

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Patchway, Bristol

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 109266

Headteacher: Mr M Walsh

Lead inspector: Mr M H Cole

Dates of inspection: 29th November - 2nd December 2004

Inspection number: 267050

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: 177

School address: Amberley Road
Patchway
Bristol

Postcode: BS34 6BY

Telephone number: (01454) 866 786
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs H Gray
governors:

Date of previous 15th March 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small voluntary aided Catholic primary school serves 177 boys and girls aged between four and eleven. The number on roll has been falling significantly in recent years. The school is currently three-quarters of the size it was when it was last inspected five years ago. This is partly because of a general fall in numbers of children in the area but also because four years ago another Catholic school was opened nearby. The school now recruits pupils from a wider range of backgrounds than previously, resulting in a significant change in the profile of pupils. There are increased proportions of pupils with lower levels of ability and/or special educational needs, and of pupils from deprived economic and social circumstances. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has, for example, doubled in the last four years at a time when the national average proportion has fallen. Currently the overall social and economic circumstances of parents are broadly average while the attainment of pupils starting at the school is a little below average. Almost all pupils are white British; a very small number of pupils is at an early stage of learning English.

Just less than one pupil in five, a broadly average proportion, is currently identified as having special educational needs. A very small number of these (a below average proportion nationally) has a statement of special educational needs.

The number of pupils starting at or leaving the school other than at the normal ages is above average.

There have been many recent changes in school staff and, at the time of the inspection, three of the seven classes were taught by new teachers, in post for just two months.

The school received a national Healthy Schools Award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3369	Mr M H Cole	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music
9417	Mrs E Owen	Lay inspector	
29688	Mr M Brammer	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Geography History Special educational needs
20603	Dr A Coyle	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	7 - 10
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10 - 15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15 - 17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18 - 26
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. A very good ethos of attitudes, behaviour and relationships and a caring commitment help pupils from a wide range of backgrounds to thrive. The teaching is good. Pupils make better than expected progress up to age seven and further satisfactory progress to age eleven. The headteacher's good leadership has helped the school prosper during a period of challenging change and promoted strong teamwork amongst a dedicated staff which is committed to improvement. The school provides good value for money.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- the very effective ways school staff encourage the enjoyment, self-confidence, responsible behaviour and respectful relationships pupils show;
- teachers' very successful promotion of pupils' interest, involvement, and application in lessons;
- the way the headteacher, with strong support from his deputy, creates a shared determination in staff and pupils to give of their best.
- the good progress pupils make in learning basic skills during their early years at the school;
- good standards of work in science and in information and communication technology (ICT), although pupils' good ICT skills are not used often enough to support learning in other subjects;
- inconsistent marking of pupils' work and its use to show teachers and pupils the way forward;
- with many staff and governors new to their management responsibilities, checks on some aspects of the school's work lack precision;
- good extra learning opportunities that arise from educational visits, visitors, activities outside lessons and community links; and
- good arrangements for the care of pupils and for working in partnership with parents.

There has been satisfactory improvement in the school since its previous inspection in 1999. The very strong ethos has been maintained. So, too, has pupils' achievement when account is taken of a significant change in the intake of pupils which has widened the range of abilities, special needs and backgrounds of pupils joining the school. The concerns of previous inspectors have been mostly resolved but progress on some minor areas for improvement in school management has been hindered by many changes amongst both staff and governors.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' **overall achievement is satisfactory**. Over the last four yearsm Year 6 pupils have generally attained results in national tests that are above or well above average. As the table below shows, results in 2004 were less good than previously.

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

mathematics	A	A	D	D
science	C	A	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.*

However, the group of pupils taking the 2004 tests was unusually small and their results are not a reliable sign of a change in standards. Present Year 6 pupils' standards of work are in line with the national standard in English and mathematics and above the national standard in science and ICT.¹ The pattern of test results needs to be seen against the background of some increase in the proportion of pupils joining the school with lower levels of ability or with special educational needs. The school has recently been recruiting pupils from more varied backgrounds, following the opening of another Catholic school in the parish. Because of this, and because numbers in each year group are sometimes small, the profile of pupils' abilities and of the standards they achieve fluctuates considerably from year to year. When Year 6 pupils' standards are compared with their attainment in their earlier Year 2 tests or on starting school, it is apparent that they have achieved satisfactorily. However, when present Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils' standards are compared with their starting attainment, their achievement is clearly good. Year 2 pupils' results in national tests of reading, writing and mathematics in 2004 were well above average, and present Year 2 pupils' standards are above average in these areas as well as in science and ICT. The work of Reception year children seen shows them to be on track to complete the year achieving the learning goals they are expected to reach. In lessons throughout the school seen during the inspection, pupils were responding to the teaching of a much-changed teaching staff with mostly good and sometimes very good achievement. Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships reflect the **good** provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are of **good** quality. The great majority of lessons are good and sometimes they are very good. Teachers manage and encourage pupils especially well, with the result that pupils behave well, concentrate on their work and develop confidence as learners. Most teaching caters soundly for the range of pupils' abilities and needs, but occasionally work planned does not fully challenge or support pupils of the highest or lowest ability. The school keeps a firm check on pupils' progress from year to year but shorter term assessments and marking of pupils' work often omit to show clearly enough the next steps teachers and pupils need to take. The basic curriculum of subjects is sound and it is strengthened by a good range of additional activities outside lessons, especially in sport. All school staff join in providing well for pupils' care, guidance and support in personal and social matters. The school makes good links with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall and the headteacher, well supported by his deputy, gives good leadership to the school. Together, they ensure a full adherence to the school's firmly held values and aims, set high expectations and inspire staff and

¹ These four subjects were the focus of the inspection and are the only ones where inspectors collected sufficient evidence to make overall judgements of standards.

pupils to strive constantly and co-operatively to achieve them. Other key staff and governors fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously. Many, however, are very new to these responsibilities. Consequently, a number of management processes, though carried out satisfactorily, do not at present reflect the conscientious commitment of the personnel involved. Checks made on the effectiveness of some areas of the school's work are not sufficient to identify scope for improvement and plan action.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are positive and pupils are very happy with their school. Inspectors found no evidence to support a few parents' concern about information for, and consultation with, parents.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE:

- improve consistency in day-to-day marking of pupils' work and its use (i) to match pupils' future tasks to their capabilities and needs, and (ii) to help them understand how they can improve;
- involve governors and all those with management responsibilities in more regular and systematic checks on the school's performance as a basis for planning school improvement; and
- proceed with plans to give pupils more opportunities for 'hands-on' application of their good ICT skills to learning across the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. Overall standards are **average**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make better-than-expected progress up to age seven and, by the end of Year 2, their standards exceed national expectations for their age.
- Year 2 pupils' results in the 2004 national tests of reading, writing and mathematics were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools.
- Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in science and ICT and their work is above the standard expected nationally for pupils' ages.
- In a clear majority of lessons during the inspection, pupils throughout the school were responding to challenging teaching with good levels of effort and achieving well.
- Pupils achieve equally well regardless of differences in gender or background.

