY

Harlow

LEA area: ESSEX

Unique reference number: 115168

Headteacher: Miss S McGuiggan

Lead inspector: Mr D Wynford-Jones

Dates of inspection: 16 – 18 May 2005

Inspection number: 267044

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:	206
School address:	Tracyes Road Southern Way Harlow Essex
Postcode:	CM18 6JJ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Scanian
Date of previous inspection:	25 – 26 June 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Cross Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary is a popular and oversubscribed school situated on the southern outskirts of Harlow in Essex. The school is slightly smaller than other primary schools. There are 206 pupils in the school. In Years 1-6 there are 176 full time pupils. In the Reception class there are 30 full time pupils. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls in the school, there are no significant gender imbalances in the year groups except for the current Year 2 where there are 9 boys and 22 girls. The pupils are organised chronologically into seven classes. The numbers in the school have remained reasonably consistent over the last five years but have increased significantly since September 2004. Most of the pupils are from catholic families who live in the local area. The local housing is a mix of owner occupied and local authority housing. Overall, the socioeconomic indicators are favourable and this is reflected in the below average proportion, four per cent, who are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry covers a full range but is broadly average overall. About 16 per cent of the pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups, with slightly more pupils of African or Caribbean heritage than from other groups. One pupil is in the early stages of learning English as an additional language; this is well below average. Other pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fluent in speaking English. There are no pupils in public care, refugees or Travellers. Twenty-one pupils are identified as having special needs (10 per cent) which is below the national average; two have statements of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils with a statement is below the national average. The school provides after school care and a breakfast club for pupils. The school was placed into special measures following its inspection in January 2002 because it was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education. Inspectors were critical of many aspects of the school's work. The school was

subsequently visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in July and November 2002 and in March 2003 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues from the inspection report in January 2002. In June 2003, HMI removed the school from special measures.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23138	Mr D Wynford-Jones	Lead inspector	English History English as an additional language
11414	Mrs A Bennett	Lay inspector	
32475	Mr N Butt	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology Music
30506	Mr R Bowers	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art Geography Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Holy Cross Primary is a satisfactory and improving school that provides satisfactory value for money. The standards attained in Years 2 and 6 are average overall. The vast majority of pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school. Their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and governance is good. The school is well placed to improve further.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the leadership of the headteacher promotes a positive ethos which supports inclusion well;
- teaching in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 is good;
- standards in reading, writing and mathematics are improving; pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted well throughout the school; standards in science are too low;
- the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and do not achieve well enough;
- the role of the deputy headteacher and some subject co-ordinators is under developed;
- the monitoring and evaluating of the quality of teaching and pupils' standards are not rigorous enough; assessment procedures are not implemented consistently;
- provision for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- governors take an active part in the development of the school;
- pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and contributes to their progress;
- pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good;
- accommodation is good overall but some toilets and sinks are of an unacceptable standard;
- a good range of extra-curricular activities enhance provision.

Satisfactory progress has made since the last inspection in June 2003 when the school was removed from special measures. The underperformance in Year 2 over the last two years has been addressed so that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are better than they were and significantly so in writing. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved each year although it is unlikely that as many pupils this year will achieve the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science as did so in 2004. The school is aware of the need to provide greater challenge for the more able. The deputy headteacher and many subject co-ordinators have recently been appointed. They have made a satisfactory start, but their roles are still developing. The improved accommodation provides opportunities to teach the information communication and technology curriculum more effectively.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	C	C	E
mathematics	C	E	B	D
science	E	E	C	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.

Overall, **achievement is satisfactory**. Attainment on entry is broadly average. By the end of the Reception class standards are average. The Reception children make good progress

in speaking and listening skills and in personal development. Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were average in reading, and mathematics but below average in writing and science. The results were well below those of similar schools in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Too few pupils attained the higher Level 3 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Several pupils underachieved. Current standards in Year 2 are higher and are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievements in Years 1 to 2 are now satisfactory. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 6, the results were average in English and science and above average in mathematics. The results in 2004 in Year 6 were not as good as similar schools. Standards in the current Year 6 are broadly in line with national averages in English and mathematics but are below average in science. Most of these pupils have made satisfactory progress during this school year; however there remains an element of underachievement among the more able. Pupils throughout the school read well. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. Their achievement is satisfactory. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education including the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 teaching is good. Good teaching was seen in Years 3 and 4. However, in Years 5 and 6, teaching is satisfactory. Members of the support staff contribute well to pupils' learning. In some classes, assessment procedures are not fully in place and pupils are not provided with sufficient guidance about what they should learn next. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of investigative science. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Good use is made of extra curricular activities and educational visits to enhance pupils' learning. The care of pupils is **good**. **Good** links exist with the community and other schools. The good relationships and the friendly atmosphere within the school create a secure environment which promotes learning and enables pupils to achieve satisfactorily.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **satisfactory with good features**. She has a clear overview and she has raised morale. Other key members of staff provide satisfactory leadership though the deputy headteacher and some subject co-ordinators are very recently appointed and their management roles need more time to develop. Performance is monitored but there is a lack of rigour in challenging teachers and analysing the data. The ethos of the school is promoted well. Governance is **good**. Much has been done to improve the office accommodation and to provide an information and communication technology suite. Governors plan to upgrade the toilets and improve the unsatisfactory sink drainage in the classrooms.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are supportive of the school. They value the approachability of the headteacher; that their children like school, make progress and that standards are rising. Parents appreciate the significant improvements in the school over the last two to three years. A few expressed concerns about bullying but these were not substantiated by inspection evidence. Most pupils have positive views of their school, speak highly about their teachers and feel they are making progress in their learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise the achievement of the more able pupils to at least satisfactory levels by providing greater challenge for them in the teaching;
- improve the monitoring of teaching and learning and pupils' progress particularly in Years 5 and 6 in order to improve teaching and raise standards, especially in science;
- improve consistency of assessment and guidance to pupils on how to improve their work;
- ensure the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators continue to develop their roles and responsibilities in order to raise standards;
- urgently upgrade the toilet facilities and the classroom sink drainage system.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory overall** it is good in the Reception class and satisfactory in Years 1- 4. There is some underachievement in Years 5 and 6. However, most of these pupils have made satisfactory progress this school year. Standards attained are **broadly average**. In the Foundation Stage the vast majority of children are on track to meet or exceed the early learning goals¹. In Year 2, standards in reading are above average, in writing, mathematics and science they are average. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average in English and mathematics but below average in science. Standards in information and communication technology are average in Year 2 and in Year 6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. Many of the more able pupils and those who are gifted and talented do not achieve sufficiently high standards. The achievement of other groups is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics are rising on a year by year basis. Standards in science are not high enough.
- The decline in standards in Years 1 and 2 has been halted. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are improving.
- Children in the Reception class achieve well.
- Many of the older more able pupils and those who are gifted and talented do not achieve sufficiently high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- In all classes, pupils are given good opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
- The vast majority of pupils are reading well.

