

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY AND ST ROSE OF LIMA
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Weoley Castle, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103443

Headteacher: Mr Kevin Macken

Lead inspector: Mr David Carrington

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th November 2004

Inspection number: 267448

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	188
School address:	Gregory Avenue Weoley Castle Birmingham
Postcode:	B29 5DY
Telephone number:	0121 464 2283
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lorraine Jones
Date of previous inspection:	24 th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School is situated about five miles west of Birmingham city centre. The pupils live mainly within the parish, which extends over a considerable area of west Birmingham. It is an average sized primary school with 100 boys and 88 girls from reception to Year 6, and an additional 24 full-time and 3 part-time children in the nursery. The attainment of children when they start school is below average. About a quarter of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of these are from Asian or Asian British, or Black or Black British family backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils do not speak English as their first language. There are an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which are mainly for moderate learning, social emotional and behavioural, or speech and communication difficulties. Three pupils have statements. Because not all pupils start or finish their primary education at the school, there is significant mobility of pupils in some years. The school is part of the *Excellence in Cities* initiative. It was awarded the *Basic Skills Quality Mark* in 2003 and earned the *School Achievement Award*, also in 2003.

The school will have a separate Section 23 inspection to reflect its Catholic status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education
9479	Mrs Christine Field	Lay inspector	
30144	Mr Edgar Hastings	Team inspector	English Geography History English as an additional language Special educational needs
22421	Mrs Val McGrath	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Personal, social and health education and citizenship

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School provides a **satisfactory** standard of education, but there are important weaknesses in provision that stop it being fully effective. The pupils have an uneven quality of provision, with some years being better than others, and this has a negative effect on their achievement. Standards, though average by the end of Year 6, are not high enough across the school. Ad hoc assessment, and a lack of rigour in management systems, result in senior leaders having limited information to help pinpoint these inconsistencies early and take remedial action swiftly. There is no doubt that all staff are committed to the pupils' well being and the headteacher is a strong pastoral leader who has created a happy and caring ethos and has fostered good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The lack of focus on academic rigour is at the heart of the problem. This has recently been acknowledged and the local education authority has set up a one-year programme of intensive support with immediate effect. At present, the school gives **unsatisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are average, but not high enough, in English, mathematics and science, and are below average in information and communication technology (ICT). They are above average in design and technology and swimming.
- Achievement is erratic and not brisk enough.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but has weaknesses in the middle junior years.
- The headteacher has successfully managed the pastoral and spiritual welfare of pupils and has formed a secure partnership with the deputy headteacher in order to make improvements.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and generally behave soundly; the ethos of the school is warm and friendly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall.
- Children get off to a successful start in the Foundation Stage because the quality of provision is good.
- Assessment procedures in Years 1 to 6 are unsatisfactory and do not form a firm enough platform for the effective planning of learning and the curriculum.
- The monitoring of achievement and the quality of learning is inconsistent and not rigorous enough.

The school has made **unsatisfactory** improvement since 1999. The two key issues, on school self-evaluation and ICT have not been completed and improvement to standards has not been fast enough.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

In 2004 pupils in Year 6 attained well below average standards in English, below average standards in mathematics and average standards in science. In comparison with schools where Year 6 pupils attained at similar levels when they were in Year 2, standards in science were above average. In English and mathematics they were the same as in comparison with national averages. The following table summarises the results over recent years in Year 6.

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

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.

In 2003 the school earned the *School Achievement Award* and the *Basic Skills Quality Mark* for its improvement to standards in the previous year. It has not maintained this improvement and standards have fallen. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach average standards in English, mathematics and science and below average standards in ICT. Standards are on course to be below average overall in Year 2 by the end of the school year. A significant number of pupils do not complete their whole primary education at the school and this has a negative effect on standards. The development of writing is an appropriate key priority of the school because of the weaknesses in pupils' skills development identified by senior managers. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because provision is effective. However, achievement is then erratic through Years 1 to 6. The best achievement is in Year 6 because of the successful booster work to standards and close focus on the knowledge required for national tests. Achievement is steady and positive in Years 1 and 3 but dips in other years. Overall, achievement is currently **unsatisfactory** because there is insufficient emphasis on the development of skills across the curriculum. There is a lack of rigour and consistency in management processes to ensure pupils achieve at best rates year on year.

Attendance levels are average and punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils show positive attitudes to their work, most of them behave soundly and relationships are positive. All these have a beneficial effect on learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **good** overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory** overall, though there are weaknesses. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage and focused soundly on the development of skills and knowledge. Teaching is satisfactory in the infant classes. However, a considerable proportion of teaching in the middle juniors is unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning have some good features in Years 3 and 6, but teaching is unsatisfactory overall in the junior years because of the imbalance between the development of skills and knowledge. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and do not provide a firm platform for the effective planning of the curriculum and learning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, though ICT, the development of skills across all subjects and investigational work in science are all weaknesses. There is some good enrichment of the curriculum through visits to the theatre, farms and museums and the retreat at Oscott College and Soli House. The pupils' pastoral well being is at the heart of the school's provision. The partnership with parents, the community and other schools and the care, welfare and guidance for pupils are all sound.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides committed leadership for the pastoral and spiritual welfare of pupils. He has built a secure partnership with the deputy headteacher as they work together to bring improvement. Other staff give satisfactory leadership to their subjects and aspects. Governors are committed and involved, though they have yet to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses rigorously enough. Their monitoring of school performance is limited. Because systems to check and evaluate that pupils' achievement is rapid enough lack impact, management is unsatisfactory. The school cannot be certain that it is providing best value in terms of standards and achievement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold positive views of the school and believe that the school has developed a good relationship with them. The Catholic, Christian, family ethos is rated very highly by parents. The pupils like their school and say they are treated fairly and warmly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning through the school.
- Ensure that assessment is used fully to plan work for the building of skills, as much as knowledge, across the curriculum, especially in ICT, science and writing.
- Make sure that the system of monitoring and evaluation and target setting are implemented consistently and rigorously by all staff.
- Speed up the rate of school improvement in order to raise the value for money provided.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are **average** at the end of Year 6, but achievement is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average, but not high enough, in English, mathematics and science, and are below average in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 6.
- Standards are above average in design and technology and swimming.
- Standards are below average overall in Year 2.
- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage, but it is erratic and not brisk enough in Years 1 to 6.
- The monitoring of achievement is inconsistent and not rigorous enough.