Commentary

1. School assessments and inspectors' observations show that pupils start at the school with levels of attainment that range widely and vary from year to year. The overall picture is that pupils start out with attainment a little below average. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, however, pupils are showing above average attainment. This was particularly evident in those previous Year 2 pupils who took the national tests of reading, writing and mathematics in the summer of 2004 when their results in all three tests were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. Present Year 2 pupils are also on track to complete the year with above-average standards in these subjects as well as in science and ICT.²

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (16.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.1 (15.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.4 (16.0)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.
The average points scores for over 90 per cent of schools are in the range 11-19 points.*

2. When account is taken of the attainment with which they started out, both past and present Year 2 pupils have clearly achieved well as a result of good progress during both the Foundation Stage (i.e., the Reception Year) and during Years 1 and 2. This is entirely consistent with the evidence from the inspection, of pupils responding very positively to teaching in all of these classes, which is nearly always good and quite often very good. Present Reception class pupils are achieving well and are on track to

² The inspection focused on the main subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. Work was sampled in other subjects but no overall judgements of provision or standards in these subjects are made. As this is a Catholic school both religious education and collective worship are denominational in character and are the subject of a separate report.

attain the learning goals children are expected to reach at the end of the year in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. In other areas of learning, there were examples of Reception children achieving well but too little evidence for an overall judgment of standards.

- Most present evidence points to an overall satisfactory level of achievement by pupils in Years 3 - 6 when the standards they attain are compared with their capabilities and their earlier attainments. Over the last four years, Year 6 pupils have generally attained results in national tests that are above or well above average. However, results in 2004 were less good than previously. English results were average but those in mathematics were below average, and in science they were well below average. Present Year 6 pupils are attaining standards of work that are average in English and mathematics but higher than this in science and ICT.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (27.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.4 (28.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.0 (30.9)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.
The average points scores for over 90 per cent of schools are in the range 23 - 31 points.*

- Caution is necessary, however, in interpreting the apparent fluctuations in standards from year to year in this school. The numbers in each year are sometimes quite small, making fluctuation in results from year to year likely. In addition, as a Catholic institution, the school recruits pupils from a wider area than most schools and this means the intake of pupils varies considerably from year to year. A further complication arises in that four years ago, a new Catholic school was opened nearby and as a result there has been a considerable decline in the numbers starting at Holy Family and a change in the profile of pupils recruited. This has brought into the school higher proportions of pupils with lower levels of ability and/or special educational needs and of pupils from deprived economic and social circumstances. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has, for example, doubled in the last four years at a time when the national average proportion has fallen. The school also now serves a significant number of Traveller pupils whose standards often reflect the shortness of their stays in school and the gaps in their earlier education. When all of these factors are taken into account, the school is seen to be maintaining the positive picture painted at the previous inspection of the way it promotes pupils' progress.
- When Year 6 pupils' attainments in English and mathematics are compared with their attainment on starting school and with their test results as Year 2 pupils four years earlier, it shows that they have achieved satisfactorily. In science and ICT, however, pupils' achievement is good. In these subjects, some pupils who find difficulty in written work are better able to do justice to their knowledge and understanding through the more practical nature of the work. In all of these subjects, lessons seen during the inspection showed pupils currently to be achieving well in response to the demands and support they are now receiving from teachers who are, in several cases, new to the school. In the great majority of lessons, pupils are responding with interest and endeavour to teaching that challenges and supports almost all pupils

well. Consequently, pupils of different abilities, backgrounds and needs achieve as well as their peers when judged against their individual capabilities and targets. This applies to pupils with special educational needs, Traveller pupils overcoming interruptions to their education, and a very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. All of these pupils especially benefit from the school's caring ethos and commitment to equal opportunities. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Only occasionally in lessons does a very small number of pupils of either the highest or lowest ability achieve less than they might because work and support planned for them is not entirely appropriate.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to their work and towards others in the school are **very good** and their behaviour, too, is **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. The attendance of pupils and their punctuality are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show much enjoyment and satisfaction in their life at school, and grow greatly in confidence.
- Pupils take a very lively interest in school life, try hard to do well and have a very responsible attitude to their learning.
- Relationships with both adults and fellow pupils are very co-operative and respectful.
- The school helps pupils develop a very clear understanding of right and wrong that promotes self-discipline and results in very good behaviour.
- The school gives pupils good encouragement and help to think deeply about their values, attitudes, relationships and social responsibilities.

Commentary

6. Pupils experience much enjoyment, interest and fulfilment in both lessons and other school activities. They are also given much warm encouragement and sensitive support by school staff. As a result, pupils develop very good levels of confidence and self-esteem and show responsible attitudes to learning. These qualities are seen in lessons where pupils get on with learning willingly, behave very sensibly and show little need for adult direction. Interest, enthusiasm and endeavour are also apparent in pupils' willing participation in optional activities outside lessons, especially in sport and music.
7. This is a very happy and friendly school where adults and pupils develop very good relationships with each other. Pupils follow very well the staff's very clear example of respect and care in their relationships with others. A calm but very orderly and purposeful atmosphere in lessons and around the school helps pupils to make good progress in their personal and social development. The strengths of the school's ethos reported at the previous inspection have been fully maintained.
8. The school makes its expectations of pupils' behaviour very clear to them through discussion in classes, through the activities of the school council and within elements of the programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). All of these processes help pupils develop a very good understanding of the principles of right and

wrong which is the basis of their good self-discipline. Teachers seldom need to impose discipline or 'tell pupils off'. Neither parents nor pupils say that bullying is a significant issue in this school. This reflects the school's very effective guidance and preventive measures. In recent times, only one pupil has needed to be temporarily excluded from school for unsatisfactory behaviour, a result of significant behavioural difficulties. In view of their particular circumstances, pupils with special educational needs, Traveller pupils and a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language have positive attitudes to school and schoolwork and generally behave well.

9. Various features give pupils good help to be aware of their social responsibilities and of democratic procedures. These include the elections to and the affairs of the school council. The oldest pupils are also able to take on a good range of responsibilities such as looking after the library or computer suite for which they have to apply and be interviewed.
10. The co-operative climate of very supportive, respectful relationships and self-discipline provides a very good basis for the school's effective promotion of pupils' willingness and ability to reflect on themselves, their lives and their relationships. School assemblies (discussed in detail in a separate report) and the PSHE programme support these processes. In lessons, too, teachers frequently encourage pupils to think about and discuss their own thoughts and views. Teachers listen closely to pupils and value their thoughts. Because of the respect they are shown, pupils respond with respect to others, including those who differ from themselves, for example in culture or language. Pupils acquire a thoughtful and respectful awareness of the diversity of their world and its peoples from the school's sound provision for pupils' cultural development. They learn to appreciate, respect and value both their own cultural heritage and that of others. Awareness of cultural diversity is built into relevant aspects of the curriculum (especially religious education, as detailed in a separate report).