Commentary

1. Pupils in the Reception class and those in Year 2 are reaching the standards expected nationally. In Years 3 and 4, standards are rising and in Years 5 and 6 they are broadly in line with national averages, but overall are not as high as they should be. There is an overall trend of improvement in the school.
2. The majority of children enter the Reception class with levels of attainment similar to those expected for their age. They settle into the routines of the Reception class quickly and are confident learners. Progress in communication, language and literacy is good, reflecting the strong emphasis placed on this area in teaching and learning. Progress in personal, social and emotional development and creative development are also good. By the end of the Reception year, most children make satisfactory progress in the other areas of learning and attain or exceed the national goals for early learning. Their achievement is good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in reading and developing their speaking skills, and satisfactory progress in writing,

¹ The Early Learning Goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children are aiming to attain by the end of their Reception year in six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

mathematics and developing their ability to listen. They make only just satisfactory progress in science. Overall, the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory.

3. More pupils are attaining or exceeding the expected levels in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making better progress because teaching is more effective. In Years 3 and 4, achievement in English and mathematics is satisfactory. However, in Year 6 standards in English and mathematics are barely in line with national averages. In these subjects, too few pupils are working securely at Level 4, the expected level for 11 year old pupils. Although the vast majority of pupils in Years 5 and 6 have made satisfactory progress during this school year, and standards are improving, there remains an element of underachievement, particularly for the more able pupils in both Years 5 and 6.
4. Standards in science in Years 3-6 are below the national average. Most pupils have made satisfactory progress in developing their skills of scientific enquiry, but their knowledge of life processes and living things, physical processes, materials and their properties is not sufficiently well developed. Pupils' knowledge and use of information and communication technology is developing satisfactorily, they use the computers in the computer suite confidently.
5. Pupils with special educational needs, and pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. The supportive teaching and the good additional support provided in classrooms means that these pupils achieve satisfactorily. They have the confidence to take part in all classroom activities and work in small groups. Effective use is made of specific targets in pupils' individual education plans to help them develop strategies to tackle their learning needs. The achievement of the more able and gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory. During the inspection there are no apparent significant differences in the overall performance of boys and girls or other groups of pupils at any age.
6. In 2004, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was well above the national average in English and mathematics but below in science. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5, was above the national average in mathematics, in line in science but below in English. Based on the pupils Year 2 national test results in 2001, the progress of the majority of pupils in Years 3-6 was less than expected. When compared to similar schools the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was in line in English and mathematics but well below in science. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was below in mathematics, and well below in English and science when compared to the results in similar schools.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (26.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.2 (25.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.9 (26.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

7. The school took part in the National Pilot for the end of Year 2 assessment in the 2004. This replaced the end of Year 2 standard assessment tests. Based on teacher assessments, standards were judged to be in line with the national average in reading

and mathematics and below in writing and science. The standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science were well below those of similar schools. Some pupils underachieved in writing in 2003 and in 2004 as too few achieved Level 3. These pupils, currently in Years 3 and 4 have made good progress because of higher teacher expectations and greater consistency in teaching. They are working at a reasonable level and their achievement is now satisfactory. There was significant underachievement in the Year 2 science standards in 2003 and 2004. The pupils currently in Years 3 and 4 have made reasonable progress. Although most are working at the appropriate levels some are still not achieving their full potential.

8. Standards in writing in this year's Year 2 are much higher and a reasonable number of pupils are working at Level 2A with elements of Level 3. Pupils' achievement in Year 2 in writing is now broadly satisfactory. Standards in reading are above average and average in mathematics and science.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.5 (13.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.1 (17.0)	16.2 (16.3)

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

9. No secure judgments were made on standards and achievement in history, geography, design and technology, and art and design because these subjects were not a focus of the inspection. Limited evidence from sampling pupils' work shows that in each of these non-core subjects the pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. In music and physical education, the evidence is too limited to make an overall judgement about achievement or standards. Religious Education is inspected by the Diocesan Inspection Team and is the subject of a separate report.
10. The most significant factors leading to the improvement in standards is the determination of the teachers to improve the quality of their teaching, the support provided by the teaching assistants and the focus on raising the pupils' expectations on what they can achieve. In many lessons, particularly in the Reception class and in Years 1-4, the good attitude shown by the pupils towards their learning is also a significant contributory factor in raising standards. However, target setting is underdeveloped and those that are set give insufficient guidance to learning. This has contributed to the well below average performance in science by the end of Year 6 and has left teachers without firmly established expectations for the end of Year 2. The school has a register for those pupils it has identified as gifted and talented. Although there are some extension activities designed for these pupils, the provision is minimal.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall pupils have **good** attitudes toward school and behave **well**. Their attendance is **satisfactory**, but too many pupils arrive late. The school makes **good** provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are best for younger pupils.
- There are good opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- Punctuality is an issue for the school.
- Pupils are not encouraged to value their own cultures enough.

Commentary

11. Pupils arrive happily for school in the morning, confident of daily routines and ready for work. The younger pupils develop good working attitudes, and enjoy getting on with the tasks they are given. When teachers harness their enthusiasm, on a well-explained task that is of interest, pupils respond, behave and achieve well. Year 3 pupils listened carefully and behaved very well when visited by three fire and rescue officers, and were rewarded with time on the fire engine which brought a sense of excitement to their learning. When tasks are unclear or do not fully engage the interests of pupils, they do not make sufficient progress. Pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, concentrate less, are inclined to be chatty, and sometimes they just busy themselves ineffectively.
12. Relationships between pupils are good throughout the school. They work together willingly. Only rarely is there a dispute about co-operating. Good behaviour is expected, and there are clear rules so that pupils understand right and wrong. Behaviour is good at lunch, in assembly and on the playground. Incidents of anti-social behaviour are rare because the school expects pupils to get on with each other. A few parents expressed concerns about bullying but inspectors found no evidence to warrant the concerns. No incidents of a racist nature have been reported.
13. Pupils respect all the adults who work in the school, and are confident that any concerns will be dealt with. From the start they are given small routine class duties, and the oldest pupils enjoy having additional whole-school responsibilities. They like the fact that their successes are rewarded in a weekly achievement assembly. By the time they leave school they are confident young people. The school is providing well for their moral and their social development.
14. The school makes good provision for pupils spiritually. This is shown in the prayers, written by Year 6 pupils, showing real empathy for a wide range of peoples involved in the tsunami. Assemblies are important times of prayer and reflection. Pupils show great respect for aspects of the Catholic faith, and they learn to respect other faiths.
15. The curriculum contains many good examples of cultural enrichment, for example in the recent art week. However there is an under-used resource because not enough is done to encourage pupils to celebrate and reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds represented in the school.