Commentary

1. Whilst the school earned the *School Achievement Award* and the *Basic Skills Quality Mark* for its work in raising standards in 2003, the improvement was not maintained and standards declined at the end of both Years 2 and 6 in the following period.
2. In 2004, standards in the Year 6 national tests were well below average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. Standards in science were above average in comparison with schools where Year 6 pupils attained at similar levels when they were in Year 2. In English and mathematics comparison with such similar schools showed the results to be well below average in English and below average in mathematics. The following tables show that the school results were lower in five of the six counts in 2004 when compared to those of 2003.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.9 (15.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.2 (14.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	14.3 (15.9)	16.2 (16.3)

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

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.6 (27.6)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.1 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

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

3. This year, standards in Year 2 are on track to be below average overall by the end of the school year. It is evident that standards are lower in mathematics in Year 2 than those in English and science. Mathematics standards are currently well below average in this year group as many pupils have important gaps in their knowledge and skills. Standards are below

average in English, science and ICT. Achievement is unsatisfactory in the infant years because skills are not developed as successfully as knowledge.

4. Standards in English, mathematics and science are currently average, but are below average in ICT by the end of Year 6. However, standards are above average in swimming and design and technology. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. However, it is erratic, with the best achievement in Year 6. It is steady and positive in Year 3 but dips in other years. The school has a successful programme of booster classes to raise standards and this is impacting well on achievement. In Year 6 there is a very close focus on the knowledge required for national tests in the work in science. Whilst this ensures that standards in the science national tests are average, it does not allow for the development of a wide range of knowledge and it does not promote the development of skills sufficiently.
5. The school has set more challenging targets than in previous years for results in the 2005 national tests in Year 6. There is secure evidence to show that pupils are on course to meet these targets, but it is critical that achievement is tracked rigorously to ensure all pupils remain on course to meet their personal best.
6. In some years there is a significant proportion of pupils who do not complete their full primary education in school. Their mobility impacts on standards and achievement. The school's monitoring processes do not yet keep a thorough enough track on the progress of these pupils.
7. The development of writing is currently a key priority of the school. This is appropriate, as there are weaknesses in achievement as identified by senior managers. The school has put in place a number of initiatives to raise standards in writing, such as regular writing assessments in all years, and these are beginning to have impact. Similarly, mental arithmetic skills are showing a modest improvement because of the additional focus on mental methods in lessons.
8. Standards are below average overall in ICT and achievement is unsatisfactory in this subject. This is largely due to the lack of effective use of computers, whether in the classroom or in the ICT suite. The school has improved its resources for ICT but there have been major faults with the computers that has meant that the ICT suite has been out of use for a considerable period this school year. ICT is not planned as an integral part of skills and knowledge development across the curriculum.
9. In contrast, there is sufficient evidence available to point to above average standards in design and technology. There is some good quality work on display in the school, and whilst pupils have insufficient opportunities for the evaluation of their work, they achieve well in the subject. On the evidence available, pupils achieve soundly in aspects of physical education seen in lessons, where standards were average. School records show that around 90 per cent of the pupils can swim the desirable 25-metre length by the time they leave Year 6. This is an above average proportion.
10. Children start in nursery with below average levels of skill and knowledge, but by the time the children are ready to join Year 1 their skills and knowledge are average overall, and most of them have achieved the *early learning goals* for children under five. Provision in the Foundation Stage is effective in enabling children to build skills and knowledge well. In general, provision is of better quality in the reception class than the nursery because children have more opportunities in that year group to take part in practical investigation and to make their own choices of activities, materials and equipment. Achievement is good overall in the Foundation Stage and standards in the six areas of learning improve well.
11. Boys and girls usually achieve as well as each other, though there are times in lessons when girls are more involved in discussions with the teacher. In some classes, boys make much more noise as they work than the girls and are generally more dominant. Recent national test results have shown that boys do comparatively well in science in Year 6 and that the girls achieve better in mathematics. In Year 2, girls' achievement in mathematics is significantly

higher than boys' results. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are represented in all attainment groups in school and their results follow the school trends. Their achievement is similar to that of the other pupils. Inspectors found no significant variations between different ethnic groups.

12. Pupils with special educational needs are generally supported soundly. The teaching assistants provide appropriate guidance, advice and reinforcement of learning. The programmes provided for those pupils with special educational needs are generally matched satisfactorily to their needs. The new phonics programme introduced this term is enabling many of them to achieve well in this area of reading. Thus, pupils with special educational needs, the majority of whom have learning difficulties, achieve satisfactorily through the school.
13. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve at similar levels to the majority of other pupils. Some rapidly develop a good command of English and most of these pupils are fluent English speakers.
14. As discussed in the leadership and management section of this report, there is a lack of rigour and consistency in monitoring and evaluation and target setting and tracking systems to ensure pupils achieve at best rates. This is a key weakness that is impacting in a negative way on standards and achievement. The local education authority's intensive support programme just introduced has the effective self-evaluation of performance at its heart.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **satisfactory** overall. Attendance levels are average and punctuality is generally adequate. Pupils show positive attitudes to their work, most of them behave soundly and relationships are positive. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils have sound attitudes to learning; they enjoy school and try hard.
- A few pupils, particularly in the juniors, require behavioural support.
- There are generally trusting and respectful relationships between pupils and with staff and these underpin the effective learning that takes place.
- Attendance overall has been improved to an average level this term.
- Pupils know right from wrong and become sociable, considerate young people.

Commentary

15. Children in the nursery and reception classes have settled well into the routines of the Foundation Stage. The staff are rightly placing much emphasis on fostering the children's personal and social skills and as they get older the children work well together and are keen to take responsibility for planning and managing appropriate aspects of their learning. For example, they shop at the superstore, ordering goods and paying for them with the right money and then ticking the assessment sheet to show that they know how to do this.
16. Older boys and girls generally show good levels of interest in their lessons. There are respectful relationships between pupils and with staff and these underpin the generally effective learning in lessons. Pupils respond best to the more stimulating lessons when their imagination is captured, where behaviour is managed positively and where tasks are challenging for all. This was well exemplified in a good mathematics lesson in Year 1 where all pupils worked purposefully and productively on a variety of tasks that involved matching the correct number to the different months of the year. At the end of the lesson the teacher reinforced the key points and gave good opportunities for the pupils to show and share with others what they had achieved. The sense of pride and accomplishment was tangible.