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	133	1	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

Attendance

11. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. In view of the nature of some features of the school population, a lower attendance target than would normally be expected was set by the Local Education Authority. In the most recent reporting year,

attendance improved, and the target of 94 per cent was exceeded. Good tracking systems are in place for pupils whose attendance drops below the threshold agreed with the Education Welfare Officer, including support from and liaison with the Travellers Support service. However, the school does not currently monitor overall attendance levels through the school year, which would facilitate taking any steps needed for general improvement. A small number of pupils arrive after registration in the mornings, and the school has recently introduced measures to improve monitoring and follow up with parents.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.5
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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 **good** quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. A **satisfactory** curriculum receives **good** enrichment from activities outside lessons. The school has **satisfactory** accommodation and resources. The care, guidance and support of pupils and the school's partnership with parents are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment of pupils' work is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers use very effective skills and strategies to encourage interest, effort and co-operation in pupils.
- Pupils' very good levels of interest, enthusiasm and application to their work are helping them to achieve well in most lessons.
- Pupils join keenly, confidently and extensively in class discussion.
- Teaching is both challenging and very supportive for the great majority of pupils.
- Day-to-day assessments of pupils are not consistently precise enough to ensure that planned work always challenges the most able pupils or is suitable for pupils with special educational needs.
- Marking of pupils work does not tell them clearly enough how well they are doing or exactly how they can improve.

Commentary

12. Four lessons in five are of at least good quality and almost one third are very good or, on occasion, excellent; none are unsatisfactory. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection in that the proportions of lessons that are good or very good are higher than before. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and are very successful in providing pupils with the motivation to behave very well and work hard. An ethos of very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships throughout the school is highly conducive to learning. Teachers practise a strong commitment to providing equal opportunity to pupils who range widely in backgrounds, capabilities and needs.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	9 (27%)	17 (50%)	7 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

13. Teachers use a wide range of skills and strategies that are very effective in encouraging pupils to take an interest, try hard and concentrate on their tasks. They are sensitive to pupils' needs for self-esteem and give much encouragement, often in the form of genuine personal warmth. They show imagination in the stimulating, and sometimes entertaining, tasks they set for pupils. Consequently, pupils come to lessons with consistently very positive attitudes, expecting to enjoy learning, find interest and success and to grow in self-esteem. As a result, teachers need to do very little to manage classroom procedures or pupils' behaviour and lessons proceed smoothly, at a good pace, in a calm, orderly and purposeful atmosphere.
14. When set to work independently as individuals or in groups, pupils show a very high level of attention to, and concentration on, their tasks. This is because of their teachers' clear expectations and their provision of interesting activities, but it is also because pupils have been successfully encouraged in a responsible attitude to their learning. However, opportunities to both extend and exploit this responsible attitude are often missed in the teaching, especially with older pupils. The marking of pupils' work is variable in quality and it generally provides too little guidance to older pupils on how well they are doing and exactly how they could improve their work. The school has a good practice of setting some long-term targets for improved work which are shared both with pupils and with parents at parent consultation evenings. However, discussion with pupils shows that they have difficulty remembering these targets and their impact as reminders or incentives is therefore lost. Nor does teachers' marking of pupils' work give consistently clear feedback on progress toward targets. Some inconsistency found in the quality of marking and in expectations about pupils' presentation of their work partly reflects the many recent changes in teaching staff and partly arises from some lack of rigour in management checks on the school's work at a time when some such responsibilities are in the hands of staff new to their roles.
15. Teachers know their subjects well, although there are occasional examples where new teachers show some uncertainty. Planning of lessons is thorough, providing relevant tasks with clear objectives and using a good range of methods to keep pupils alert as involved and active learners. A strong feature of the learning is the keen and confident way very many pupils contribute to class discussions. They are willing to tackle teachers' challenging, open-ended questions, secure in the knowledge that their teachers, and their peers, will respect their efforts. Sometimes teachers' provision of opportunities for pupils to rehearse their thinking in discussions with partners or in small groups is also effective in encouraging pupils' very willing contributions to class debate. The development of independence, initiative and self-esteem, as well as speaking and listening skills, through these processes is a significant strength of the teaching and learning.

16. Although a generally good range of teaching methods is used, one area of weakness is the lack of opportunity for pupils to apply their good ICT skills to their everyday learning across the curriculum. Class lessons in the computer suite often link development of ICT skills with work in other subjects but there are few examples at other times of pupils individually, or in small groups, using classroom computers to support their learning. An opportunity to both extend and exploit pupils' good ICT skills and their abilities to learn independently is lost here. The school has recognised this and already identified development as a priority within planning for improvement during the current school year.
17. Some parents would like pupils to have more homework and some less. Overall, the school strikes a sound balance in the homework set, which includes a suitable range of tasks with an appropriate emphasis on basic skills.
18. Teachers show a very clear commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils to be fully included in lessons and able to prosper. They are very supportive to pupils finding difficulty and are given good help in this endeavour when classroom assistants, and occasional visiting specialist teachers, are deployed to support teaching. These staff work very closely with teachers, are skilled in the guidance they give and relate well to pupils. Teaching for pupils from Traveller families and for those who learn English as an additional language is good. Staff plan their lessons well and they guide pupils' learning carefully.
19. Planning of lessons provides effectively for the great majority of pupils to progress well in response to challenging tasks but there is some inconsistency in practice. There are a few occasions when some older pupils with special educational needs are given work that does not fully reflect their needs as shown in their individual education plans. On the other hand, the work given to a few pupils of higher capability does not always challenge them to make the best progress of which they are capable. This is partly because, except at the Foundation Stage, day-to-day marking and assessment of pupils' progress is not sufficiently probing. Also, the school has identified a need to develop its provisions for the small minority of gifted or talented pupils but is at an early stage of establishing policy and practice. At the time of the inspection, two teachers had begun an extensive programme of training designed to support the school's developments in this area.
20. Although there is some lack of precision in day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress and its use to plan work or set targets, the school has sound arrangements for assessing pupils' longer-term progress from term to term and year to year. The best practice is in literacy and numeracy where good, regular and precise assessments are carefully analysed and used to set long-term targets for teachers to aim for. This assessment information is used well to pinpoint individuals or groups of pupils who need more help and this help is then organised. In the subjects where pupils take national tests, their performances are analysed carefully as a basis for planning improved teaching and learning. In science and ICT, new assessment processes are not as precise as in English or mathematics but are still satisfactory. Development of assessment in other subjects has been hindered by many changes amongst subject co-ordinators and staff generally. However, in these subjects, a good, common and workable format based on national guidance has been adopted across the school. This

system is too new, however, to have provided sufficient data so far for the school to analyse and respond to.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum with **good** opportunities for enrichment. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' learning is made more interesting by the wide range of activities that are organised for them outside lessons.
- The school successfully includes all pupils in all opportunities for learning.
- The good arrangements for the pupils' personal, social and health education contribute well to the pupils' personal development.
- Too little use is made of ICT to support the curriculum in other subjects.
- The accommodation and resources for outside play at the Foundation Stage are insufficient.

