

# INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE ROMAN CATHOLIC  
VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Shirley, Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104098

Headteacher: Mr Bart O'Shea

Lead inspector: Mrs Chris Field

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 267454

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:	420
School address:	Stratford Road Shirley Solihull West Midlands
Postcode:	B90 4AY
Telephone number:	0121 7446852
Fax number:	0121 7440608
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr G Murray
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady of the Wayside Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is much bigger than most schools and is located in the southern part of Solihull. The school serves a large parish that stretches into Worcestershire, and currently has 420 pupils from the age of 3 to 11 on roll. Around twenty per cent of pupils travel some distance to receive a Catholic education and the school is very oversubscribed. The school caters for three year olds in its nursery part-time and most of these children transfer into the reception classes. The profile of children's attainment when they start in the reception classes is typically above average but covers a wide span of ability. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin and virtually all speak English as their first language. A broadly average proportion of pupils have special educational needs that cover a range of learning difficulties; eight pupils have a statement. Only a very small per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard times is very low.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Personal and social education and citizenship
9428	J Butler	Lay inspector	
1189	S Brown	Team inspector	English Music Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language Special educational needs
15414	D Carrington	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education
10204	D Vincent	Team Inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is **very effective** in providing a very good quality education for its pupils and enables them to achieve successfully. The ethos is warm, friendly and very caring and everyone is a highly valued member of the school family. Pupils are a wonderful asset and give of their very best in all aspects of their education. The headteacher provides very good leadership and ensures that the school moves forward with confidence. The school gives **very good** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is very good and standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- The school is very inclusive in all respects and this results in pupils' specific needs being very well provided for and helps them to learn confidently.
- Teaching is very good and this assists pupils in gaining very good skills, knowledge and understanding in core subjects.
- The assessment of learning including marking, the tracking of achievement including pupils' self-review, and targeting of their next steps in learning are not rigorous enough.
- Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are all very good and they take full advantage of the very good quality education provided.
- Very good leadership is the driving force behind the school's many strengths.
- Morale is very high and core subject leaders are at the forefront of raising standards; non-core subject leaders have yet to have opportunity to have the same very positive impact.
- Very good learning experiences are provided but there are inconsistencies in the timetable across years and between subjects that limit the promotion of cross-curricular skills.
- The system for registering pupils' attendance and punctuality is not good enough.

The school has sustained the best aspects of the educational provision reported on last time it was inspected in 1999 and has made very good improvement to identified weaknesses. The school has very good capacity to continue to improve. The school's declared priorities are exactly right.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

From a typically above average start, pupils' achievement is **very good** overall. The children in the Foundation Stage receive a rounded education and achieve well. The effective team of early years staff help the children to make good progress in all areas of learning, with most meeting the goals expected and many exceeding them. Pupils in Year 2 make good progress and achieve well overall. Those currently in Year 6 have achieved very well to reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school is a very happy and high achieving learning community.

The table that follows shows that in 2003 the Year 6 pupils reached well above average standards in all tested subjects and made very good progress during their time in school. The picture in the 2004 national tests was very similar overall though fewer pupils reached the higher level 5 than in previous years in writing.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A	A
Science	A	A	A	A

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. Pupils enjoy school, they try really hard with their work and behave very well. Levels of confidence and self-esteem are exceedingly high. Attendance is very good, though morning registration and register maintenance are not of the best. Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is **very good** and their spiritual awareness is outstanding. It is crystal clear that pupils have a strong sense of social justice and are very highly principled. Pupils are adept at mediating their own problems.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. Classrooms are lively places in which boys and girls of different abilities achieve very well because of interesting activities that enable them to be challenged at the right level across the core subjects they study. A good start has been made in assessing pupils' learning in English and mathematics but this has yet to be extended to other subjects. Target setting in these subjects is a recent initiative that has promise for wider use in the future. The curriculum offers exciting learning experiences for the pupils, with very good enrichment, though it is not well reflected in some class timetables. The very positive care and support that pupils receive helps them to learn confidently and with success. Pupils are very well supported, especially those with special educational needs. The provision for pupils' personal and social development ensures that they move with high levels of confidence to the next stage of their education. The school has a very good partnership with parents and has forged very strong links with the church, other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher is an astute and caring leader who is providing very clear educational direction and the right ethos to support on-going improvement. The strong teamwork of staff and high levels of motivation are central to the school's very good effectiveness. However, non-core subject leaders have not yet had sufficient time or opportunity to fully develop their monitoring and evaluation responsibilities. Governors are committed to the school, give effective support through their committee system and apply the principles of best value securely to all decisions.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils are extremely happy with the school and hold very positive views. Pupils flag English, mathematics and history as their favourite subjects. Some parents raised concerns about behaviour at lunchtime but inspectors found no substance for this. The quality of lunchtime supervision is adequate but the team agrees with school managers that more staff are required to help better promote the very positive ethos found at other times of the school day.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Sharpen up teachers' assessment of learning, including marking, the tracking of achievement, pupils' self-review, and targeting of their next steps in learning.
- Further develop the role of non-core subject leaders in rigorously monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and standards to ensure that the features of best practice are identified and shared.
- Smarten up registration practice, ensure that all staff use a timetable that accurately reflects the agreed times of sessions and seek to re-shape the curriculum so that sufficient time is available to better promote cross-curricular skills.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

Standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is **very good** in core subjects.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- From a typically above average start, boys' and girls' achievement is very good overall.
- The school has made a useful start with target setting but more needs to be done to sharpen up the system to support even better achievement.

#### **Commentary**

1. The school has sustained high standards in core subjects since the time of the previous inspection. The 2003 national tests data shows that standards were well above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. A blip in writing results in the 2004 national tests has been fully evaluated by the school. Over half of the papers sent back for re-marking have resulted in higher levels being awarded. The results in 2004 indicate well above standards all round. Effective improvement strategies have resulted in standards being raised in information and communication technology (ICT) from a below average to an average level. The new ICT suite is having a positive impact on standards. All pupils have weekly opportunities to work in the suite using a range of software that has been carefully chosen to help promote confident use and help develop skills. Teachers have embraced new technology well and many use PowerPoint presentations for example, to support lesson introductions and the sharing of learning objectives. This was observed to be a very positive feature in securing pupils' high interest levels and active learning right from the outset. The next steps in the school's ICT action plan are to widen the use of class-based computers and to extend the opportunities for more interactive learning, for example across the curriculum. Inspectors agree that both are useful improvement strategies to add value to pupils' ICT experience.
2. Standards currently are above average in history and music throughout the school and this is a more positive picture than reported in 1999. Pupils identify these two subjects as two of their favourites and in the lessons observed in these subjects it was clear that exciting learning opportunities are being provided that stimulate very good responses from the pupils and engage them in achieving consistently well. Standards are at broadly average levels in all other subjects and this is a similar picture to that reported previously.
3. The children in the Foundation Stage receive a rounded education and achieve well. The effective team of early years staff help the children to make good progress in all areas of learning, with most meeting the goals expected and many exceeding them. Children of all capabilities are well supported in their early years. The rigorous and timely assessment of individual learning needs is highly effective in supporting good achievement. For example, a speech and language programme for at risk learners is proving very beneficial in assisting this small, but significant group of children, to learn successfully. Potentially high fliers receive added challenge to enable them to move forward in their learning with confidence.
4. The building of basic skills is at the heart of the school's teaching and learning programme and this assists pupils of all capabilities in acquiring these skills with very good assurance. A good quality and well taught early literacy strategy is beneficial in helping pupils in Year 1 build good reading and writing skills. The further literacy strategy in Year 5 has very good impact in helping pupils to move forward in acquiring well-honed literacy skills. The setting arrangements in junior year groups are having a very positive impact on pupils' rapid acquisition of very good numeracy skills.



5. Standards in Year 2 are currently well above average in English, mathematics and science, above average in history and music and average in all other subjects. Pupils' achievement is good during the infant years irrespective of background, gender or ability.
6. The table that follows shows that Year 2 pupils reached very high standards in reading and mathematics and well above average standards in writing in the 2003 national tests. The results in reading and mathematics were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Reading has the strongest trend of improvement when compared to the other two tested subjects and writing the weakest but this is relative to the very positive picture to be seen. The school's overall trend in raising standards in Year 2 is above average. Indicative results of the 2004 national tests suggest that standards will be sustained at similar levels to those seen in 2003.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.7 (18.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	17.0 (17.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.7 (20.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

7. Standards in Year 6 are currently well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are above average in history and music and broadly average in all other subjects. Irrespective of background or ability, pupils' achievement is very good during the junior years. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, despite the imbalances between the genders in some of the year groups and learning sets.
8. The table that follows shows that Year 6 pupils reached well above average standards in all tested subjects in the 2003 national tests. The overall trend in improvement in Year 6 is keeping pace with that seen nationally. Indicative results of the 2004 national tests suggest that standards will be sustained at similar levels to those seen in 2003.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (29.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	30.0 (31.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.2 (31.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 68 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