17. The school seeks to promote positive behaviour but the application of recently agreed policy is more consistent in some years than others. Behaviour in class is typically settled, though occasionally one or two pupils in the middle years of the juniors display attention seeking behaviour and are disruptive to others. A minority of junior-age pupils show challenging behaviour that most staff manage positively. A system of happy and sad faces operates with clear rewards and sanctions tied to each. Good behaviour is rewarded by house points and with the top accolade of the pupil's name being written in the *Gold Book* on public display outside the headteacher's room. Break and after school detentions are invoked for unacceptable behaviour with exclusion being the last resort. Last year, 7 fixed term exclusions were made for instances of misbehaviour that occurred at lunchtime. Parents and governors supported the headteacher's stance. Pupils told inspectors that *play fighting* at lunchtime is something that occurs and they do not like it. They also told inspectors that instances of bullying do arise but that the teachers always sort them out when they are brought to their attention. Prefects are well deployed to support more positive play and encourage good behaviour from others as they come back into school after play.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	150	4	0
White – Irish	6	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	1	0

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

18. Pupils' attendance is broadly average as is the level of unauthorised absence. The school is working effectively to promote good attendance by raising its status amongst pupils and by rewarding improved attendance. Punctuality is satisfactory on the whole but a few pupils are habitually late. Despite the school's good efforts some parents are not giving the school their full support in making sure their children attend regularly and on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.1	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.

19. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. A programme of personal, social and citizenship education supports pupils' personal, including moral, and social development well. Topics such as the importance of rules and coping with peer pressure help pupils make good progress in their understanding of right and wrong, and of the moral dilemmas they will encounter. Circle times are used effectively for the youngest children to consider what it means to be special and how everyone is special in some way. The representatives on the school council say that their views are listened to well. They notch up the purchase of playground resources and the more frequent serving of chocolate custard as two key successes! Pupils' spiritual growth is fostered through the sacramental work of the school. For example, Year 6 pupils visit Soli House in Stratford as part of their preparation for Confirmation. Assemblies are held daily to provide times for reflection about how to treat others

and live in harmony. Pupils learn about the cultural differences in the wider world through the study of comparative religions and through specific events such as the Asian Day organised for pupils to learn about the Muslim way of life. A strong focus on aspects common to both Islam and Catholicism, for example regular prayer and the teachings about the Testament characters of Abraham, Moses and Elijah, help deepen the pupils' understanding. Through such experiences the pupils become sociable, considerate young people well prepared for the next stage of their education.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**, though there are weaknesses, as discussed below. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and there is a sound curriculum. The care, welfare and guidance for pupils and the partnership with parents, the community and other schools are also satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. They are consistently good in the Foundation Stage, but have key weaknesses in infant and junior stages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but has important weaknesses.
- Children get off to a successful start in the Foundation Stage because the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Assessment procedures in Years 1 to 6 are unsatisfactory and do not form a firm enough platform for the effective planning of learning and the curriculum.
- The monitoring of quality of learning and teaching is inconsistent and not rigorous enough.

Commentary

20. The school provides a satisfactory quality of teaching and learning overall, though there are important variations in quality. There has been considerable turnover of teaching staff in recent years and some senior teachers with considerable experience have left. The local education authority's intensive support programme is designed to eliminate the weaknesses in teaching within the next year and to address the unsatisfactory quality of assessment in school. A specific feature of this programme will be specialist support for newly qualified teachers.
21. During the inspection just under ten per cent of lessons observed were of unsatisfactory quality. These were all in the middle junior classes. This was due to lack of effective behaviour control, a slow pace and weaknesses in the match of work to attainment levels. As the following table shows, 57 per cent of lessons were of good or very good quality. This is a lower proportion than the two-thirds of good or better teaching found in most primary schools.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (3 %)	19 (53 %)	13 (36 %)	3 (8%)	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. There was one additional lesson observed, making 37 in total, but this was not judged because the visit was too short for a reliable assessment to be made of its effectiveness, though what was observed had no shortcomings.

22. Teaching quality is good in the Foundation Stage and this results in good learning. Teaching is of better quality in the reception class than in the nursery because learning is more practically based and develops children's skills of making decisions, choosing activities and discussion of their experience more thoroughly.
23. The quality of learning is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Whilst some good lessons were observed during the inspection in these two year-groups, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. The close scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that whilst knowledge is improved soundly, skills are not promoted to the same level of effectiveness. For example, ICT is used insufficiently as a learning resource and skills such as writing are not developed systematically across the curriculum. Many tasks are based on worksheets and are frequently the same for every child in the class. This caps achievement as the work is then mostly focused on the needs of the middle attaining pupils to the disadvantage of the others and offers a lack of challenge for higher attainers.
24. The support for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall, enabling them to achieve at the same general rate as the other pupils. Where there is additional support from teaching assistants in lessons, this is usually focused on the needs of lower attaining pupils. When teaching assistants are consistently involved in the planning and delivery of the lesson, pupils' learning is enhanced. This is the case across the school, though there is not the same intensity of in-class support in junior years. Support staff make an effective contribution to the booster classes designed to raise standards in English and mathematics amongst targeted groups of pupils.
25. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall in the junior stage. However, the quality varies greatly. Teaching in Year 3 is effective in promoting sound learning, and achievement picks up on that of Years 1 and 2. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 4 and 5, for the reasons cited above. Here, there is less experience amongst the staff. However, training opportunities and induction processes are appropriate. Teaching and learning in Year 6 are the most effective in the juniors. Many lessons were of good quality in Year 6 during the inspection, but the work sample shows that this is not a consistent feature. Work in mathematics shows good focus on knowledge and skills and a relatively broad coverage of the content. In science the focus is often restricted to the knowledge required to succeed in the national tests. In such cases, every pupil completes the same knowledge-based worksheet. The skills of investigation, prediction, testing and evaluation are not developed strongly enough. Throughout Years 3 to 6 there is insufficient use made of ICT resources to develop knowledge and skills across the curriculum, and standards in ICT are below average by the end of school.
26. The strongest features of learning and teaching in general are the encouragement given to pupils to work hard, the effective use of resources and the insistence on good behaviour and response. Pupils work productively and concentration is usually prolonged. Pupils are able to work independently and to collaborate when necessary, though they could be given more opportunities to do so. Overall, pupils show positive attitudes to their work and most lessons are settled and focused on the task in hand. Homework is used soundly to support learning.
27. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory overall because they do not provide comprehensive and consistent information about pupils' achievement in all subjects. However, assessment is effective in the main in the Foundation Stage, though there is need for closer focus on the pace of skill and knowledge development. The close matching of work to children's needs results in them making good progress as they build skills and knowledge in the six areas of learning. Assessment is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs and enables staff to prepare appropriate individual learning programmes to support the improvement of learning.
28. In English and mathematics there are satisfactory procedures to assess knowledge, skills and understanding in Years 1 to 6. In the other subjects, assessment is inconsistent and often to the individual teacher's own choice. The information produced by assessment is not used effectively enough in all subjects to provide work that is matched sufficiently to pupils' needs.