Commentary

21. The school provides a curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Policies and schemes of work giving clear guidance to teachers are in place for all areas and most are based on national guidance. Effective use has been made of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to guide teaching of these basic skills, and the national Foundation Stage curriculum established in recent years has been adopted well in all areas of learning except for physical development where the accommodation and resources limit the learning opportunities offered to children. Some satisfactorily productive links are made between subjects, as when pupils have opportunities to practise literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects but this is not a strong feature of the curriculum and too little use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.
22. Since the last inspection, a scheme that conforms to Diocesan Guidelines has been written to steer the provision of a good, well-planned programme of personal, social and health education. Older pupils take part in sex education lessons and there is sensitive provision for those pupils whose parents do not wish them to be involved. Through the School Council, pupils have been involved in encouraging others to become aware of the importance of healthy eating. This and other developments have helped the school achieve the Healthy Schools award.
23. A strength of the school is the way it strives conscientiously to ensure all pupils are fully included in opportunities for academic and personal development in ways related to their individual needs. This is particularly evident in the good provisions made for a substantial number of Traveller pupils. These pupils are given very good support and encouragement by school staff and by visiting part-time specialist staff. Additional curricular input is made for these pupils when appropriate. Sensitive management of relationships throughout the school has helped these pupils to become effectively and harmoniously involved in the life of the school despite their sometimes short or intermittent stays. Both the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language and the larger number of pupils with special educational needs benefit from the caring and very supportive approach of school staff. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and individual education plans to

help meet their needs are clear and precise. Some plans, however, are not currently reviewed with sufficient care, a situation recognised by the co-ordinator who is very new to the responsibility.

24. The school provides a good and varied range of clubs and activities which are open to both boys and girls. The very good support for sport includes coaching by members of local professional and amateur clubs as well as teachers from the local secondary school for rugby, football, netball and short tennis. This results in many pupils taking part in tournaments and inter-school matches. Good provision for the arts includes opportunities taken up by many pupils to learn to play musical instruments. Pupils work with visiting artists, go to the theatre and join with a local college for dance and drama. All of these activities, together with the residential visits for pupils in both Years 5 and 6, make a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural and social development.
25. Overall, the school has satisfactory accommodation and resources. However, there is insufficient external accommodation and equipment to support physical development at the Foundation Stage, a situation the school has identified and for which remedial plans are under consideration.

Care, guidance and support

Measures to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are **good**. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is **good**. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Thorough tracking of pupils' academic and personal development leads to effective intervention with extra help when required.
- Effective health and safety checks and risk assessments are carried out.
- Governors give good support to oversight of pupils' care and welfare.
- Staff know pupils well and pupils are confident to go to them with problems.
- Pupils are involved well in the work of the school through the School Council and the extensive Year 6 responsibilities.

Commentary

26. Systematic assessment and tracking of pupils' development at the school enable the school to take action should pupils have difficulties with their work or in personal matters. This includes introducing 'booster groups' in basic skills and the support given to some pupils through the 'Pyramid Club' programme for those who need to develop self-confidence and personal skills. Good links with external agencies, in particular the Traveller Support Service and those concerned with special educational needs, supplement the good quality of care shown by school staff.
27. Governors are fully involved in carrying out health and safety checks and risk assessments. These are reported to the governors' premises sub-committee which responds with necessary action. A recent review by the local authority has produced some helpful guidance to further enhance the process. All staff have had recent

training in child protection issues, and the policy has been reviewed in line with local agreements. The recently-appointed lead teacher is due to take further training next term. The school has worked towards its achievement of the 'Schools for Health' programme over the past year, and projects have included a 'Walk to School Day' each week, the setting up of the school council, and healthy eating initiatives. All of these have made a good contribution to pupil welfare.

28. The very good relationships across the school ensure that all pupils have adults to whom they could turn should any problems arise. All pupils are well known by staff, who are sensitive to their needs and offer good support. Good links with the local playgroup, which meets at the school and regularly uses the school hall for physical activities, help a smooth transition when pupils transfer into full-time education.
29. Pupils have a number of opportunities to influence school life, particularly through the elections, to and democratic procedures of, the school council which was introduced last year. The work of the council has resulted in access to the library for two lunchtime sessions each week, the introduction of 'fruit tuck' and new playground activities. The Year 6 pupils' wide range of responsibilities for helping around the school also gives them a good insight into how the school works.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, with the community and with other schools and colleges are all **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality information is provided for parents about school life, their children's progress and their work throughout the year.
- Parents' involvement in school contributes well to their children's learning.
- Good links exist with the local parish and wider community.
- The links with the local Catholic secondary school provide a smooth transition and enhance the curriculum on offer.

Commentary

30. Parents strongly support the school, and all who responded to the questionnaire said that their children liked school, were making good progress, and were taught well. Parents who attended the meeting with inspectors said their children were happy in school, were keen to attend, and were interested in their work.
31. Parents receive a weekly newsletter which keeps them up to date with school life. They have termly curriculum plans explaining what their children will be studying, and afternoon information sessions have been held in a number of curriculum areas. At the two parents' open evenings, they have a good opportunity to discuss their children's' targets and progress. The majority of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with an issue, although a tiny minority of questionnaire respondents disagreed. Many parents respond to invitations to attend Friday assemblies, where they can hear first-hand about their children's work. Parents have been consulted in the past about the anti-bullying policy and how the 'Friends of the School' funds should be spent. Reports are satisfactory, and the prospectus and governors annual report contain the required information.