Attendance

16. Attendance is broadly in line with the national median, but the rate of unauthorised absence is higher. This reflects the school's concern about the number of term time holidays. The school is also concerned about the number of pupils who arrive at school late each morning, and it is monitoring both. This is good practice, but decisions need to be made and action taken so that absence and lateness are followed up with more rigour. There have been no exclusions.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) – 2003/04

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.9
National data	5.1	National data	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for the majority of its pupils. Teaching is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. The use of assessment is good in the Foundation Stage, and broadly satisfactory in Years 1 - 6. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory, but there are weaknesses. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra curricular activities. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, their achievement is broadly satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6, there is rarely any good or better teaching. Assessment systems are satisfactory overall, but with some weaknesses.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers encourage pupils to work hard and take a full part in lessons.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good.
- In many lessons there is a clear focus on what it is pupils are going to learn.
- In some lessons the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Teaching is almost entirely satisfactory rather than good in Years 5 and 6.
- Teaching in English is strong, but in science it is weak.
- Pupils do not always understand what they have to do to improve.

Commentary**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection 38 in lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (3%)	15 (39%)	21 (55%)	1 (3%)	0	0

- Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the majority of lessons. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed. The proportion of good or better lessons seen is lower than normally found in most schools. The good teaching was concentrated in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 was not as strong. It is better in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. In these older year groups hardly any good teaching was seen. This was because teachers did not allow pupils to discuss their learning enough or allow them sufficient independence to find things out for themselves. Teaching was often quite formal. This affected the more able pupils in particular, who were directed too closely and not allowed the freedom to make links in their learning and try out new ideas.

18. In the Foundation Stage every lesson seen was taught to a good standard, and there are some very good elements. Work is planned carefully to embrace all the areas of learning and particularly good use is made of the outside environment. Activities are practical and fun, and the teacher keeps things moving at a rapid pace. Children are excited about their learning and consequently make good progress. For example a group of children used cardboard boxes to build themselves a fort and enjoyed imagining sieges and battles. This good practice is continued in much of Year 1 and 2, with well planned lessons and objectives that are very clear and made known to the pupils. In Years 3 and 4, teachers have good ideas and plan interesting work for pupils to do but sometimes the pace slips or too much time is spent explaining things. Pupils want to learn and respond enthusiastically to effective teaching. In most classes teachers encourage pupils to take a full part by using a range of strategies, such as talking to a partner or writing answers on an individual whiteboard.
19. Teachers provide satisfactory support for pupils with English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs. They direct the teaching assistants well. The teaching assistants provide good support to these pupils. As a result the pupils are able to take part in the lesson, make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily. Although the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, pupil achievement is satisfactory because most of the teaching is only satisfactory.
20. All adults manage behaviour well. There are good relationships and non-teaching staff provide valuable support for learning. There is a sensitive and well-managed approach to pupils with behavioural difficulties, with teaching assistants and teachers providing encouraging but firm guidance. As a result, classrooms are calm and orderly with a purposeful atmosphere. Teaching in English is generally strong, with teachers confident about the range of strategies they are using to improve reading and writing. In science teaching is less confident and lessons are not always well planned. In one unsatisfactory lesson on sound, pupils became over-excited because they were not fully clear what was required of them, and they achieved very little.
21. The school has put in place satisfactory systems to track pupils' progress and these are beginning to identify groups of pupils who would benefit from additional support. At present there is some duplication and too much data is being used, some of which is not readily compatible. This leads to confusion, so that teachers are not entirely clear about the standards some pupils are reaching. In the past assessments for the Year 2 pupils have not always been reliable due to a lack of knowledge or experience. This in turn makes it difficult to track progress in Years 3 to 6 to see how well pupils are doing over time. Because of this uncertainty, pupils themselves are unclear how well they are doing and marking contributes little to inform them. Targets are written in language that many do not understand or have little relevance to what they are presently learning. Assessment in science is not sufficient or rigorous enough.

THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is **satisfactory** and meets statutory requirements. The school provides a **good** range of opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources for learning are **good**, but there are some concerns. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a satisfactory overall curriculum plan which ensures a balance between subjects and provides an overall cross-curricular structure, but there is lack of progression of skills and concepts in many subjects.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is enhanced well through a range of extra curricular activities.
- The information and communication technology suite provides a very good learning resource but is not used to its full potential.

Commentary

22. The school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum in which subjects are taught in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and provides pupils with rich and exciting activities. There is a commitment by the school to provide a curriculum structure which enhances the quality of pupils' learning through developing the links between subjects. In a Year 2 science lesson, pupils' language development was enhanced well through pupils talking to each other and to the teacher about their observations on differences between plants. Information and communication technology is sometimes used to develop skills in other subjects but opportunities are not taken to use information and communication technology to extend learning in the classrooms and the information and communication technology suite is underused. The newly opened library is a good resource but more time is needed for its use to become fully established.
23. The school uses a combination of national and published schemes of work to provide an effective basic structure for many subjects and which link with the school's medium term cross-curricular plan. Planning, however, is not consistent across the school and it lacks focus upon the progression of skills and concepts in many subjects. As a result, teaching is not always focused upon the learning outcomes and the more able pupils in particular do not make the progress of which they are capable. The school has already identified this as an issue for development and has plans for improvement in place.
24. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a good range of extra curricular activities. Pupils are enthusiastic about the activities available which include football, art and craft, Rosary and music clubs. Pupils enjoy a wide range of visitors that extend their experiences and enrich the curriculum. Visitors include representatives from a variety of faiths, local police, fire service, and 'library' monitor trainers for pupils of Years 5 and 6. All pupils experience a wide variety of visits which stimulate their interest and enjoyment in learning. The residential visit to Llwyn Filly provides pupils of Year 6 with opportunities to engage in activities such as abseiling, archery, canoeing and horse riding. A pupil with severe physical and learning difficulties was accommodated very well during the recent residential visit and, due to the efforts of the staff and pupils he engaged in all activities. Not only did the pupil benefit, but the experience added to the personal development of all pupils. Pupils from all other years visit places such as Kentwell Hall to engage in Tudor activities and Stevenage District Museum as part of the Victorian work. These visits support many areas of the curriculum and make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
25. The school effectively identifies those pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Class teachers and teaching assistants are aware of the needs of these pupils and provide appropriate support. Individual education plans ensure that pupils gain full access to the whole curriculum. Most individual education plans provide appropriate targets for pupils to achieve, but some

pupils' targets are centred more upon the activity required rather than the learning outcome. The requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are met.