Much evidence from pupils' past work shows that the same task, at the same level, is completed by every pupil. There is variable use made of target setting and tracking across the school, marking does not inform pupils about ways to improve and there are very few opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work. An exception to this was observed in a satisfactory mathematics lesson in Year 4, where the pupils were given time to think and then discuss the progress they felt they had made in understanding and sequencing simple fractions such as half, quarter and third.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a satisfactory range of curricular experiences for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is enriched well through its programme of visits and visitors.
- Curriculum innovation is unsatisfactory.
- ICT does not meet legal requirements.
- The development of skills across all subjects and investigational work in science are weak.

Commentary

29. Although the curriculum is largely broad and balanced, there has been little overall improvement since the last inspection because some weaknesses reported then have not been sufficiently addressed. Provision in ICT is unsatisfactory and does not meet legal requirements since pupils are not receiving their full entitlement. There is little evidence of the use of ICT in the school, and classroom computers are under used, especially in literacy and numeracy. The situation has not been helped by protracted problems encountered with the new computer suite. There are still too few opportunities for pupils to participate in investigational science activities, to develop the related scientific skills, and this is a weakness. The use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects is not promoted sufficiently throughout the school. This is particularly true for writing, although improvements have been made in this area since the last inspection, and it is still a management focus for further development. Curriculum time is inconsistently allocated because of the lack of an agreed timetable format.
30. The curriculum is planned to include all subjects, and to ensure all pupils have equality of access to it, including boys and girls as well as those with learning and emotional needs. A long and medium-term planning is carried out satisfactorily to ensure it supports learning throughout the school. Recently planning systems have been updated to ensure they take account of continuity and progress, but are not yet fully embedded. Short-term plans include learning objectives that are insufficiently focused on what the higher attaining pupils need to achieve.
31. The school provides satisfactorily for pupils with learning difficulties, those with emotional and behavioural needs, speech and communication, or hearing or visual impairment. The targets in pupils' individual educational plans are generally clear and focused on enabling them to achieve. Provision is made for parents to be involved in the review process and to enter their comments along with the other professionals. A number of teaching assistants are trained to work with special needs pupils and they provide skilled support. A recently introduced phonics programme is having a successful impact on learning across the age ranges. The additional strategies are providing support for the lower attaining pupils, as well as booster lessons for Year 6, and helping to improve achievement. There are no additional strategies in place to support the needs of gifted and talented pupils.

32. The school provides enrichment for the curriculum through opportunities to extend experiences through visits to the theatre, farms, manor houses and museums, St Chad's cathedral, and a four-day residential visit to Bromsgrove. Additional activities provide good enrichment. In keeping with Catholic tradition the oldest pupils go on retreat to Oscott College and Soli House. Theatre, dance and music workshops visit the school, as well as the *Life Caravan* to support personal, social and health education and citizenship. Extra-curricular sporting activities include football, badminton, cross country and tag rugby, and pupils do well in these tournaments. Participation in these activities is a positive feature and pupils derive benefit from the experiences provided. However, there is little in the way of concerted curriculum evaluation or innovation carried out over time, and this is a weakness. The one exception to this occurs in Year 1 where staff have introduced a more experiential approach to learning in the afternoons so that pupils are introduced more gradually to the formality of the national curriculum, and to the next stage of their learning. The school has not yet embraced sufficiently the principle of excellence and enjoyment in the curriculum.
33. There is generally a good supply of resources to support the curriculum throughout the school. This includes the Foundation Stage who also have quite spacious and well equipped accommodation both indoors and outdoors. The school itself has little spare space, and is not able to accommodate a library anymore since the inception of the new ICT suite.

Care, guidance and support

The systems in place to ensure pupils' health, welfare and safety are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective procedures overall in place to ensure the health, welfare and safety of pupils.
- The monitoring of pupils' personal development including attendance is good but more work is needed to make the assessment of academic achievement an effective tool for targeting improvement.

Commentary

34. The pupils' well being is at the heart of the school's provision. The headteacher has a high presence at all break times, supervising the pupils and also being available to them to give help and guidance where required. Parents are very positive about the time he gives to ensuring the pastoral welfare of their children. Pupils are treated with respect, care and patience. The school works with a large measure of success to support a small but significant number of pupils who are particularly vulnerable.
35. Health and safety aspects are well attended to in practice, although there is no formal risk assessment undertaken and this requires attention. Child protection procedures are well understood by all staff and a *concerns book* is appropriately maintained. Recent staff training has been delivered by the headteacher who is the named person with responsibility for this key aspect of the school's work. The policy in place is due for review. The office staff are very efficient in what they do and are a very positive point of first contact. There are good procedures for signing in of all visitors. Each morning the teachers meet their class on the yard and take them into school while the secretary is on hand to welcome those who are late and to very nicely stop parents from coming into school once the session has begun. The systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality are efficient and effective.
36. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They are included well in lessons, and able to make steady progress in their learning. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is carefully tracked. However, the monitoring of other pupils' achievements is limited. Assessment has been the focus for improvement but staff have been reluctant to embrace the new systems introduced this year. The tracking system set up

does not enable close monitoring because of gaps in the information entered. Target setting has been introduced in English but more work remains to be done to promote these in lessons, undertake regular review and revision. Pupils need to know what they have to do to reach higher standards in their work. A forecast sheet being developed by the deputy headteacher has the potential to be a useful tool to help predict pupils' next steps in learning but it is only at the consultation with staff stage.

37. The involvement of pupils in the work and development of the school is satisfactory, and the school council representatives and monitors are good role models for others in taking on responsibility. The school is currently working towards the *Healthy Schools Award*.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a **sound** partnership with parents, the community and other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Communication between school and home works effectively.
- Most parents are supportive and involved in their children's education.

Commentary

38. Parents hold positive views of the school. They like the small, Catholic, Christian family traditions of the school and are pleased their children attend. Most parents are supportive and involved in their children's education through homework and when they help in school as volunteers or when they attend the Inspire workshops organised by the home-school link worker.
39. Communication between school and home works effectively. The headteacher and longer-serving members of staff know the pupils and their families well and useful information is passed on through personal contact at the start and close of sessions. There is a regular newsletter sent home, that contains news and diary dates that parents find useful. However, it is not enlivened by the use of photographs or pupils' artwork. The prospectus and governors' report to parents contain all required information but are equally lacklustre in their presentation. The annual written pupil report sent to parents, is viewed positively by them, and include general targets and efforts grades that many find helps them better support their children's education.
40. The school involves parents of pupils with special educational needs appropriately in the formulation of their children's individual education plans, and has satisfactory procedures in place to involve them in the reviews of progress.
41. The Parents Teacher Association is a small group, who work together to help the school resource the education provided. Through the well-supported Friday raffle they raise funds to support their children's education. The school makes effective use of the local area to widen pupils' experiences and has strong links with the church and other local schools. The links with one receiving high school involve shared enrichment days such as the percussion workshop held earlier this year.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides committed leadership for the pastoral and spiritual welfare of pupils.