32. Parents help in school, listening to readers at the beginning and end of the school day; they supervise pupils going swimming and to the parish church, and are involved in the Year 6 summer camp. Educational links exist through reading and homework diaries. Parents from the Traveller community have good links with the school, assisted effectively by staff of the Travellers Support Service.
33. The school is fully involved with the Patchway Arts Festival, which involves local artists working in school among the associated activities. There are a number of sporting links and regular visits to local art galleries and theatres. There are strong parish links, and the school is currently the venue for weekly Advent services, open to all. A number of local businesses have given generous support in providing equipment and resources, and strong support is given by the Friends of the School. The school is involved in much fundraising activity, and donates to a range of charities.
34. Links with the local Catholic secondary school are effective, and the curriculum is enhanced in a number of areas, including mathematics, art and design, physical education and design and technology, by the specialist input made by staff from the secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. The work of school governors, the leadership provided by other key staff and the management of the school are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's good leadership ensures the school's consistent commitment to its values of care and equal opportunity and results in a very good ethos.
- The deputy headteacher is a hardworking member of staff who supports colleagues well.
- The good teamwork of a dedicated staff gives strong support to the school's values and commitment to improvement.
- In some management roles where staff are new to their responsibilities, procedures for checking the work of the school lack rigour.
- Governors' involvement in the school has improved but, with many new members, the present governing body is not yet sufficiently influential in strategic planning for the school's future.

Commentary

35. The headteacher leads the school with a firm commitment to its clear and agreed values and aims. His success is evident in the very good ethos of attitudes, behaviour and relationships, the good quality of pupil care and the successful determination to include all pupils in all aspects of the school's work so that everyone experiences equality of opportunity. He knows all the pupils and their families well and actively promotes the pastoral care of pupils.
36. The headteacher's good leadership has helped the school prosper during a period of challenging change which has included a fall in pupil numbers, increasing demands from a changing profile of pupils and many staff changes. He effectively manages good teamwork amongst teaching and support staff who share his commitment to school values and to ensuring that pupils have the best possible education. In all of this, the headteacher is well supported by his hardworking and committed deputy. She works closely with other members of the senior management group and supports new staff conscientiously. The leadership of these senior staff sets high expectations for staff and pupils alike and inspires and supports them all well in their endeavours.
37. The headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards. Whole-school management planning is satisfactory. The school development plan is a useful, positive tool that is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, although it is not fully linked to the strategic financial planning. The significant staff turnover in recent years and the many subsequent changes in staff management responsibilities have meant that progress on school improvement, especially in management procedures, has been interrupted temporarily. The appointment of a significant number of new teachers has also meant that at the time of inspection, several temporary arrangements are in place. These include the need for longer-established staff to bear a challenging multiplicity of management responsibilities. Because of these factors, some management procedures, especially for making systematic checks on the school's work, lack rigour. A consequence of this is the existence of some present inconsistencies in practices within the school, such as in marking and expectations of presentation.

38. The management of provisions at the Foundation Stage, for Traveller pupils and in mathematics, science and ICT is good. Good management of the provision for pupils from Traveller backgrounds is seen in the time and energy the headteacher and the part-time specialist teacher spend putting structures and systems into place to support pupils and their families. In other areas and subjects, where arrangements are mostly new, leadership and management are at least satisfactory. The conscientious co-ordinator for special educational needs has only been in post for two months and has not had time to act upon all her aspirations for quality provision. The co-ordinator recognises the importance of developing checks on the consistency with which individual education plans are implemented and is aware that pupils need to be more fully involved in discussing and reviewing their targets.
39. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the governing body has developed its role and ensured that all statutory requirements are fully in place. Many governors are new, but they have already begun to monitor the school's work appropriately through a system of committees, visits, meetings and discussions with pupils, staff and parents. The governing body is keen to support the headteacher and the school in raising standards. However, with its largely new membership, it is not involved enough with strategic planning for the future or in challenging the school sufficiently as a 'critical friend'.
40. Financial planning is satisfactory and governors have a sufficient understanding of the financial affairs of the school. The finance committee meets regularly and there are key governors who oversee planning. Governors are now more involved in the financial planning for the school than they were at the time of the last inspection and the principles of best value are considered, not least in the financial implications of falling numbers on roll. The surplus fund is specifically aimed at maintaining the current level of provision, which, in view of the uncertainties of pupil numbers, is an appropriate strategy.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	443,109
Total expenditure	455,481
Expenditure per pupil	2,664

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	60,959
Balance carried forward to the next year	48,587

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Children enter the Reception class following their fourth birthday and there are good induction procedures to ensure they settle happily and feel secure in their new environment. They have access to a wide range of learning opportunities that are well suited to their needs. Teaching and learning are good overall, and sometimes excellent, which represents good improvement since the last inspection. The provision is managed well and the staff work as a strong team to help children achieve well. The highly inclusive approach taken by all adults means that all children, including those with special educational needs, children who learn English as an additional language and children from Traveller families, are valued equally and achieve well. Good assessment information shows that most children, having started out with attainment slightly below average on entry, are on track to reach the expected learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they end the Reception year. The most capable children go beyond and achieve high standards.

The inspection focused on three areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development. In the areas of knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development, provision was sampled but no overall judgements about provision or standards are made.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are polite and well behaved.
- Adults provide good role models for the children and learning is fun.

Commentary

41. Children attain the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year and are very well behaved. They work and play together happily and quickly learn to take turns. They are respectful towards each other and apologise quickly for any mishaps. Most achieve well and concentrate hard, spending sustained periods on tasks they have chosen themselves. They learn about Roman Catholic beliefs, as well as other religions of the world, such as Hinduism, and they enjoy making pictures for the 'Birthday Wall'. Teaching is good. Adults provide good role models for the children and they treat each other and the children with great courtesy and respect. Six rules of the classroom are clearly displayed for all to see and the children respond quickly when they are asked to tidy up or sit quietly. The teacher's strong sense of humour and love of the children frequently leads to great fun and enjoyment during activities. Happy smiling faces and much laughter amongst the staff and children are everyday features of the Reception class!

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have well-developed skills in speaking and listening.
- Adults interact well with children and teaching is sometimes excellent.

Commentary

42. Most children reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year, owing to the good teaching provided by the adults in the Reception class. Teaching is sometimes excellent due to the very careful planning, highly inclusive ethos and outstanding relationships between adults and children. All staff work together as an excellent team and involve the children successfully in conversation, helping them to increase their skills well. Adults include plenty of discussions about characters in books, leading to good standards of speaking and listening amongst the children. They converse clearly with each other and adults, using full sentences, and they are successful when recalling the stories they have been told; *'Elmer the Elephant'* and *'The Little Red Hen'* are firm favourites. The class teacher plans the curriculum conscientiously and is well supported by the teaching assistant and other adults, who are all deployed effectively. Learning is well organised, with children guided and supported closely in groups and individually. In particular, this leads to children's success when sequencing stories in pictures and written sentences. The teacher's lively, cheerful manner and good humour have a very positive impact on children's attitudes and help them to see learning as fun and to achieve well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Many children achieve well and reach the expected standards.