9. The school is very inclusive in its practice and holds useful assessment data on how well individual pupils are doing. The school is very responsive to individual needs and this works in pupils' best interests, as tailor-made programmes are in place to help those who require extra support to enable them to work at the right level. The provision being made for pupils with special educational needs, including statements, is working extremely effectively to help them make very good progress against their personal targets. The school is developing a system of target setting in English and mathematics that involves all pupils. It has potential to heighten staff and pupils' awareness of the next steps for learning and has merit for extension across other subjects. So far there has been limited use of targets in marking for example to show pupils where their achievement lies. The next step is to involve them in regular reviews of their progress. The targets agreed with the local education authority for 2005 have good levels of

challenge that reflect well the school's ambition to sustain high standards. The school has very good capacity to do this.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**. They are happy to come to school, try really hard with their work and behave very well. Attendance is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' personal development is very good overall, and excellent in aspects of self-knowledge and spiritual awareness.
- Pupils have an excellent sense of moral values and social justice.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and try very hard in lessons.
- Relationships are very good and pupils work and play together very harmoniously.
- Attendance is very good, but procedures for recording punctuality and absence are not sufficiently smart.

### **Commentary**

10. The pupils are a wonderful asset and enrich the school with their very positive attitudes to learning and their strong social values. Parents acknowledge that their children like school, and the inspection found just how keen they are to learn, and to give of their very best in lessons. When presented with a challenge, they rise to the task and take pride in their results, confidently sharing their findings with others. For example, Year 3 pupils were fascinated by the idea of creating poems in different shapes when learning about *calligrams* and produced some commendable results. Pupils say they find learning is fun, and that teachers have a good sense of humour.
11. Right from their start in the Foundation Stage, the children demonstrate high levels of confidence and social awareness. A performance of *Goldilocks* in a reception class was an outstanding success thanks to the level of maturity and self-assuredness of the children involved. The school is very successful in promoting all aspects of pupils' personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. In an atmosphere where every member of the school community is clearly valued and every effort is made to nurture and support those with special educational needs, pupils grow into very responsible young citizens who are a joy to know. In response to the very clear codes of conduct, pupils develop an excellent sense of moral values which underpins their behaviour at work and at play. Very good relationships are a hallmark of the school, and pupils are adept at mediating their own problems. The prefects also do a sterling task when helping with younger pupils, for whom they provide excellent role models such as through paired reading opportunities. From observations during the inspection, and having talked with many pupils, it is clear that anti-social or harassing behaviour is extremely rare, and that pupils are confident that any problems will be dealt with immediately.
12. The personal development of pupils is at the heart of the school's work, and involves a wide range of approaches, from formal lessons to informal chats, assemblies and cross-curricular themes. Pupils are able to empathise with the feelings of others, and in assemblies experience a very spiritual dimension to school life. Through the charitable work undertaken, and special events like *One World Week* pupils develop a strong sense of social justice and a desire to take responsibility wherever they can. The fledgling school council has already had some noticeable successes in improving the quality of school life. In their preparation for life in a multi-cultural, pluralist society, pupils learn to respect the values of those who do not share their Christian faith and an assembly about the Islamic festival of Ramadan, provided a very informative and reverent insight into the lives of friends and neighbours in Birmingham.
13. Attendance is very good, and unauthorised absence extremely low. Lessons begin on time but the system for registering pupils' attendance and punctuality is not good enough. Registers are not called until 30 minutes after the start of the day and this limits the scope for checking up on lateness. It also means that the school has no accurate log of who is on school premises from

9.00am. This was pointed out to the school on the first day of the inspection and immediate action was taken.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/4 (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.5	School data :	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** overall with particular strengths in Years 5 and 6. The curriculum offers **very good** learning experiences for the pupils and those who need it are given very good levels of support, especially those with special educational needs. The school has a **very good** partnership with parents and has forged **very effective** links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Highly effective teaching and learning that has continued to get better over time, results in all pupils achieving very well in core subjects by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching and learning is very good in English, mathematics and science and leads to well above average standards being reached year-on-year.
- The school shows very good commitment to ensuring that pupils of all ages and capabilities are given equality of opportunity to succeed.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very capably assisted in making strides forward in their learning by very good quality support staff and this results in them making rapid progress in their personal targets.
- A useful start has been made with target setting in English and mathematics but more work is required to enable a sharper view of progress in other subjects, including the full involvement of pupils in self-review in all areas of their studies.
- Marking is not sufficiently focused on pupils' next steps in learning.