- There are weaknesses in management shown by the lack of improvement to key aspects of the school's provision since the time of the previous inspection.
- Value for money is unsatisfactory.
- Governors work collectively in the best interests of the school. However, their involvement in school improvement planning, curriculum monitoring or in holding the school to account through a critical look at its work is limited.
- The local education authority has committed intensive support over the next twelve months geared towards improving leadership and management.

Commentary

42. The headteacher has the full confidence of staff and parents who speak highly of his many qualities. Chief amongst these are the caring ethos he has created, the deep concern he shows for the spiritual and pastoral welfare aspects of pupils' education and the commitment he has given to the school and its community over the past eighteen years of his headship. The headteacher is the successful manager of a satisfactory standard of education and in overseeing the very tight budget. However, there are weaknesses reflected in his management shown by the lack of improvement to key aspects of the school's provision since the time of the previous inspection. Insufficient improvement has been given to developing rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, developing the role of curriculum leaders and in developing ICT. The provision currently made for ICT does not meet legal requirements. Two lesser issues raised at the time of the previous inspection, namely writing and mental calculation skills are still on the school's agenda for action but improvement is beginning to show. In view of the current weaknesses identified in provision and in the light of the high expenditure per pupil the value for money is currently unsatisfactory.
43. The staff have undergone significant change in the last two years with nearly 50 per cent of teachers retiring or moving to new schools for promotion. This has resulted in a loss of recognised expertise. Newly qualified teachers have been appointed but as yet they are still getting to grips with their teaching roles. The new deputy headteacher who was class-based for the first two terms this year is now out of class to lead on a very long list of responsibilities that include English, assessment, professional development and special educational needs. The deputy headteacher has some good ideas for taking the school forward and has made a useful start in setting up systems, for example in assessment, but so far the staff have not embraced the change and practice remains ad hoc. The situation in school is where individuals have too much leeway in deciding when agreed policy is to be implemented and this leads to inconsistency in quality and effectiveness.
44. School-wide procedures to identify and evaluate strengths and weaknesses are the main shortcoming of management. Whilst the school has a reasonable school improvement planning process and has set appropriate targets for improved standards, the data collected to track the progress made is not used sufficiently well to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses. Too often, the progress made is evaluated after the event rather than as it unfolds. Success criteria are not sharp enough and assessment procedures are not sufficiently tied into the targets, so they do not enable managers to keep track of what is being learned in relation to the goal. School managers have raised mobility of pupils as an issue, but there is no data held to show what impact this has on standards or achievement of those new to the school.
45. Subject co-ordinators have a limited sphere of influence in comparison with colleagues in many other primary schools. Their knowledge of standards and progress in all classes in school is limited. Nonetheless, they work hard and most are enthusiastic and determined to develop their roles. The part-time oversight of prime subjects such as mathematics, however, does restrict the potential for this. Additionally, the agreed plan for monitoring does not include regular release time for all subject co-ordinators to monitor at first hand teaching and learning. A start has been made with English, though it is too early for this to have had significant impact on the quality of education. Job descriptions for co-ordinators are not focused enough on the

key priorities for that subject and, whilst performance management systems are satisfactory, staff require greater direction in order to bring concerted improvement.

46. The governors are a supportive group and work collectively in the best interests of the school. However, they have limited involvement in school improvement planning, curriculum monitoring or in holding the school to account through a critical look at its work. They are more involved in buildings and finance and their minutes show sound oversight of these. There is good control by governors of the very tight budget.
47. Financial planning is done carefully and day-to-day systems to manage finance and for the administration of the school are very effective. Governors have responded appropriately to the most recent financial audit of two years ago that raised a number of shortcomings about a lack of system in some aspects of governance. For example a register of pecuniary interest and a charging and remissions policy are now in place. Terms of reference for committees have been written, but these have not yet been agreed this year by the full governing body. For the past twelve months the governing body has been without a chair but this term a new chair has taken over the reins and this is step forward in supporting more effective governance.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	703 000	Balance from previous year	24 600
Total expenditure	683 400	Balance carried forward to the next year	19 600
Expenditure per pupil	3 010		

48. Thus, school management and leadership is the sum of diffuse parts. Some of these parts are good, others are satisfactory; some are unsatisfactory. Overall, leadership works in the interests of the pupils and the school functions efficiently enough and is satisfactory. The number one priority of raising achievement as the driving force behind all that managers do has yet to be established clearly enough and as such management is unsatisfactory. The local education authority has committed intensive support over the next twelve months with a plan set out that includes substantial involvement of specialist staff to assist the school managers in developing their roles in monitoring teaching, learning and standards and in driving forward innovation and reform. A specialist team has been attached to the school to support the professional development of newly qualified teachers. Additionally, an advanced skills teacher is to be deployed to the school to help identify and promote best practice. With an increased level of senior adviser input to self-evaluation the school is judged to have a satisfactory capacity for making improvement.

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**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership of the curriculum leads to good teaching and learning.
- Children's achievement is good overall.
- Good relationships lead to good attitudes and behaviour.
- Accommodation, resources and staffing ratios are good.

49. Full-time nursery provision is offered from the beginning of the school year in which children are four. Currently 24 children attend full-time, and three attend part-time. Teacher assessments show that most children start nursery with social and language skills below those expected for their age. Most children move into the reception class, and a small minority move to other schools.
50. The induction procedures, together with the secure relationships, provide a smooth transition from home to school. Children progress well in their language, literacy and mathematical skills and behave well. There are good systems for checking how children are responding to activities, but children's progress through the stages towards the targets for five year olds are not recorded or monitored. The national system for assessing children in the Foundation Stage has been fully implemented and is conscientiously and accurately completed. The use of assessment is generally effective, but there is too little analysis of the pace of children's progress or for identifying aspects of the curriculum requiring more attention.
51. The curriculum, accommodation and resources are good and there is good enrichment from a range of visitors. Since the last inspection the nursery provision has changed, offering full-time places for most children. The daily routine, however, has not been adapted to ensure there is a good balance of child initiated and adult led activity in order to meet the social needs of the youngest children. The school acknowledges the need to provide an outdoor learning environment for the reception children, to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. Outdoor provision for nursery children is satisfactory, but is not used to its full potential.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are of good quality.
- Clear expectations are consistently set, leading to good behaviour.
- Welcoming and supportive relationships lead to children's good emotional development.
- In the reception year children are encouraged to take responsibility and this enables them to show good independence in their work.
- The emphasis placed on adult led activity in the nursery constrains the development of children's independent and social skills.