Commentary

43. The good teaching has a positive effect on children's learning as they extend their knowledge of the numbers one to ten. Some of the most capable children achieve particularly well; for example when counting up to 20 and back down again. Lessons contain a good balance of individual tasks and group activities and this approach builds well on children's prior knowledge and contributes to their growing independence and confidence. Very skilful questioning and good opportunities for fun-filled moments are used well throughout the day to consolidate children's understanding of number, shape and measurement. For example, children love to jump up and call the appropriate answer when asked questions such as, *'What's one more than five?'* or *'Stand up if you have a...cone!'*. They compare strips of paper in order of the longest and shortest and recognise circles, squares and triangles. The

most capable children can recall confidently the names of three-dimensional shapes such as cubes, cylinders, spheres and pyramids. Overall, most children achieve well and reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

44. Children enjoy finding out about the world around them. They are enthusiastic when using their senses to explore the sight, touch and taste of various fruits, such as guava, mango and pineapple when making fruit salad. They then make careful and observant pictures of fruit using a 'paint' program on the computer. Children conduct simple scientific investigations successfully to find out how seeds grow and they like to play with the toys in the home corner. The teacher's good questioning helps them to build rapidly on their understanding and to think for themselves.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

45. Children develop their hand and finger muscles by working with play dough. They enjoy and discuss the feel of the different textures, developing numeracy skills at the same time. They use construction materials, sand and water happily and move confidently when using outdoor equipment. However, the provision for physical development is limited by the lack of a secure outdoor area and the few resources available. The school has already recognised this and begun to plan improvements.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

46. Throughout the day, children have a good range of opportunities to develop the skills of using pencils, crayons, computers and paints to make self-portraits, Rangoli patterns, for the Hindu celebration of Diwali, and Mendhi designs. This work helps children to begin to appreciate the cultural diversity of their world and society. They work within a colourful, stimulating environment that is well organised by the teacher and support staff who work together as a strong team. Very good opportunities for activities, such as drawing tropical fruits and modelling finger pots in clay helps children use their imagination in exciting ways.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and their standards are good by the end of Year 2.
- Year 2 pupils' results in the 2004 national tests of reading and writing were well above average.
- Pupils listen attentively and discuss and debate topics confidently, developing good standards of speaking and listening throughout the school.
- There is good teaching of well-planned, purposeful lessons, some of which benefit from the good work of support staff.

- Lessons are usually well planned, but the most capable pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make more use of books or computers for independent research.
- The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and some pupils do not present their work neatly enough.

COMMENTARY

47. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 when account is taken of their earlier attainment. In recent years, there has been a steady trend of improvement in Year 2 pupils' results in national reading and writing tests and the 2004 results were well above average. Present Year 2 pupils' standards are good. Year 6 pupils' test results have fluctuated in recent years, reflecting the particular profile of each year group; they were average in 2004. Present Year 6 pupils' work is in line with national expectations for their age. Since these pupils' attainment was average when tested in Year 2, pupils' achievement as measured by their long-term progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. During lessons seen during the inspection, however, pupils were seen to be achieving well in the great majority of lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language make sound progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans, whilst pupils from Traveller families achieve particularly well. In addition, pupils who are seen to be performing less well than expected are given effective additional support in booster groups. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls compared with that found nationally. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
48. Speaking and listening skills are good at the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils achieve well in these skills. The school places a clear emphasis on developing these aspects of the subject and staff give pupils plenty of opportunities to extend their skills in the classroom. As a result, pupils discuss and debate topics confidently in whole-class lessons. They listen attentively and collaborate well with each other during partner and group tasks. The most capable pupils think very carefully about the points they want to raise and then put them forward articulately.
49. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in reading by Year 6. They usually read confidently and independently. When listening to stories, pupils are able to discuss the author's intentions, make suggestions and give opinions. They recognise metaphors and read their own work with sound expression and feeling. Book areas in classrooms and in the library are attractively organised and easily accessible, and this helps pupils to benefit from them. Younger pupils achieve well and attain good standards generally by the end of Year 2. They read simple texts fluently and accurately, and most have effective strategies to help them sound out unfamiliar words and to re-read sentences once the context is understood. For example, a group of pupils working with the class teacher was able to tackle new words confidently in *'Lucy Loses Red Ted'* and *'Twigg'* and they often corrected themselves successfully without adult help.
50. Standards in writing are in line with the national expectations in Year 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Teachers have worked hard to help improve standards in writing as this has been a key focus for improvement. There has been a gradual improvement in content and structure. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum, using a wide variety of styles and formats including stories,

factual accounts in history and descriptions, report writing, poems and letters. In Year 6, they produce biographical accounts of their parents' lives, using facts, quotes, past tenses and descriptive language. Pupils in Year 5 enjoy studying metaphors in the poem, *'The Highwayman'* by Alfred Noyes. In their own writing, some pupils lucidly describe the sun as a *'red, bouncing ball'* and the clock as an *'angry face peeping through the darkness'*. However, although handwriting skills are taught regularly, there are too many junior-aged pupils whose standard of handwriting and presentation in finished work is below that expected. In Year 2, most pupils attaining the expected level in writing, which continues the healthy trend seen over the last few years.

51. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in the infant and junior classes; sometimes it is very good, especially in Years 1 and 2. Lessons are well planned and different activities are organised effectively to meet the range of attainment in each class. Teachers place good emphasis on helping pupils develop their literacy skills through purposeful activities during literacy time. For example, in a well-taught Years 1 and 2 lesson on letter sounds, the teacher effectively used a method known as 'Jolly Phonics' to help the pupils learn letter sounds. She made excellent use of a puppet called 'Inky Mouse' to inspire and motivate the class and, as a result, the pupils responded enthusiastically. They quickly discovered vowels in the phrases *'at the side of the box'*, *'at the edge'*, *'in...on and underneath the box'*. In all lessons there is a sound match between the tasks set and the range of attainment displayed by the pupils. Good support is on hand from the teaching assistants and class teachers for pupils with special educational needs, pupils from Traveller families and the few who learn English as an additional language. Teachers make some use of computers to support learning, but this aspect is not fully developed. In particular, the most capable pupils are not stretched enough to use computers and books for independent research. Homework is given appropriately. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent; it is best in Years 1 and 2 when the teachers provide brief written comments to help pupils improve their work but elsewhere in the school, marking is usually limited to just ticks and words of praise.
52. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has only been managing the provision since September 2004 but has already made sound use of the data to analyse the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and produce an action plan for tackling areas for improvement. As a result, the development of writing skills has been a focus recently, which is beginning to have a positive impact on the progress pupils make. The refurbishment of the library is an improvement since the last inspection, which has benefited pupils' learning through the enhanced supply of non-fiction books. Assessment practice is satisfactory overall and some target-setting is in place. However, there is only a modest approach to setting ambitious targets for the pupils and involving them in understanding exactly what it is they need to do to achieve a higher level of attainment.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

53. Pupils' speaking and listening skills, and their basic reading and writing skills are developed effectively in other subjects. For example, pupils regularly discuss ideas with partners or in whole class groups. They review their work with one another and provide constructive criticism using a good range of vocabulary.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' progress up to age seven is better than expected and current Year 2 pupils' standards are above average.
- Year 2 pupils' 2004 national test results were well above average.
- Good teaching is well focused and helps the pupils to learn well but the marking of the pupils' work does little to help them to improve.
- The pupils' very positive attitudes to their work contribute well to their achievement although the presentation of their work is sometimes untidy.
- In some lessons tasks are not always well matched to the needs of a few higher and lower attaining pupils.
- The subject co-ordinator monitors and evaluates the pupils' progress well and this helps to raise standards.