### **Commentary**

14. The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning has continued to improve since the time of the previous inspection. The excellent focus given by the headteacher to building a high performing team and the very good attention to training and continuing professional development are the key driving forces behind this very positive picture. There is a high level of consistency in the quality of pupils' learning experiences that does not come about by accident. Classrooms are stimulating places in which boys and girls of different capabilities achieve very well because of interesting activities that enable them to be challenged at the right level across the core subjects they study. Teachers are reflective about their work and willingly engage in professional discussion in an endeavour to share the best of practice. Morale is very high and there is a positive culture promoted that includes a strong commitment to performance management. The sense of teamwork is tangible and the school is a happy place of work in which everyone rightly feels highly valued.

15. The scrutiny of pupils' work saved from last year and the lessons observed shows the same very positive picture in respect of teaching and learning. Inspectors observed 57 lessons over their three days in school and all were of at least satisfactory quality with just over four fifths being of good or better quality and these help pupils build their skills from strong foundations. Classes are happy and purposeful places of learning in which very good relationships underpin pupils' very good achievement. The very best and most consistent teaching to help pupils build their knowledge, understanding and skills at a rapid pace was seen in English, mathematics and science and particularly in the last two years of school. The emphasis placed on developing pupils' communication, language and numeracy skills from an early age pays dividends as they grow older and also enables them to have full access to all the subjects that they study.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (3%)	17 (30%)	31 (55%)	7 (12%)	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 rounded percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

16. The very best lessons, of which there were a significant number, were observed in English, mathematics, science, art and design, history and music. Some common features were present in all of these high-quality learning experiences that enabled well above average standards to be reached:
- Crystal clear explanations given to support the amount and quality of work produced.
  - Shared expectations that harnessed pupils' attention and interest from the outset and engaged them in sustained application and high levels of productivity.
  - A demanding amount of challenge in the work set that ensured pupils worked towards their personal best.
  - Highly effective use of support staff resulting in total inclusivity.
  - Very well chosen resources that made learning purposeful and fun.
  - Successful use of every minute of the time available to ensure that everyone worked to the full and gained immense personal satisfaction from so doing.
17. The school shows very good commitment to ensuring that all pupils are given equality of opportunity to succeed. The staff in the Foundation Stage have good command of all areas of learning and are working in successful partnership to enable the children to learn well. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. They have high expectations of both work and behaviour, and this contributes to the good achievement the children make. Pupils with special educational needs receive some very good one-to-one support from teaching assistants who are well deployed and effective in role. Teachers set suitable learning challenges in response to these pupils' diverse learning needs, as work provided is closely related to targets identified in pupils' individual learning plans.
18. Good attention is paid to sharing the lesson objectives with pupils at the start of lessons so that they know what they are expected to learn. Most plenary sessions are used well to reinforce the lesson objectives, but few take account of what has been learnt by individual pupils or enable them to identify what they need to do next to improve their work. The marking of pupils' work at its best is evaluative in recognising strengths and area for improvement, but practice is not consistent and some marking is little more than ticks and brief comments. A useful start has been made in assessing the outcomes of pupils' learning year-on-year in English and mathematics. Approaches in other subjects so far have involved checks being made on progress usually at the end of topics. The school has yet to introduce a system of target setting and tracking beyond English and mathematics that will enable a sharper view of progress. The assessment of learning including marking, the tracking of achievement including pupils' self-

review, and targeting of their next steps in learning are not yet rigorous enough. Homework is very well supported by parents, although a few have concerns about how much is set and others do not know what to expect as there are differences between teachers' practice. This is one area the school would be right to explore further.

## The curriculum

The school's curriculum is **very good** and is well matched to the needs and aptitudes of the pupils. Extra curricular provision is very good and the quality and quantity of accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well. The level of staffing is very good and this has a positive influence on the quality of pupils' experiences.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Equality of access and opportunity is very good for boys and girls from different backgrounds and enables those with learning difficulties and emotional needs to achieve well.
- Accommodation and resources generally have a positive impact on pupils' curricular experiences.
- There is insufficient time available to promote cross-curricular skills and the organisation of the first thirty minutes of each day is not sharp enough.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences.