Commentary

52. Teaching, learning and achievement are good. Adults set clear expectations for behaviour and regularly praise children, promoting good behaviour. Positive relationships between staff and children lead to good attitudes to learning. High expectations are set for following instructions,

and the routine offers a good balance of child initiated and adult led activity for reception children. There are some missed opportunities in nursery, however, for promoting good achievement in social and personal development when children spend too much time waiting, or too much time is spent in activities that are directed by adults. This leads to ineffective use of time for promoting social skills because it constrains opportunities for collaboration and social interaction. Assessments show children do not progress as well in their personal and social development by the end of the nursery year, as in other areas of learning. Children demonstrate good concentration and perseverance when working independently. By the end of the reception year the majority of children are meeting the expectations for their age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good levels of individual support lead to children's good achievement in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- There are good opportunities for parents to support the development of their children's reading skills.

Commentary

53. Children regularly share books with adults at home and school. Nursery children select books with parents to take home. There are regular and stimulating opportunities for learning about sounds and letters. Reception children also develop a good understanding how rhyme and initial sounds can help them predict words. Children showed good learning because high expectations were set as they read a shared text. Children's misreading was sensitively corrected, and all participated fully, and were confident and well motivated.
54. Children are given good individual support when writing, and are encouraged to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to build words and sentences. Nursery children are encouraged to send messages using the *post office*, which is well resourced with stamps, post box and good quality writing materials. Reception children achieved well when given individual help to sound out and build words as they wrote their own story endings. Parents are involved well. Many support children at home by reading with them, helping them to spell simple words and write their names. There is an open invitation to help in nursery, and several parents regularly do so.
55. Speaking and listening is promoted well in small group activities where there is a very good ratio of adults to children. Children's competencies in speaking are assessed regularly, and individual support helps children with language delay to progress well. A small minority of children with English as an additional language show good understanding when listening and respond confidently when speaking. Good teaching and good learning leads to good achievement by all groups of children. Children are on track to reach the goals expected for their age at the end of reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teaching and learning are of good quality.
- Stimulating activities promotes very good attitudes to learning.
- Individual children are supported well in small group tasks.

Commentary

56. Children's mathematical development is provided for well. The quality of teaching and learning is effective and achievement is good. Children listen and respond well as they count forward and back, read numerals and identify number patterns. By the end of the reception year the vast majority record calculations, writing numerals and maths symbols correctly. They use coins to pay for toys in the *shopping centre*, and record quantities and prices accurately. They use the language of measurement to compare length, capacity and weight. Good planning ensures coverage of all aspects of mathematics. Stimulating activities make good use of resources and are well matched to children's competencies. The grouping of children, with different levels of challenge for different ability groups, ensures children of all abilities achieve well.
57. Effective use is made of learning support assistants and volunteers to promote learning. This enables good levels of individual support for children, leading to totally inclusive provision. The involvement of all adults in assessment is also effective in identifying children's achievements. As a consequence of good teaching and learning, children achieve well and attain standards in line with expectations by the end of the Foundation Stage.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

58. It is not possible to make a judgement of provision or standards for these areas because insufficient teaching was observed, although children were observed engaging in play activities.
59. Children play imaginatively in the well-resourced shop, post office and home corner. They create imaginary worlds with vehicles, play people, and sand. They manipulate tools and materials well as they build cardboard models, paint and use malleable materials. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution, providing materials, demonstrating techniques, and talking to children about their work. There are missed opportunities, however, for promoting children's initiative and creativity because activities are generally set out for children, with few opportunities for children to select the materials and tools they need in order to pursue their own ideas.
60. Children enjoy a good range of first hand experiences to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example they handle and discuss old and new kitchen implements and have visited a farm to learn about animals and their habitats. They have also joined in a range of school celebrations and talked to visitors from the police, fire and health services. They have frequent access to computers in the classroom and control a tape recorder for enjoying music and stories.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

61. It is not possible to judge provision or children's competencies by the end of the Foundation Stage because teaching of physical development was not observed. Whilst nursery children access the outdoors for a brief outdoor playtime during each session, there is not enough intervention by adults. This leads to some lack of challenge in physical activity. Children enjoy using wheeled toys and low-level blocks for balancing. However, the area is not used effectively to promote a good range of challenging physical activity. The school has acknowledged the need to provide an outdoor environment for reception children. Children's manipulative skills are well developed through a wide range of tasks involving constructing, cutting, drawing and modelling with malleable materials.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average, but are not high enough in English.
- Pupils' achievement levels are erratic.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but has important weaknesses.
- Writing skills are showing some improvement.
- Assessment and monitoring procedures are unsatisfactory.
- The subject leader has firm plans for the necessary improvements for English.
- The development of writing skills across the curriculum is inconsistent.
- There is positive capacity for improvement.

Commentary

62. Standards have fluctuated since the time of the last inspection, and a pattern of overall improvement has not been sustained. The mobility of pupils in some years, especially in the juniors is having an adverse impact on achievement and standards. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are currently below average by the end of Year 2. Pupils are on course to achieve average standards by the end of Year 6. The achievement of pupils is erratic. They achieve well and get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, but this is not maintained and is only satisfactory by the end of Year 2. It dips again in Years 4 and 5 and through the use of booster lessons rises to being satisfactory by the end of Year 6. There is a clear link here to the quality of teaching, where good teaching results in good achievement. The overall quality of teaching ranges from good to barely satisfactory, because of the lack of expectation and challenge over time, and for the higher attaining pupils in particular. In the weaker lessons lack of pace of working means pupils do not achieve as well as they are able. Teaching assistants are used well in some classes and provide effective support, especially for pupils with special educational needs, whilst in others they are under used and too inactive for parts of the lesson.
63. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average across the school. They listen well in lessons and are confident to respond to the teacher's questions, or when expressing their ideas, suggestions or points of view. In general, most pupils have positive attitudes to English and the work makes a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Some pupils have language delays and good strategies are helping them make progress.
64. Reading standards are average by the end of Year 2. They read with interest, enthusiasm and some confidence. They show good understanding of what they read and are able to talk confidently about the story. They are quick to recognise words that rhyme, and use their phonic knowledge to attempt unfamiliar words. The higher attaining readers show fluency and expression, and are able to explain how to use parts of the book such as the contents page. All read regularly in class and are well supported at home. Detailed reading records are kept to monitor progress. By Year 6 standards are also average, and pupils demonstrate enjoyment of reading when talking about their favourite authors. Most read fluently and with expression to convey the meaning of the text. They read confidently, discuss the plot and characters, and make sensible predictions. The lack of a school library limits opportunities for them to develop personal research skills.
65. Writing has been an issue since the previous inspection. The school has worked hard to raise attainment in writing skills and progress is being made in this area. Currently, standards are below average in Year 2, but a wide range of activities is being provided to improve writing levels in a variety of different forms. For example, stories, instructions, links with religious