Commentary

54. In Year 2 the pupils' 2004 test results were well above the national average and well above those attained by pupils at similar schools. Current Year 2 pupils' standards are above the level expected nationally. When compared with their earlier attainments these pupils' standards point to good achievement. In the case of the oldest pupils, after two years when Year 6 national test results were well above average, the 2004 results were below the national average. However, the year group taking the 2004 tests was small and untypical and their results do not indicate a significant change in standards. Current Year 6 pupils' work is in line with the standard expected nationally for their age. When Year 6 pupils' earlier attainments are taken into account their standards show that they have achieved satisfactorily during Years 3-6. Taking account of fluctuations in the attainments of pupils joining the school, the effectiveness of provision for the subject in promoting pupils' progress has been maintained since the previous inspection.
55. Teaching and learning are good overall but most consistently so in Years 1 and 2. In good lessons the teaching is brisk and pupils are expected to have quick recall of number facts. Teachers manage and encourage pupils very effectively and the pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour have a positive effect on their learning. They are keen and attentive and work well either on their own or with a partner. Almost all co-operate well with their peers, their teachers and the support staff. Some, however, let themselves down in the presentation of their work which is not as neat or careful as expected for their age. Resources are well organised to support the pupils' learning and carefully prepared lessons are taught in a lively way. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those of lower ability. In some satisfactory lessons, the pace of learning is slower and tasks are not always well matched to the capabilities and needs of a few higher- and lower-attaining pupils. However, a good recent development has been the provision of a weekly lesson designed to challenge a group of older pupils who have high ability in mathematics; this is led by a teacher from the partner Catholic

secondary school. A common weakness of the teaching is that pupils' work is not marked in a way that pinpoints what they need to do to improve. Pupils in Year 6 know that targets are set in consultation with their parents but they do not know what those are in detail or how to achieve them. Too little use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics.

56. The leadership and management of the subject are good and this has a positive influence on the standards that pupils attain. Expectations of, and support for, colleagues and pupils are at a high level. The co-ordinator analyses the results of national tests carefully to see what lessons can be learned for the future and plans related action. Strengths of the teaching and scope for further improvement are well understood. This has led to specific interventions, such as additional teaching support in Years 1 and 2 last year which proved effective in helping pupils achieve their very good test results. Useful workshops have been organised to show parents how they can support pupils in developing basic skills.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. There are some good examples of pupils applying and practising their mathematics skills in science and in information and communication technology when, for example, pupils construct graphs of science data or reinforce their understanding of area and perimeter when learning how to use formulae in computer spreadsheets. In other subjects, few links are made and there is no systematic planning for this to happen.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show a lively interest, try hard and achieve well.
- The good teaching is both challenging and very supportive.
- An effective emphasis on investigative work promotes good scientific understanding and generates pupils' interest and enjoyment.
- The use of information and communication technology in science is underdeveloped.
- Marking of work is not consistently rigorous.
- The provision is led enthusiastically and effectively by the co-ordinator.

Commentary

58. Year 6 pupils' results in the 2003 national tests in science were well above average but results fell in 2004 to a well-below-average level. The change is not a reliable guide to trends, however, as the Year 6 group in 2004 was quite small and unrepresentative of the normal picture. The work of the present Year 6 pupils is above average. The great majority of them reach the level of attainment expected at their age and a considerable minority exceed it. Younger pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 are also above average, their levels of knowledge and understanding generally exceeding what is expected for their age. In view of their prior attainment and capabilities, pupils throughout the school achieve well.

59. Good teaching which encourages a lively interest in the work and a will to succeed helps pupils learn and achieve well. High expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are accompanied by well-planned, interesting work. Teaching that is challenging but also very encouraging and supportive leads to pupils' positive attitudes to the subject which are reflected in their keen endeavour and full concentration on tasks. Although they work hard, pupils are sometimes untidy in their written work and teachers' expectations and marking of work are not rigorous enough here. Tasks cater soundly for the range of pupils' abilities and needs, including special educational needs. On a few occasions, however, pupils of the highest ability are not fully challenged by their tasks. Pupils' enthusiasm is successfully promoted by the many interesting practical investigations which are included in the work. These also are effective in developing and consolidating pupils' understanding of scientific ideas and investigative methods and in giving them some good opportunities to apply their mathematical skills of data handling as they construct and interpret graphs of measurements they have taken. As yet, however, the use of information and communication technology to support science work is underdeveloped, a situation currently being addressed by the subject co-ordinator and part of the school's improvement planning.
60. The co-ordinator shows good leadership of planning and support of colleagues in development in the subject. She has taken part in extensive training for her role and disseminated the benefits of this to colleagues. The curriculum has been reviewed in the light of national guidance and teachers supported well in implementing changes, for example when the co-ordinator has shared the teaching of some lessons with class teachers. Assessment of pupils' progress has recently been usefully refined and procedures are now good, though too new for data to have yet been collated and analysed. Sound management of the provision includes a thorough check on pupils' performance in tests and the taking of relevant action to improve teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has a number of other major management roles within the school and consequently has too little time currently to monitor teaching and learning in lessons directly. The good quality of the provision in science and its success in promoting pupils' achievement have been maintained since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and pupil enthusiasm is promoting good achievement.
- Throughout the school, pupils' standards are above those expected nationally for pupils' ages.
- The provision is led and managed with determination, supported by the co-ordinator's very good knowledge.
- Too little is done to exploit ICT resources or pupils' good skills and enthusiasm for ICT in supporting teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

61. Throughout the school pupils achieve well and standards in information and communication technology are above those expected nationally for pupils' ages. Year

6 pupils almost all reach at least the level of attainment expected for their age and a substantial number exceed this level. The oldest pupils develop a marked competence in a wide range of practical skills for successfully using a good range of computer programs. They understand well how these programs can be used to access, organise, present and communicate information. Year 6 pupils confidently combine text, images and sound effects, sometimes sourcing these elements from the Internet, to create their own very effective presentations. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2, also, are gaining understanding and skills beyond the levels expected at their ages. Both provision for the subject and the standards attained have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