### Commentary

19. Since the previous inspection, good improvement has been made to the curriculum, which provides a range of very worthwhile experiences across subjects and fully meets statutory requirements. Boys and girls of all abilities and aptitudes experience a rich and rewarding curriculum that assists their personal and academic growth very successfully. The very good provision made for core subjects is central to pupils' very good achievement during their time at school and the school's strong performance in National Curriculum tests reflects this.
20. Provision in ICT is much improved compared to that reported five years ago and resources are now of good quality in all subjects. The ICT suite is a good resource that is used well. The next step already being pursued by the school is to add to the stock of ICT hardware and software resources and to make more effective use of the computers in the classrooms to support pupils' better use of ICT across the subjects they study. The situation with the library, which was said to be too small and not used well by the last inspection, is very similar today and this needs more attention. However, the range and quality of books in the library has improved. The school hall has been flagged by school managers as too small for the number and size of pupils expected to use it. Inspectors agree that its size is a barrier that the school does very well to overcome through sensible planning and good organisation. The huge investment in extending and refurbishing the buildings since the previous inspection, and in providing outdoor play space for the youngest children in school, has had a positive impact on the quality of their learning experiences. The school's next priority is to implement a playground enhancement scheme to support more positive play and this is a good idea. The new woodland walk is a very positive feature.
21. The school has been successful in its implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and this is reflected in improvements in pupils' sustained very good achievement. The setting of pupils in English and mathematics is making a positive difference to pupils of all capabilities. The three-way setting arrangement in Year 6 is particularly effective in enabling a rapid pace of learning to take place. The school is usefully looking at how the curriculum might be reshaped to focus more on skills across subjects, in the light of the good practice outlined in the government's strategy entitled Excellence and Enjoyment. The one weak aspect in the organisation of the curriculum is the construction of class timetables which do not present an accurate picture of the time allocations to subjects or to actual practice. The start of the school day in its current format is neither efficient or effective as too much time is lost by pupils moving to the hall for assembly and then back to class before going to their appropriate English or

mathematics set. The shortcomings in the registration procedures have been outlined earlier. The first thirty minutes of the school day is not sufficiently well planned and this is a missed opportunity for supporting even better curricular experiences, especially in promoting cross-curricular skills and dimensions.

22. The school goes the extra mile to provide a rich and varied curriculum to which all pupils have full access. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex and drugs education. A good curriculum is in place to support the good achievements of children in the Foundation Stage. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils who are potentially very high attaining are equally given the curricular support and level of challenge they need to do well. The school's strong and determined approaches to addressing educational inclusion aspects results in all pupils being provided with equality of opportunity to succeed.
23. Pupils are provided with a range of very good quality experience in creative and aesthetic subjects that add enrichment to their cultural development, for example visits to the ballet, art gallery and theatre. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities take place at lunchtimes and after school that include French, chess, good readers' club, lending library, music, dance, drama, football, netball, athletics, rounders, volleyball and cross-country. The school swimming team have met with recent success in competitions and galas. All of these very usefully extend the pupils' wider curricular experiences.

### Care, guidance and support

This is a warm friendly and very caring school which makes **effective** provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. The quality of support and guidance offered to individuals is **very good**. The level of involvement of pupils in the daily life of the school is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of relationships between pupils and those who care for them is excellent.
- There is very good support and guidance for the personal and academic development of all pupils, especially those with special educational needs.
- There are very good induction arrangements.
- The new school council has made a good start in seeking the views of pupils and involving them in matters of school life.
- The monitoring of health and safety procedures including registration is not sufficiently rigorous.
- The involvement of pupils in their own assessment, including progress towards targets for improvement, is not fully developed.

### Commentary

24. The school has sustained the very good support for its pupils since the previous inspection. All pupils and their needs are well known to the teaching and support staff, and they are cared for in a loving, respectful environment. A real strength is the detailed description and planned support for those pupils who have particular special educational or medical needs. The overall procedures to ensure welfare, health and safety of pupils are good, but the monitoring of these procedures is not sufficiently rigorous. There is a lack of system in the approach to some key aspects of school life that were raised directly with the school managers, who are now aware of those areas requiring greater attention. Child protection arrangements are clear and in line with local procedures.
25. The induction of new children into school is very good, and begins with a home visit for nursery children which is celebrated and often referred to during their time in school. Parents say they value the helpful information they receive to cement the partnership approach to their children's education. Transition arrangements to later stages of education are also very good.

26. Careful monitoring of the personal and academic progress made by pupils underpins the very good support and guidance offered to them as they strive to improve. There is an ethos of promoting positive role models and rewarding success both in attitudes and achievements, to which the pupils respond very well. Some elements of the best practice, like challenging marking comments, and a clear review of personal targets to ensure that pupils are engaged in consciously aiming for improvement, are not yet fully embedded.
27. A very small number of pupils are from travelling family backgrounds and they receive good support in response to their specific needs, to help them learn effectively. The school makes very effective use of assessment data to enable the right kind of support to be given to pupils with special educational needs. The school uses *Makaton* to help extend the language skills of the small but significant group of pupils who have speech problems. Good use is made of a wide range of external support services to help respond to pupils' diverse, educational, medical and behavioural needs. A *Circle of friends* initiative is in place to help those vulnerable at play times.
28. The views of pupils are sought and acted on where appropriate. In response to pupils' requests, a school council was established this term which has already had an impact on the quality of daily life. For example, older junior children now enjoy greater privacy when changing for physical education. The calibre of the school councillors is such that the school is well placed to increase their contribution to decision-making.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

There are **very good**, effective links with parents, the local community and with other educational establishments which greatly enhance the quality of the educational experience for pupils.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The parents hold the school in very high regard and provide a very good level of support for its aims and policies.
- The school works very hard to ensure that very good communication channels enable parents to take an active role in support of their children's education.
- There are excellent links with the parish, and families are valued and supported for the benefit of pupils at the school.
- The local business community provides worthwhile support for school projects.
- The local cluster of schools and specialist services contribute well to the breadth of support and enrichment activities for the pupils.