education, and the compiling of information books using their own researching. By the end of Year 6 standards of writing are average. Pupils write in a range of styles such as newspaper articles and biographical writing. Some imaginative pieces are produced, but on occasions they include inappropriate references to members of staff. The style of handwriting conforms to a particular style but it is not often joined. Some pupils' use of punctuation and spelling lacks accuracy.

66. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, but the subject co-ordinator is currently working to rectify this situation. Teachers' marking is not rigorous or consistent enough throughout the school to inform pupils what they need to do to improve. A recent positive step has been to introduce half termly writing assessments that do inform pupils how well they are doing, and this is good practice.
67. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator has made a positive start by identifying the areas that need improving, and has shown well-focused leadership in the subject. A regular programme for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in lessons has been introduced, but has yet to have major impact. Nonetheless, there is positive capacity for improvement in English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. The development of English more widely across the curriculum is something that has yet to be tackled with great consistency. This is especially the case in writing, which is a key priority of the school. Wider use of writing across all subjects is at an early stage of development. In some classes, skills of writing in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education are not promoted strongly enough and the too frequent use of worksheets caps the development of skills. Similarly, there is insufficient use of ICT to support skills development in English.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average, but not high enough, in mathematics.
- Achievement is erratic and not brisk enough.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but has important weaknesses.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory but the information they provide is not used well enough to provide a platform for the effective planning of learning and the curriculum.
- There is not enough direct monitoring of achievement and the quality of learning.

Commentary

69. Standards in mathematics are currently well below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. They are not high enough in any year group in the infants and juniors. Achievement is broadly satisfactory, though it does vary from year-to-year. The mobility of pupils, especially in the junior years, is having a negative impact on achievement and standards in mathematics. Some pupils join the school part way through their primary education and have had interruption to their learning. The school tries hard to meet specific needs and is meeting with success. There has been a downward trend in the results of national tests in mathematics in recent years. The peak seen in Year 6 mathematics standards in 2002 has not been maintained because the target setting and tracking, and monitoring and evaluation processes are not focused rigorously enough on pupils' learning and performance. The greatest spurts to achievement are in Years 3 and 6 because learning focuses as effectively on skills as it does knowledge in these two years.

70. Pupils are, however, improving their mental mathematics skills at an appropriate rate. This has been a priority of the subject recently and teachers' greater emphasis on mental mathematics is paying off. However, there is still work to be done to reach appropriate accuracy levels and speed of mental calculation. The school has planned a sound curriculum for mathematics, which pays appropriate attention to the development of problem solving and investigation work. Skills in these aspects are developed satisfactorily.
71. Mathematics is taught satisfactorily and this results in sound learning on the whole. However, a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching of mathematics was observed in Year 5, due to the mismatch of work to pupils' needs and too leisurely a completion rate. On the other hand, good teaching of mathematics was observed in Years 1, 3 and 6. Lesson planning and the setting of appropriate work for each attainment group are in most need of improvement. The general level of encouragement to work well, the use of resources and the insistence on good behaviour are relative strengths. Pupils respond to the satisfactory teaching by working productively and showing appropriate capacity for independent work.
72. Assessment in mathematics is satisfactory insofar as the procedures are appropriate. However, the use of the information from assessment is not rigorous enough in planning appropriate work for different groups of pupils, which impacts in a negative way on achievement, especially for higher attaining pupils. Marking is not used constructively enough to flag ways to improve and there is, as yet, little consistent use made of target setting and tracking in mathematics. Pupils have few opportunities to self-assess their work, though there was an example of good practice in this during a Year 3 lesson on fractions.
73. A committed co-ordinator leads mathematics soundly, though her part-time appointment is inhibiting more effective improvement. However, its management is unsatisfactory because of the inadequacies in monitoring and evaluation, and target setting and tracking discussed here. Improvement in mathematics remains a subject of key importance for the school's future success.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. There is some effective use of mathematics in other subjects, as for example the presentation of scientific data in graph and tabular form. However, mathematics skills of problem solving and investigation, and pupils' mental mathematics dexterity are not capitalised upon enough in other subjects. There are too few links to ICT and this reduces the potential for more effective skills development in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in national tests in science have been improving steadily since 2000.
- There is a heavy focus on preparing pupils for national tests in science.
- Pupils' achievement in learning scientific facts and vocabulary is satisfactory.
- Teaching and learning of scientific skills is unsatisfactory.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

75. The standards reached by Year 6 have improved each year since 2000, and are in line with standards attained nationally, and above average when compared to similar schools. The recorded work in Year 6 shows a heavy emphasis is placed on revision for science tests from the beginning of the year. Achievement in knowledge of science facts in Years 3 to 5 is satisfactory, and in Year 6 is good. However, the development of science investigation and problem solving skills is unsatisfactory. The work completed by infant pupils shows achievement is satisfactory overall, though there is a slower pace of skills development in Year 2.
76. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The work completed in Years 1 and 2 shows termly science topics are adequately covered. Sound teaching of how electrical circuits work was observed. Pupils frequently record their work on worksheets, which are often inadequate for promoting good achievement by all groups of pupils. There is little evidence of infant pupils raising their own questions and undertaking explorations or investigations to test them. During the inspection the oldest pupils carried out a science test to consolidate their knowledge light. Good teaching demonstrated the properties of light well, using torches, diagrams and pupils' own experiences of sunlight and shadows. Younger junior pupils were taught satisfactorily about the solar system. Worksheets for recording key facts about muscles and skeletons proved to be too challenging for some pupils. In some lessons more could be expected of higher attaining pupils, for example through independent research and writing their own reports. There are missed opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and ICT skills to promote learning in science. Work is regularly marked but it does not help pupils understand how they can improve.
77. Learning is satisfactory, although there are insufficient opportunities for using skills in research, exploration and investigation. When pupils are given the opportunity to work practically they are highly motivated. However, decisions about what to test, and how, are largely made for pupils. This offers insufficient challenge, and little experience of testing their own ideas, and having their views confirmed or challenged.
78. The co-ordinator has been in post for one term, and so far there has been little monitoring of teaching. Resources are good and are well organised. Unsatisfactory use of assessment information means there is little understanding of how well individuals or groups of pupils are doing. The below average standards by the age of seven, and underachievement in using science skills has not been identified by the co-ordinator. There is satisfactory vision for improving the use of science skills and ICT. Curriculum leadership at this early stage is satisfactory, but management of science is unsatisfactory because there is a lack of rigorous systems of subject checking and evaluation.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average in ICT and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- There have been significant problems with resources in ICT in recent months.
- The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum for ICT does not meet statutory requirements and is not firmly embedded enough across the curriculum.
- There is no direct monitoring of achievement and the quality of learning.