26. Overall, the accommodation is good. The field, play areas and recent new building developments provide good learning and working environments. However, there is a lack of covered outdoor areas for the Foundation Stage children. The condition of the toilets and the open sink drains in the classrooms are a hazard to pupils' health. This needs to be rectified as a matter of urgency. There are sufficient teaching and support staff with qualifications and experience to meet the demands of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Members of staff make **good** provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Most teachers know their pupils well and provide **satisfactory** support and guidance for personal and academic development. Pupils are **satisfactorily** involved in school life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good levels of care.
- There are inconsistencies in the monitoring of pupils' personal development.
- Pupils are not clear enough about how to improve their work.
- Pupil toilets and classroom sink drains need urgent refurbishment.

Commentary

27. Pupils are well known and cared for throughout the day. There are sufficient members of staff qualified in first aid and a good medical area where pupils who are unwell can be supervised. Health and safety procedures are in place. The newly appointed caretaker is using his skills well on maintenance tasks but he would benefit from training in health and safety. The pupil toilets and the open drains from the classroom sinks are in urgent need of refurbishment.
28. Playtimes are well used and there is plenty for pupils to do. Supervision is good. Turnover of midday supervisors has been high, and so there are problems of continuity and of training. Recent good co-operation with the pre-school on site has helped the school to recruit mothers for the role. Pupils are confident that they could find an adult in school to confide in if the need arose. Arrangements for child protection conform to those agreed locally.
29. Parents confirm that there are satisfactory arrangements when their child starts school. Most teachers know their pupils well but monitoring of their personal development is too varied. In the best examples teachers keep information alongside academic progress, so that good they have a complete picture of the pupil and can both give clear day-to-day guidance and make informed comments at parents' consultation meetings and on end of year reports. There is a need for clear guidance about what to record about personal development and about using the information.
30. Pupils are not clear enough about how to improve their work. They need better information, in language they can understand, about both their own progress and of the standards they are capable of achieving. The school council's contribution is useful but restricted in its perspective. Pupils are capable of greater involvement in whole-school activities and priorities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents think highly of the school and are confident about its provision for their children. The school has satisfactory links with parents and good links with its local community and other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents need to be helped to be more active helping to raise standards
- There is good quality information about the curriculum, but it is too long
- Annual reports do not give useful enough information on pupils' progress
- Useful links have been established with local schools network

Commentary

31. The school has the confidence and support of its parents. They know that their children are happy in school, and that they can approach the school if they have any concerns. Parents get involved in helping and in raising funds for the school. A small number of parents attended the recent mathematics evening session but overall, apart from reading at home with the youngest pupils, they are not sufficiently involved in helping to raise their children's achievements.
32. Parents of pupils with special educational needs know who the special educational needs coordinator is, are very pleased with the provision made for pupils with special educational needs and feel informed and involved. However, the school is not making clear enough to the vast majority of parents how their children are getting on. Annual reports do not tell them this, nor do they give specific ways in which parents can help their child to make progress. The school sends out detailed information about what pupils will be learning each term, but any good ideas, like which authors to read, are lost in the mass of detail. Parents are kept well informed about events through the weekly newsletter. A parent governor produced a parent version of the school development plan which is a good example of how the school could consider its audience in everything it sends out.
33. The school is an active member of its Catholic community and parents choose it for their children because of its ethos. There are close links with the parish and the feeder Catholic secondary school. Good use is made of the community through initiatives to promote sport through the local town football club, and swimming lessons and competitions using an external provider.
34. Useful links with other schools have been established through a national initiative to develop a local "Primary Schools Network". The schools are working together to raise standards in mathematics by focussing on investigative skills in mathematics. Links with other schools to moderate teachers' assessment of pupils work for example in writing, have not been established. The adjacent secondary school's pool is used for swimming lessons and there are useful links with the on-site pre-school. A breakfast and an after-school club are useful additions for working parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory overall**. The leadership of the headteacher is **satisfactory** with good features. The leadership of other key staff is **satisfactory** as is the management of the school. Governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership by the headteacher effectively promotes the Catholic ethos of the school and supports inclusion well.
- Day to day management is good; there is a calm atmosphere and the school operates well.
- A good school development plan focuses on the key areas for improvement.
- The governance of the school is good. Governors are proactive, supportive of, and committed to the school.
- Many key members of staff are new in post and are still to develop their roles.
- There is a lack of rigour in checking the accuracy of assessment data, and analysing the results.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough.

Commentary

35. The headteacher has a clear overview for the development of the school. Much work has been done to develop positive relationships with parents, links with other schools and to creating a team committed to raising standards and providing pupils with a good education. Satisfactory systems have been put into place which focus on raising standards and are beginning to have an effect, particularly in the Reception class and in Years 1-4. However, whilst there have been significant improvements since the school was placed into special measures approximately three and a half years ago, the school's performance has not been sufficiently analysed and compared with the national picture. For example, the school considers teaching to be good, however when asked to describe the quality of teaching, the description matched that of satisfactory teaching.
36. The headteacher and senior staff provide satisfactory role models for staff and pupils. They promote the inclusive ethos of the school well. All groups of pupils are made welcome. This contributes much to the pupils' social development and prepares them for living in the wider community. The deputy headteacher and many of the subject co-ordinators have recently been appointed. Most co-ordinators have compiled detailed subject files and have undertaken an audit of provision within the school. Co-ordinators are able to identify the relative strengths and areas for development in their respective subjects. They have a good understanding of what they have to do to develop their respective roles as co-ordinators. This includes monitoring and evaluating the quality of teachers' planning and teaching, pupils' learning and the development of assessment within their subject area. Satisfactory subject developments plans have been drawn up and incorporated into the school development plan. The deputy headteacher is loyal to the school and she is beginning to provide support in the leadership of the school. The school is well placed to develop the roles of the senior management team and the co-ordinators in order to achieve higher standards.
37. Management is satisfactory. The day-to-day management of the school is good. The headteacher and senior teachers work together effectively to ensure the school

operates in a calm, purposeful and methodical manner. The school secretaries and the caretaker provide a re-assuring and welcoming presence for pupils and visitors alike.