62. Teaching is of good quality and, combined with pupils' very positive attitudes to the work, results in good learning and achievement. Substantial training and the mutual support of staff have helped teachers acquire good expertise in the subject. Lessons are well planned and managed and make good use of the good resources in the computer suite to demonstrate skills and to encourage pupils to evaluate their own and others' achievements. Pupils respond to the stimulating tasks designed for them and to the exciting possibilities created by the resources, with much enthusiasm, close concentration and very good behaviour. They take much pride in what they can achieve. Pupils who find difficulty in oral or written work particularly benefit from the practical nature of the work and acquire confidence from what ICT equipment enables them to achieve.
63. The good provision and standards found reflect the good, enterprising and committed leadership of the subject co-ordinator, whose knowledge of the subject is very good. A good curriculum and a sound process for assessing pupils' progress are in place. The co-ordinator knows the strengths of the work, identifies areas where further improvement is possible and plans relevant action. She works hard to provide effective resources for the teaching and learning and researches possible improvements very carefully. The computer suite is soundly equipped but only just adequate in size and therefore an inhibition to extension of the equipment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

64. Lessons in the computer suite designed to develop pupils' ICT skills are often linked to work in other subjects. During the inspection, for example, pupils were seen practising literacy skills while learning how to word-process, applying mathematical understanding as they learned how to use a spreadsheet, and exploring pattern in art and the mathematical ideas of symmetry and reflection, as they used a computer program to design Christmas wrapping paper. Sometimes, too, classes use the computer suite to support learning in other subjects by the use of computers and allied equipment such as apparatus used in science to measure sound or light. However, these are exceptional events and overall too little is done to exploit routinely the school's ICT equipment in the computer suite or classrooms as an aid to learning. Since pupils have good skills and much enthusiasm in the use of ICT, these, too, are benefits that are not fully exploited in support of teaching and learning across the curriculum. The school has itself identified the need to extend use of ICT across the curriculum and made it a priority for school improvement over the forthcoming year.

HUMANITIES

Neither **geography** nor **history** was inspected in depth and it is therefore not possible to make overall judgements about provision, standards or achievement. In history, two lessons were observed and one was seen in geography. Samples of pupils' work were examined and pupils in Year 6 talked about what they had learned in these subjects. The work the pupils do is based on national guidance and teachers assess what pupils know at the end of each topic. The subjects make a good contribution to the development of the pupils' literacy skills when teachers give pupils the opportunity to work at length. This is seen in Years 1 and 2 when pupils write a storyboard account of the life of Florence Nightingale, in Year 3 when they record their leisure activities and in Year 4 when pupils write about changes in their local area. There is good emphasis on skills in Year 6 when pupils record how they know that Bristol has changed. In general, however, the teaching of skills is not well developed. Discussion with pupils indicates that history is taught more successfully than geography. Visits made by the pupils and visitors who come to talk to pupils provide good enrichment of the curriculum and mean that the subjects make a valuable contribution to the pupils' cultural and social development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

These subjects were not inspected in depth and therefore no overall judgements about provisions or standards are possible. One lesson was seen in each of the subjects of art and design, design and technology and music. Three lessons of physical education were seen but these related to only a small part of the curriculum. Planning for these subjects and samples of pupils' work were examined and discussions took place with staff and pupils.

65. In **art and design**, the work seen on display and in sketchbooks shows that pupils cover a suitable range of activities throughout the year. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 focus on topics such as, 'Self-portraits' and 'Still Life' and they create pastel images in the style of European artists. Sound links with other subjects are made when pupils produce sketches of buildings and studies of works of art to represent the diversity of cultures within Britain. The work of famous artists, such as Picasso, is used well to help pupils build up an awareness of shape and colour in compositions and the expertise of visiting artists is used effectively to promote the subject. The headteacher is currently managing the subject because of staff changes and he ensures that the curriculum is covered appropriately.
66. Pupils enjoy **design and technology** and the practical nature of the subject. The co-ordinator manages the subject efficiently and ensures that the curriculum is covered appropriately to include themes such as making biscuits, musical instruments and pop-up puppets. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have undertaken various activities such as designing slippers and making fairground models. They explore ways of joining straws to make models of bridges and evaluate their work successfully by testing for strength. The project on 'Dragonflies' with a visiting artist resulted in good standards of finished models.
67. The one lesson of **music** seen was devoted largely to teaching pupils to play the recorder and benefited from the expertise of a visiting specialist music teacher. Pupil

showed great enthusiasm and effort in this very good lesson. All Year 3 and 4 pupils follow a course of recorder instruction which gives them all some basic instrumental competence and reinforces important musical ideas and skills. It also helps to generate the evident enthusiasm of pupils for music which is seen in the very good number of pupils who opt to build on their recorder skills by receiving tuition in a range of other instruments from visiting teachers. A detailed scheme of work in music is in place and is supported by good resources for its implementation. These provide for music of different styles and cultures to be heard and performed, contributing to pupils' cultural development.

68. **In physical education**, teachers' planning shows that gymnastics, dance, swimming, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities are all covered to provide a comprehensive and balanced curriculum. Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject and this is seen both in dance lessons and when they talk about canoeing and abseiling they have undertaken during residential visits. Year 3 pupils have weekly swimming lessons and a very large majority can swim 25 metres by the end of the course in the summer term. In one lesson seen, Year 6 worked with real concentration as they copied and then improvised movements in groups to African music and to the Stomp. This makes a good contribution to their social and cultural development. The good links with other schools enhance the pupils' learning when a visiting teacher from the secondary school to which most pupils transfer takes a netball lesson with Year 5. There is very good enrichment of the curriculum through activities outside lessons. Local professional and amateur clubs coach football and short tennis and the pupils take part in football and netball tournaments. The local education authority supports the development of athletics and gymnastics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

69. The inspection did not focus on this subject and only two lessons could be seen. No overall judgement of the provision is therefore made. Discussions about arrangements took place with staff and pupils and planning was examined. A good curriculum has been devised which integrates very well with the full range of the school's provisions for pupils' personal and social development as well as with its mission as a Catholic school. A further link takes the form of carefully managed elections of school council members and the council proceedings which help pupils appreciate democratic procedures and related aspects of citizenship. In discussion, pupils show they value highly the way in which they are increasingly being consulted about their views and feelings and then experience a helpful response. Provision benefits from the clear emphasis on the development of a positive ethos that flows from the headteacher's good leadership. One very well taught lesson gave pupils a very good understanding of friendship and helped them to develop the practical skills of relating to peers. These arrangements contribute significantly to the school's very good ethos of positive attitudes, co-operative behaviour and relationships that are warm, caring and respectful.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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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	3

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).