#### **Commentary**

29. A very good partnership with parents has been sustained since the time of the previous inspection. The school aims to involve its parents thoroughly in support of their children's education and encourages them to enter into dialogue freely, and not just at formal occasions. Parents feel very comfortable about approaching the school with ideas or problems. The information provided for parents is very good, and covers all aspects of supporting children's learning at home, how well they are getting on at school, and forthcoming events. The very active School Association is a focus for generous fund-raising and social activities. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are particularly happy with the degree of involvement and information they receive.
30. There are very good links with other primary schools in the cluster, and with the main receiving high school. These include joint staff initiatives like the summer school which helps to boost the confidence of pupils about to transfer to secondary education. A special school has helped staff with their professional development, and takes part in a shared placement scheme. The school also benefits from extra teaching support in the form of students from local colleges, and particularly the trainee teachers from its partner Newman College.

31. Very strong, supportive links with the parish church provide for the spiritual well-being of pupils, staff and their families. There is a seamless interaction between church and school life which underscores pupils' achievements and personal development. Special services like the *Feast of All Souls* for remembering departed loved ones illustrates how much individuals are valued and cared for. Links into the wider business and service community help to enrich the pupils' learning experiences in areas like healthy eating, fire safety, street safety and design and technology by providing a professional *real life* slant to their studies.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and governance is **very good**. Management is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective leadership by the headteacher together with the senior leadership team ensures that pupils' achievement is very good and standards are well above average in the core subjects.
- Governors are well informed, influential and supportive in their work to check the effectiveness of school performance.
- Management procedures are good and there is effective financial planning and control. There is excellent commitment to educational inclusion.
- The tracking of achievement and the targeting of pupils' next steps in learning are not rigorous enough.
- Non-core subject leaders have yet to have opportunity to monitor and evaluate their subjects rigorously and consistently.
- There are inefficiencies in timetabling across years and between subjects.

### Commentary

32. Leadership and management are very good overall and this report indicates the many strengths of the school that reflect this. Chief amongst these are the well above average standards, the very good level of pupils' achievement, the very good quality of education and the very good rate of improvement since the time of the previous inspection. These strengths are directly attributable to very effective leadership and management. The school is led very well by the astute and caring headteacher who has a very clear vision of what he wants the school to be. He sets high standards for staff, governors and pupils to achieve, but also creates the required ethos for success. His skills lie in getting the best out of people who strive for a high level of effectiveness because he creates the right climate in which this can take place. Staff are particularly well motivated, they work as an excellent team, and are fully committed to educational inclusion. The leadership of the senior leadership team, including the deputy headteacher, is very good and is focused squarely on maximising pupils' achievement and holding standards at a well above average level.
33. The governors have good understanding of school performance. Their business is conducted efficiently and they hold school managers to account in their evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors have adopted sensible priorities for school improvement and have linked these carefully to finance. Decisions are tested well for impact, in order that the school meets the requirements to give best value. Governors are effective critical friends of the school.
34. Management systems work well. There are aspects of management that can be improved further, particularly in relation to subject time allocations, the evaluation of performance data and the monitoring and evaluation of non-core subjects by their leaders. At present, assessment is not consistently effective across all subjects. It is of good quality in English and mathematics but more satisfactory elsewhere. The setting of targets for achievement by individual pupils is best developed, and of good quality in mathematics. Again, in other subjects



it lacks consistency and rigour. At present, subject leaders have different opportunities to monitor the quality of provision and standards. This varies from a programme of well focused monitoring in core subjects to no opportunities at all in subjects such a geography and music. The subject leaders are keen to undertake such monitoring, as they are adamant they want to ensure provision and standards are of the best.