38. The quality of school development plan is good. The priorities are based on a good understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school and focuses on improving standards. The actions are appropriate and success criteria clear. Appropriate references are made to finances and cost. The involvement of the governors in drafting and finalising and monitoring the school development plan is good.
39. Arrangements for performance management are satisfactory. The outcomes have been used appropriately to support teachers in their professional development and to help to improve the standards achieved by the pupils. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are good. The recently revised staff handbook provides new and supply staff with useful basic information. Good links have been established with other primary schools and the local secondary school. A group of primary schools have recently been successful in bidding to become involved in a National Primary Strategy Network focussing on raising standards in mathematics. At the instigation of a parent governor, arrangements have been made for pupils to visit the nearby secondary school to use the swimming pool. This ensures that effective use is made of time and most pupils are able to achieve the requirements of the Physical Education National Curriculum and are able to swim twenty five meters by the age of eleven.
40. However, the senior management team and co-ordinators are not sufficiently rigorous and analytical in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, or in the assessment of pupils' work and in holding teachers to account. As a result, some teachers do not accurately assess pupils' work against the National Curriculum attainment target level descriptors. This leads a lack of challenge for some pupils, particularly the more able, as some teachers believe the pupils are working at a higher level than they are in practice. The leadership team does not always ensure effective use of resources, particularly the use of computers within the classrooms.
41. The governance of the school is good. Statutory requirements are met. Governors are proactive, supportive of, and committed to the school. They are proud of the school's achievements over the last three years and they have worked hard to improve the accommodation to enable the curriculum to be taught more effectively. They are aware of the need to improve the conditions in the toilets and the drainage from the sinks in the classrooms. Several governors spend a considerable amount of time working as volunteers in the classrooms, undertaking governors monitoring visits and in liaising with their allocated subject co-ordinator. This has enabled the governors to make valuable contributions to the identification of priorities for the school development plan and for the governors' development plan. The governors provide reasonable challenge and are fully aware of the strengths and areas for development within the school. However, governors tend to compare the school's current performance with that of the school three years ago when it went into special measures, and not against that of all schools. Governors are keen to promote an inclusive education for the pupils and have supported the provision of special education well. However, the appointment of a teacher governor as the governor for special educational needs is inappropriate, as it would be difficult for the teacher to hold the headteacher to account if there were issues over special educational needs provision. Appropriate consideration has been given to promote race equality and for

those with disabilities. The governors are aware of the need to develop further the provision for more able pupils.

42. The school and the governors monitor the financial expenditure well. The newly appointed bursar is very efficient and ensures that the principles of best value are applied effectively. There are good systems in place to ensure that accurate records of projected and actual expenditure are maintained. Although the expenditure per pupil last year was well above average, this can be accounted for by the building, furniture, equipment costs and repayment of an overspend from the previous year. The projected expenditure per pupil for this financial year is comparable to similar schools. A small carry forward to 2006 / 07 is predicted. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	756,118
Total expenditure	711,294
Expenditure per pupil	3,824

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-33,268
Balance carried forward to the next	11,556

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**. The children are taught in one class by a class teacher. They achieve well because of consistently good teaching, a diverse and exciting curriculum and effective leadership and management. From a standard upon entry that is broadly average children make good progress and leave the Reception class largely meeting and in many cases exceeding the expected goals in all six areas of learning. Teaching and learning in the Foundation stage was sampled rather than inspected in detail.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The coordinator knows the learning needs of young children very well.
- Teaching and learning are always at least good.
- Children's creativity is well developed through imaginative activities.
- There is a strong team of adults supporting learning.
- There is no covered area for use during periods of inclement weather.

Commentary

43. All children start school in the September before their fifth birthday. They enter the Reception class with reasonable social skills but lacking in knowledge and understanding of the world and below average in creative and physical development. Their early literacy and numeracy skills are as expected. While there is a wide variation standards overall upon entry are broadly average. By the time they leave they have caught up in all areas of learning and exceed the early learning goals in most aspects. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are average. This good achievement is a result of the constantly effective and imaginative teaching they receive, and careful assessment of their progress. The coordinator is very experienced. She has boundless energy and enthusiasm, which fires up the children and creates in them a passion for learning. Their personal social and emotional development progresses quickly and they are able to work cooperatively together and independently for sustained periods, observing classroom routines as a matter of course.
44. In **communication language and literacy**, phonics is very well taught through the Early Reading Research project. This helps children to learn rapidly the sounds they need to read text with confidence. Efficient routines ensure books are changed regularly and all children read to adults. They are taught a love of books and they enjoy sharing stories and discussing their big book. Strong links are made to the other areas of learning. For example children heard a story about a man whose boat sank and immediately proceeded to experiment with floating and sinking. Many children can write their own names legibly and make coherent sentences.
45. In **mathematical development** the outside space is very effectively used to teach pupils early number skills such as counting on and back along a number line and making a tally. They jump and hop, affix numbers to clothes lines and make chalk marks on the ground. Many are counting to twenty and learning simple doubles. They are learning about regular 2D shapes.

46. Despite little experience prior to coming to school many of the children gain a **knowledge and understanding of the world** through many exciting and fun activities, and regular use of computers. There are many opportunities to develop their growing awareness through role-play, such as the travel agent's or the boat. The curriculum is enriched by regular visits to support topic work. This year they have been to the woods, a wildlife park and are due to ride on a steam train. Work is attractively presented in topic books that include photographs of the children taking part, creating a valuable record of their experiences.
47. Their **creative development** is fostered through a wide variety of relevant and exciting activities. Again very good use is made of the outdoors for large-scale collage work, building with bricks and boxes and imaginative play. Adults intervene sensitively to move them on in their thinking without becoming intrusive. Children have regular slots in the hall for **physical development** and access to wheeled toys, so that they learn to move their bodies and other vehicles with increasing skill. They have the use of manipulative toys and playdough to develop strength in their fingers, and a range of construction kits. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that all pupils received vigorous exercise and were encouraged to find out how exercise affected their heart rate. These pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson, responded well to the teacher and were highly motivated throughout.
48. From the moment they come in routines are well established and a secure caring environment created in which they can flourish. Each day is a new adventure and races by, so that they are sorry to have to go home. Links with the main feeder pre-school are effective, and a series of induction events take place. All adults maintain careful records of progress, making notes as they go along and transferring them into the Foundation Stage Profile. They know the children very well and match work well to their capabilities. The high standards observed at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and the Foundation Stage remains a main strength of the school. The only area of weakness is the lack of a covered play area to enable children to go outside even if the weather is not good.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the school are rising.
- Pupils are developing their speaking and reading skills well.
- Writing standards have improved in Year 2.
- Teaching does not sufficiently challenge the most able.

Commentary

49. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards in reading and writing are improving. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and broadly in line in Year 6. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in Years 1 - 4 is good. Most pupils', including pupils with special educational needs and

those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. Achievement is better in Years 1 to 4 than in Years 5 to 6. It is satisfactory in the former and broadly satisfactory in the latter. The more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.