Commentary

79. ICT was a key weakness last time the school was inspected and improvement has not been good enough. There is insufficient use of ICT in general in school and so pupils' skills and knowledge are not developed quickly or substantially enough. In part, the unsatisfactory quality of provision, which does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, is due to major faults with the new computers installed earlier this year. This has meant that staff have not been able to use their timetabled slots to teach the ICT programmes of study. However, the situation is compounded because there is relatively little ongoing use of computers based in classrooms and, now the ICT suite is in working order again, the specialist resources for ICT are not used to full capacity.
80. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in ICT at present and standards, which are below average, are not high enough. This applies across the school. Although there was very little evidence of ICT in use, including actual ICT lessons, during the inspection, it is clear that teaching and learning quality are both unsatisfactory. There was very little ICT work in pupils' books and files of past work. The most substantial was from the final two terms of Year 5 during 2003/04. In other years, little or no ICT work was forthcoming for the scrutiny.
81. The means to establish the subject performance of ICT are unsatisfactory. Whilst the co-ordinator leads the subject with confidence and shows determination to make improvements, she has no opportunities to monitor provision directly in other classes. Assessment and its links to the planning process, and monitoring and evaluation require much more frequency and rigour. These are weaknesses common with other subjects. There is a pressing need for improvement in subject evaluation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. Whilst a little helpful use of ICT in other subjects was in evidence in school, the extent of this is not wide enough. Computers in classrooms were rarely used during the inspection. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were observed to locate information in the ICT suite about the Ancient Greeks and Year 3 pupils also used this room soundly for the development of skills of research. However, there is not enough use made of computers across the curriculum and pupils do not build skills and knowledge consistently enough.

HUMANITIES

83. The school is to have a separate inspection of **religious education** due to its Catholic background.
84. Because of the focus on core subjects, there were not enough opportunities during the inspection to observe a wide range of lessons in geography and history, though samples of pupils' past work was examined carefully. Geography and history are, therefore, treated in less detail here.

Geography

85. Due to the half termly rotation of the humanities there is very little evidence upon which to make a judgement about standards. The curriculum is based upon the national guidelines, and provides the opportunity for pupils to study a contrasting locality, as well as the local environment. The development of writing skills in geography is reduced in impact because of the over-use of worksheets, which caps achievement, especially for higher attaining pupils.

History

86. Evidence from lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that a satisfactory curriculum, based on the national guidelines, is being provided and that pupils receive worthwhile experiences. Pupils say they enjoy history, especially when they visit places of historical interest. The lack of a school library inhibits the development of personal research skills.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

87. As in the case of history and geography, it was only possible to make a light sample of lessons and work in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education, because the focus of inspectors' work lay in the central subjects of the curriculum.

Art and design

88. There are some attractive displays of pupils' work in art and design around the school, which indicates that in the areas covered, skills and techniques are built satisfactorily. The subject has an appropriate curriculum, though assessment is in need of improvement. There is no monitoring of art and design work in lessons and so, the evaluation of subject performance is not rooted in substantial enough evidence.

Design and technology

89. Teachers' planning, which follows national guidance, indicates there is appropriate coverage of the curriculum. Pupils have incorporated their own designs in their model toys, chairs and moving Christmas scenes. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows standards are above average by Year 6, where good teaching was observed. These pupils demonstrated good acquisition of skills for assembling, joining and combining materials. They measured and joined materials accurately as they constructed mechanisms such as cams, pulleys and gears for their moving model fairground rides. Pupils become increasingly competent at generating their own designs, and they also evaluate their work to identify where they have been successful and what they need to improve. There was a display of high quality design and technology work in the Year 6 class during the inspection.

Music

90. It is not possible to judge standards in music, though the evidence from assembly and hymn practice suggests that the quality of singing is good. The choir also sing well and participate in a number of concerts and presentations each year, some of which are shared with parents and the community. There is specialist teaching of musical instruments such as clarinet, flute and saxophone. It is noticeable that a good proportion of ethnic minority pupils take advantage of this provision and they were seen to be enthusiastic and interested in the brief visit made to their instrument lesson. The planned programme for music is satisfactory, and is a regular enough feature on school timetables.

Physical education

91. Standards in swimming are above average. When pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, about 90 per cent have achieved the desirable 25-metre length. This is evidenced in school records. Provision in games is hampered by the lack of a sports field; games activities are taught, therefore, on the playground. A good quality lesson in Year 1 was observed during the inspection that was focused on the development of ball handling skills. The curriculum for physical education is satisfactory and there are appropriate opportunities for sports events outside school time.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

92. It is not possible to report on the quality of provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship as this area was sampled rather than inspected intensively during the inspection. However, discussions with teachers and pupils, and a review of the planning documents and displays around the school show that this is an important area for the school. The *School Mission* is prominently displayed and the school works with success to develop its pupils as good people and citizens.
93. Children in the Foundation Stage are provided with some effective opportunities to build skills and knowledge and their achievement in personal and social development is good. In the main school all staff are committed to the all-round development of pupils' personal, social and health education. The pupils become soundly behaved children with positive attitudes to other people and their school-life. Relationships are generally good and this supports their personal development effectively. Governors, parents and staff are proud of the school's work to develop the personal qualities of its pupils.
94. The school has earned a *Healthy Schools Award* for its effective work to encourage a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are also involved in a *litter busting* initiative in the playground, which is creating a spotless outdoor environment. The playground has been enhanced successfully by the addition of new equipment, which was purchased after pupils were consulted about ways to make play time more beneficial.
95. Moral and social values are promoted well. There is strong appreciation of one another's cultures. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are welcomed by staff and pupils alike, and their heritage is celebrated by everyone. The commitment to inclusion is good. Pupils are beginning to make a positive contribution to the school community through the school council and pupils who have earned the title *Good Citizen* have their name enrolled in the *Gold Book*.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