35. The management of staff is effective. There is a good system of performance management, which is well focused on the priorities of the very effective cycle of school improvement planning. The ongoing professional development of staff is very good and has resulted in the improvements identified in this report in subjects such as mathematics and ICT. The special educational needs leader is a very effective manager. Record keeping is in apple pie order and the team of support staff work very successfully with pupils with special educational needs under her positive guidance. The quality of professional development provided for support staff is very effective in helping them develop very useful skills to respond to the pupils' diverse learning needs. The *Investors in People* accreditation is well deserved.
36. Generally, the school works as a very efficient organisation. Financial control and management is very good and the recent financial audit indicated the good quality of financial systems. The administrative staff give very effective support to school managers. They are fully part of the school team and, like their colleagues, they place the interests of the pupils at the heart of what they do. In order to maximise efficiency and effectiveness there is room for a re-evaluation of school timetables to ensure that the available time for learning is used to best effect at all times. However, it is evident that the school is highly effective and that it gives very good value for money. The capacity for sustained improvement is very good.

#### Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>	
Total income	1,065,939
Total expenditure	1,057,828
Expenditure per pupil	2,366

<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Balance from previous year	29,060
Balance carried forward to the next	37,171

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been very good improvement to the Foundation Stage provision since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is consistently good and often very good helping children to learn successfully.
- The children achieve well to reach the goals set for them in all areas.
- The very good curriculum is exciting and challenging, providing a very good balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities.
- Leadership and management are very good.

#### **Commentary**

37. Children join the nursery on a part-time basis in September. They enter one of two reception classes in September in the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection there were 78 children in the Foundation Stage including 40 part-time in the nursery and 58 full-time in the two reception classes. Four children are identified as having special education needs in the nursery and three in the reception classes, two of whom have a statement. One of the children with a statement has a split placement between the reception class and Year 1.
38. Very good induction procedures enable children to settle quickly and happily into school. Parents are very positive about the start children receive to their education. Attainment on entry is above average overall but includes both very high attaining children as well as children with specific learning difficulties. All children are well provided for and their needs are well met because work is carefully matched to meet individual needs. The excellent attention to inclusion is a strength.
39. Progress in all areas of learning is consistently good and very good in personal, social and emotional development. All children achieve well. Many children in the reception classes are already reaching many of the learning goals expected for children of this age. Almost all are on course to achieve and many will exceed these by the end of the Foundation Stage. Standards are above average by the end of the reception year. Very good improvements have taken place since the last inspection when provision for children under five was a key issue. Since that time a purpose-built nursery has been opened. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been implemented with good opportunities for children to develop their exploratory and investigative skills, together with their physical and creative abilities.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average at the end of the Reception Year and achievement is very good.
- Classroom routines are well established and there is a high level of independence.
- Personal, social and emotional development is integral to all class activities.

## Commentary

40. In most cases, children enter school with a good range of skills in personal and social development. These skills develop very well in the nursery and reception classes and progress is rapid as a result of very well planned activities, very good teaching and teamwork, very good relationships and very high expectations of behaviour. Children quickly learn classroom routines. They listen carefully to instructions and carry these out obediently, participating with great enthusiasm in all class activities. They take turns and share when using resources, for example, when using the computer or the large outdoor wheeled toys. They listen well to each other and work well cooperatively. Attitudes to learning are very positive. The majority are confident with very good independence and positive self-esteem. They are likely to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of the reception year and achievement is good.
- Children achieve well in all aspects of this area of learning as a result of good teaching.
- Assessment of the progress of individual children is good.

## Commentary

41. Most children's communication skills are typically above average when they first start school. They achieve well, particularly in speaking and listening as a result of good teaching and well-planned activities. The very good relationships with the adults promote confidence, independence and self-esteem. Children listen carefully and engage readily and confidently in conversation with the adults and other children. The many opportunities for speaking aloud, questioning, engaging in discussion and role-play ensure that speaking and listening skills are well developed. The focus on role-play and free expression is a good improvement since the last inspection. In the nursery, for example, in the workshop, two children sustained a lengthy telephone conversation to fix an appointment for tools to be repaired, while another boy arrived from the homecorner to say the washing machine had broken down. He collected tools and a torch and returned to the homecorner to carry out repairs! The youngest children have a good appreciation of books and all show great enjoyment and interest in stories. They are well supported at home in developing early reading skills. Children in the reception classes recognise many letters and sounds of the alphabet and a small number are beginning to write independently. By the end of the reception year the majority will write independently, some at length with accurate spelling of simple words and plausible attempts at more complex vocabulary, for example, 'seygulls'. The majority form letters accurately and use capital letters and full stops when writing sentences. Good links are made to other areas of learning as children write about the life cycle of a butterfly or write letters to the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Many will be working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum by the end of the Foundation Stage, having exceeded the early learning goals.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of the reception year.
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Basic number skills are reinforced well.
- Well-planned practical activities enable children to learn well.