50. In the end of Year 6 national tests in 2004, standards in English were average but well below those in similar schools. School records indicate that the progress these pupils made from the end of Year 2 was much lower than expected given their prior attainment in Year 2. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was well above the national average and in line with similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was below all schools nationally and well below similar schools. This suggests underachievement by the more able pupils. However, in the past assessments for the Year 2 pupils have not always been reliable due to a lack of knowledge or experience. This in turn makes it difficult to track progress in Years 3 to 6 to see how well pupils are doing over time.
51. The school took part in the 2004 teacher assessment trials for pupils in Year 2. Teachers assessed that the standards in Year 2 were similar to the national average in reading and below average in writing. Compared to similar schools, standards were well below average in both reading and writing. Ninety six per cent of pupils attained Level 2 in reading; this was well above the national average. In writing, eighty six per cent attained Level 2; this was in line with the national average. However the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was well below the national average in reading and writing. As these pupils began in Year 1 with average standards, this indicates unsatisfactory achievement in writing and to some extent in reading for the more able pupils.
52. In all classes, the vast majority of pupils are developing their speaking skills well. They are articulate, speak confidently and are keen to share their ideas. In some classes, the range of vocabulary the pupils use is limited. They do not fully explore the use of the full range of words to describe situations or feelings. Pupils listening skills are developing satisfactorily. However, the older pupils are not as keen to listen to others.
53. The majority of pupils make good progress in their reading. They enter Year 1 with average levels of attainment. In Year 2 they read with good expression and accuracy and are able to identify the main points from the text they are reading. The majority of pupils are reading comfortably at Level 2, and use phonics to help them read unfamiliar words. Pupils use their reading skills to support their learning in other subjects. For example, in a science lesson the pupils researched different types of plants and read about the different shapes, textures and colours of leaves.
54. In Year 6 pupils read with confidence, expression and good pace. They can talk about their favourite authors, the books they have written and make suggestions on how the story could be changed. They are to compare the works of different authors and give reasons why they prefer one author to another.
55. In writing, standards in Year 1 are above average. In Years 2 – 4, standards are average. In Years 5 and 6, standards are broadly average. There are increasing strengths in writing in Years 1 and 2 and to some extent in Years 3 and 4. Given the recent history of the school, this suggests achievement is satisfactory overall.
56. Many pupils in Year 2 write with confidence in lively and generally interesting ways. They use good techniques to improve their writing including planning and drafting.

They know that the use of adjectives bring interest and use this approach when writing accounts, stories, poems, letters or postcards. More able pupils use more sophisticated approaches to build up drama and repetition to emphasise, for example "very, very, very small". Their ability to spell correctly is developing satisfactorily. School records show that the boys were previously performing better than the girls in writing. This is contrary to the national picture. This pattern is not evident within the current Year 2 and the girls in Year 3 appear to have progressed well and are now performing at a similar level to the boys. The improvement in writing in Year 2 is due to good teaching and a clear focus on raising pupil expectations on what they can achieve.

57. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average. Work in books indicates that pupils have made satisfactory progress during this school year and are writing more interesting and complex sentence with appropriate punctuation. Pupils are given the opportunity to practise their writing skills beyond the literacy lessons, with a strong emphasis on the importance of choosing an appropriate style for specific purposes and audience. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of the importance of engaging the interest of the reader and often start their stories with imaginative sentences. Pupils know how to use a dictionary and thesaurus correctly.
58. Pupils' handwriting skills are being developed well in Years 1- 4, many pupils in Year 2 can write in neat joined script, but this is not always evident in all their writing. In Years 5 and 6 the general presentation of the work is untidy and many pupils do not write neatly enough.
59. In Year 6, a significant number of pupils are working at the top end of Level 3 and the lower end of Level 4. Few pupils are working comfortably within level 5. Overall, standards are broadly in line with national expectations although there are fewer pupils are working at the higher Level 5, which may result in slightly lower standards in the 2005 national tests than in 2004. This is partly due to the lack of challenge for the more able and the significant number of new pupils who joined the class in this school year. However, the vast majority of these pupils have made satisfactory progress during this school year.
60. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although good, teaching was observed in Years 1 – 4. Planning draws on the guidance from the National Literacy Strategy, with appropriate focus on word, sentence, and text level work. In all lessons the teachers identify and share the learning objective and success criteria with the pupils and provide them with opportunities at the end of the lesson to assess their own learning. Good support is provided for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Support assistants are well prepared, and know when to help pupils make progress and achieve the lesson's learning objective. Good opportunities for speaking and listening in groups are built into every lesson, allowing pupils to be fully involved in their learning and help them contribute with confidence to whole-class discussion. In the Year 3 class, the teacher made good use of the recently installed interactive white board. She projected an image from the focus book and In this way she was able to draw pupils' attention to the detail, spelling, grammar, and punctuation, as well as demonstrating how meaning can be inferred from a range of "cues". Because of this, pupils with special educational needs were supported well, and the lesson was inclusive. Higher attaining pupils were able to demonstrate satisfactory inference skills.

61. Teachers indicate clearly through group target-setting what pupils need to do to improve their writing. This enables pupils to take responsibility for improving their work. However, not all teachers refer to these targets when marking the pupils' work and some work is not marked. In contrast, marking in some books is of a high standard, which allows pupils to understand what progress they have made and what they can do to raise their level of achievement. Some teachers do not accurately assess pupils' work against National Curriculum attainment target level descriptors. Because of this, some pupils are not achieving sufficiently high standards. The inconsistencies in daily assessment, teacher expectations, the lack of use of information and communication technology in the classrooms, and occasionally teachers not allowing pupils to take enough initiative in lessons, for example, in reading a key text or writing up ideas from class discussions are restricting pupils' progress.
62. The leadership and management of the subject are broadly satisfactory. The literacy co-ordinator has recently taken up post and has made a satisfactory start in obtaining a reasonable overview of the strengths and areas for development within the subject. Good support has been provided by the Local Education Authority Literacy Consultant in ensuring that teachers are developing their skills, knowledge and understanding of teaching English. These skills are being successfully transferred to the teaching of other subjects. The resources for the teaching of English are satisfactory but the newly created library is underused. Pupils said they have only visited the library a few times since it was opened early in the spring term. There is a good range of Dewey classified reference books although some reference books are out of date. This is recognised by senior management and action is being taken to refurbish the book stock. There is no numeric, colour or subject guidance chart to help the pupils locate the appropriate section in the library. Nor is there a central index of the books in the library. As a result pupils and staff are not fully aware of what books are available and are not able to make effective use of the library. There are very few non fiction books. There are satisfactory plans to develop the library provision.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Curriculum planning includes a good range of speaking and listening opportunities in all lessons. Pupils discuss ideas before feeding back as a group to the rest of the class. This enables a fuller involvement of all pupils and allows the less experienced to rehearse ideas before writing them in their books. There are some opportunities for developing writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum, for example in history and science. However, teachers do not always remind the pupils about the basic techniques they have learnt in their English lessons or do they give them sufficient opportunities to develop their writing using a word processing package on the computer. Pupils are able to use their reading skills appropriately to support their learning

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mental mathematics is often well taught.
- The focus on problem-solving is helping to raise standards.
- There is not enough discussion in Years 5 and 6.

- More able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

64. In the 2004 national tests for Year 2 pupils results were in line with the national average but fewer pupils attained the higher levels. Year 6 pupils did better than the national average. Compared with similar schools Year 2 pupils did much worse and Year 6 pupils performed below similar schools. Current standards are average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Overall achievement is satisfactory, with solidly satisfactory teaching and learning contributing to this. Only one lesson seen during the inspection was taught to a good standard.
65. Strengths in the teaching include the mental arithmetic at the start of lessons, which is usually well planned and taught in a lively fashion. For example Year 3 pupils played a game where they had to call out money in pounds or pence depending on the card they held to create a chain of responses. This required concentration to recognise the amount and to convert it. Teachers are usually secure about exactly what they want pupils to learn, and write it up on the board. They are not so effective at setting work that meets the needs of all pupils precisely. In particular the more able pupils are often not challenged sufficiently, and do not achieve as well as they could. Part of the reason for this is the lack of opportunity to discuss mathematical ideas in depth among the older pupils in Years 5 and 6. Here the teaching is often pedestrian, with the emphasis on written calculation. Even when investigations are launched, pupils are not given enough time to think for themselves before a possible solution is offered.
66. Leadership and management are satisfactory. An emphasis on problem-solving has helped to raise standards and increase understanding, especially among the younger pupils. While there are class targets for improvement they are often written in language that is difficult for pupils to comprehend. The need to challenge the more able pupils has been identified in the useful action plan. Some monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has taken place, but it is too early to measure its impact. The assessment systems in place are useful in identifying trends and picking up pupils who need to do better, but are rather unwieldy. Marking does not specifically show pupils how they can improve and it is couched in vague terms such as “you have a problem here”. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, with standards rising in Year 6.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. While there are some examples of mathematics in subjects such as science with graphs and design and technology with measuring, opportunities are not deliberately planned to occur. Pupils’ mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding are not being promoted sufficiently through other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory** for Years 1 and 2, but **unsatisfactory** in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 2 are average but standards at the end of Year 6 are below average.
- The improvement in the teaching of investigation and enquiry is not consistent throughout the school.
- More able pupils are not challenged well enough.
- Assessment procedures are not developed, which means that pupils' achievements are not monitored and targets are not set.

Commentary

68. Standards in Year 2 are average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 2. They continue to make satisfactory progress as they move through Years 3 - 6. However, in Years 5 and 6, pupils do not achieve as well and standards are below average by Year 6. The achievement of the pupils with special educational needs and those from ethnic minorities is in line with that of other pupils. The results of the Year 6 national tests in 2004 were in broadly line with the national average but well below those in similar schools. In the end of Year 2 assessment in the 2004, the teachers assessed standards as being below the national average and well below those of similar schools.
69. The school has made broadly satisfactory progress since the last inspection there have been some improvements in pupils' skills in investigating scientific ideas and the pupils of all classes are given opportunities to develop their skills of observing, predicting, constructing a fair test and controlling variables. These improvements have been brought about through training provided for the teachers and through the implementation of schemes of work which provide ideas for practical investigational activities. Although most pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of fair-testing and the skills of investigation, the subject knowledge of many of the pupils, especially the older ones is still limited. During a Year 6 lesson on investigating the release of gas from a mixture of solids and liquids, the teacher needed to direct the experiment far too much. Very few pupils showed that they had the skills to make choices about the investigation. Pupils' attempts to tabulate the results to allow them to draw conclusions showed lack of experience in this area. Because the experiment was teacher directed, pupils who had the ability to work at a higher level of scientific enquiry were not given the opportunity to develop their skills. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were provided with the opportunity to develop their observation and recording skills through comparing types of plants. During this activity, pupils' language skills were developed through discussion with the teacher and with other pupils.
70. The quality of teaching varies throughout the school. It is broadly satisfactory overall, however it is better in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 – 6. Pupils in the later years at school do not learn as effectively as the younger pupils. The planning is based upon published schemes which the teachers modify according to their requirements. Although this provides an overall structure and gives ideas for investigational activities, there is no school structure for the development of skills, especially related to the process of scientific investigation. There is also no effective means of assessing pupils' attainment and tracking progress made. Targets for improvement are,

therefore, not set and consequently the focus upon improving standards lacks rigour. The co-ordinator is aware of these issues and has already planned to address them.

71. The co-ordinator is recently appointed to the post and she is still acquiring awareness of the role. She has very good subject knowledge and satisfactory understanding of what needs to be developed. However, she has not yet undertaken a rigorous analysis of quality of teaching and learning in all classes and standards of pupils' attainment in all year groups. Resources are good, organised and accessible. Computers are used to support some aspects of the pupils' learning, but opportunities are not always taken to use the computers to help pupils learn.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision, achievement and attainment of pupils have risen since the last inspection.
- The teaching assistant assigned to teach computer skills is beginning to make a significant contribution to the achievement of pupils.
- The planning does not allow for the development of skills of the more able pupils and progress of pupils is not effectively recorded.
- The computer suite and computers in the classrooms are underused and opportunities to use information and communication technology to raise standards in all subjects are not taken.

Commentary

72. Attainment is in line with national averages by Years 2 and 6. Achievement of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, is satisfactory. In one very good information and communication technology lesson, the pupils with special educational needs were extremely proud of their achievements. One pupil, in particular, worked independently very well, produced a good standard in his assigned task, enthusiastically talked about what he had achieved in the lesson and proudly showed his work to the other pupils.
73. By Year 2, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of many of the uses of the computer. They show a confident use of the key board and mouse, know how to store and retrieve their work, type words and sentences, edit their own text and use art packages to make illustrations. By the time the pupils leave the school, they can use a data handling programme to express their results in terms of a formula, know how to send email and have experienced use of the internet to search for information, find and copy images.
74. This represents good progress made by the school since the last inspection when pupils' attainment was below average. The improvement has been brought about through several factors. The completion of the computer suite in 2003 has made significant contribution to the provision available for teachers and pupils. The decision to timetable the use of the suite so that the pupils can be taught computer skills by a specialist teaching assistant, while still leaving time in the suite for pupils to follow up their own study during lessons, also contributes well.

75. The quality of teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory overall. The teaching assistant has good subject knowledge, is enthusiastic to develop use of computers throughout the school, and she is developing a good range of teaching skills. However, teachers do not make full use the information and communication technology facilities available to them in the classroom to support pupils' learning. The recently installed 'Smart Board' is beginning to be used to enhance the quality of teaching. Good use is made of an overhead projector in one of the classes to support learning.
76. The school uses a combination of national and other published schemes of work to provide a basic structure for teaching and which link with the school's medium term cross-curricular plan. Planning, however, is not consistent across the school and lacks a development of skills which are suited to the needs of all pupils. Progress of pupils is also not effectively recorded.
77. Consequently, there is lack of challenge for those pupils who have already a high degree of skills on the computer.
78. The co-ordination of information and communication technology is broadly satisfactory. Systems have been put into place to ensure pupils are provided with the opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills, but the implementation is not monitored and evaluated with sufficient rigour.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. The work undertaken by the teaching assistant in the information and communication technology suite is sometimes used well to support the development of skills in other subjects. For example, pupils of year 1 use the computers to support their work in language development and sentence construction. Although the computer suite is made available for teachers to develop pupils' skills in other areas of the curriculum and a system has been established to promote this, opportunities are not always taken. Similarly, the computers in the classrooms are not often used to support the learning of pupils across the curriculum and opportunities to raise standards are lost.

HUMANITIES

80. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**. Two lessons were observed in history and none in geography. These subjects were not the focus of the inspection. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. Provision in Religious Education is subject to a separate inspection by the Diocesan Inspection Team.
81. The requirements of the National Curriculum for history are being met. Judgements are based on work sampling, scrutiny of curriculum planning, displays and discussions with the co-ordinator, and pupils. There is evidence to show that pupils are making satisfactory progress in their knowledge of historical events and that they are likely to achieve the expected level by the end of Years 2 and 6.
82. In the two **history** lessons, the teaching was satisfactory. In both lessons effective use was made of a range of artefacts, pupils were encouraged to handle and discuss the objects. This helped the pupils to develop their inter-personal and speaking and listening skills. The use of the artefacts also enabled the teacher to bring the lesson alive, and to challenge and consolidate the pupils' knowledge and understanding. The

pupils worked hard and achieved satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by the learning support assistants. Good use is made of trips and extended visits to support the curriculum. Visits to places of interest make a good contribution to developing the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. During these visits good cross-curricular links are made. Pupils are beginning to consolidate their writing skills in the history lessons and to develop and use vocabulary associated with the subject. In some other classes, however, the pupils' books show only limited evidence of the work they have undertaken and that effectiveness in the subject is variable between classes.

83. The history co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has only recently assumed responsibility for leading the subject. A good start has been made on reviewing the work undertaken in the school. Satisfactory plans are in place for reviewing the history policy. A start has been made in the monitoring of teachers' lesson plans and looking at pupils' work. Since her recent appointment, the coordinator has had few opportunities to monitor standards of teaching and learning or to offer advice to other members of staff and this is allowing variations in effectiveness to linger too long.
84. A system for assessing pupils' level of attainment is in place but the use of assessment is underdeveloped and does not provide teachers with a clear understanding of the skills and knowledge the pupils have achieved. Some teachers do not mark the pupils' work with sufficient rigour and rarely identify in the marking what the pupils have to do to improve.
85. In **geography**, insufficient work was seen to form overall judgements about provision. By sampling pupils' work in classrooms and around school and talking to the co-ordinator, the indications are that achievement is no better than satisfactory. Due to the school emphasis upon raising standards in English and mathematics during recent years, the subject has received little development and it is not of high status in the school. The scheme of work is based upon a combination of national and published schemes. These provide an overall structure which the school links to its cross curricular plan. The scheme, however, does not allow for progression of skills and knowledge. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is enthusiastic to develop the subject further.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. In creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects, work was sampled in **art and design, design and technology, music** and **physical education**. These subjects were not the focus of the inspection. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision.
87. In **art and design**, based on the sampling pupils' work in classrooms and around school and talking to the co-ordinator, the indications are that achievement is at least satisfactory. Displays of pupils' work stemming from the 'Art Week' are of a good standard and show a range of painting, use of pastels and clay models. Work in classrooms shows that the styles of famous artists have been studied. They appreciate the different art techniques and can apply them well in their own art work. The scheme of work lacks development of skills, but the co-ordinator is aware of this and plans to develop planning to include a development of skills in painting, drawing and modelling. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic to raise the status of the subject and teaches art to a good standard.

88. In **design and technology** one lesson was observed. Year 1 pupils practised basic joining techniques prior to making a model house. This was a good lesson and pupils followed instructions well. Year 6 pupils made motorised windmills from their own designs. The quality of the work was broadly in line with expectations for pupils of this age group. The coordinator is beginning to monitor and assess standards but this is at an early stage. Teachers are given a lot of flexibility in adapting planning but are not held sufficiently to account for the changes they make.
89. In **music**, a small part of a music lesson was seen. Insufficient time was spent in the lesson to make a judgement on the quality of teaching or on pupil achievement. The Year 2 pupils sang in tune and kept a simple beat. Year 5 pupils have been studying sound in science, which links with their music lessons. An attractive display of books and vocabulary enhances the Year 4 classroom. The school employs a specialist music teacher who teaches music to some classes and Local Education Authority music teachers visit the school on a regular basis and work with pupils to teach them to play a wide range of instruments. These pupils play together well in the school orchestra. The school has a good range of musical instruments.
90. In **physical education**, a few lessons were observed, on the basis of these lessons and watching pupils play in the playground, the attainment and achievement of pupils are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Older pupils are given the opportunity to take part in swimming lessons, attend after school sports clubs, and undertake outdoor adventurous activities while on extended educational visits.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for pupils' social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils work together well in pairs and small groups.
- Pupils show an increasing sense of responsibility and maturity as they move through the school and are keen to undertake responsibilities.
- Pupils could contribute more to the development of the school.

Commentary

91. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers provide pupils with opportunity to discuss their learning with a partner and in some lessons to undertake joint work. Pupils are developing a sense of responsibility and are eager to offer help to the teachers and learning support assistants. There are representatives from each year group on the school council, they meet regularly but have not had a loud voice in developing provision within the school. The effects of the good provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education, are reflected in their good behaviour and attitudes towards learning. Overall, this represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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