## Commentary

42. Skills in this area of learning are above average when children start school. They achieve well as a result of good teaching and well planned activities, clearly matched to their stage of development. Number rhymes and songs support children's learning and reinforce basic number skills well. They count accurately with higher attainers recognising and counting numbers to 20 and beyond. They form numbers accurately and create repeating patterns with good understanding, higher attainers creating more complex patterns of two or more shapes and colours. Most children by the end of the Foundation Stage have a good mathematical vocabulary, understanding comparative terms such as shorter/taller, heavier/lighter and terms such as one more than/less than. Well-planned practical activities develop a good awareness of the concept and language of length, time, money and capacity. Good use of stories such as *The Three Little Pigs* in the nursery consolidate their understanding of numbers. Most children in the reception classes recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes and higher attainers can describe some of the properties using mathematical language. Children are likely to achieve the early learning goals and many will exceed these by the end of the Foundation Stage.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of the reception year and achievement is good.
- Good teaching is helping children to achieve well.
- Good questioning by the adults extends children's thinking skills well.

### Commentary

43. Attainment is above average in this area of learning when children first start school. Good teaching ensures a good range of challenging and interesting experiences that enables children to make good gains in their knowledge about the world. Lessons are well planned and linked to language and mathematical areas of learning. For example, in reception class, when explaining magnets, scientific vocabulary is emphasised with terms such as 'attracted to'. In the nursery children experiment with autumn colours, discussing what happens when they mix two colours of dough. As they create autumn structures using natural materials, very good intervention by the teacher challenges their thinking and extends their ideas well. In the nursery children explore with torches, use a variety of tools in the workshop and investigate a canal way using the pump to make the water. Children in the reception classes investigate telescopes, magnifying lenses, binoculars and kaleidoscopes. They learn about the seasons and carry out simple scientific investigations, for example, floating balloons on the field, planting flowers and seeds and observing changes from chrysalis to butterfly.
44. Children know about the main festivals and celebrations of the Christian faith, for example, role-playing a Baptism, and are familiar with stories from the Bible. Well-structured role-play and timely intervention by the adults extends learning well. Visits such as to the farm and visitors to school also make a valuable contribution to children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Good use is made of resources, including computers to develop and support learning. Almost all children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 and a significant number will exceed them.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

45. This area of learning was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. However, it is evident children have good access to a range of outdoor equipment enabling them to enjoy wheeled toys, which they pedal and steer with confidence. All children have regular access to the hall where they use a range of climbing equipment to extend their movement skills and develop their hand-eye coordination through a range of small apparatus such as bats and balls.
46. In the one lesson seen in a reception class children worked safely and confidently using a range of large apparatus. Most moved with very good control and style, very effectively supported by the classroom assistant who gave good support to children with special needs enabling them to achieve as well as others in the class. Well-chosen resources and good on-going assessment helped children to realise the teacher's high expectations. Children took responsibility for putting the apparatus away, contributing effectively to their personal and social development. Standards were above average and children achieved well as a result of good teaching. All are likely to achieve the early learning goals for this area of learning and many will exceed them by the end of the Foundation Stage.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of the reception year.
- Teaching is good and results in good achievement.
- Children are given a good range of experiences.
- Well structured role play contributes effectively to learning.

### Commentary

47. Skills in this area of learning are average when children first start school. An interesting range of media and experiences enables children to explore and experiment. They develop their control of small manipulative skills well as a result of the good teaching and support provided. They control pencils and paintbrushes well and cut, stick and paste effectively. Children are expected to be independent and responsible for their own workplace. The good range of experiences contributes well to their creative and imaginative skills. Role-play areas are well structured and contribute effectively to literacy and mathematical skills. Good use of music enhances children's creative skills. They have a good and increasing repertoire of songs and rhymes, which they sing tunefully and with much enjoyment. They enjoy listening to music and have regular access to a good range of untuned instruments. Children achieve well in this area of learning as a result of good teaching. All are on course to achieve the early learning goals and many will exceed them by the end of the Foundation Stage.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils of different abilities achieve very well as a result of high quality teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and higher attainers are well challenged.
- ICT is used effectively to support learning.
- Very good relationships and very good attitudes to learning enable pupils to learn successfully.
- The subject is very well led and well managed.
- The marking of pupils' work, involvement in self-review and targeting of their next steps in learning are not rigorous enough.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length, in all subjects. Writing is not celebrated well through displays in classrooms or around the school.

#### Commentary

48. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6. They are above average at the end of Year 2. The high standards found at the previous inspection have been sustained and this is borne out by National Curriculum test results and current inspection findings. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in English and very well in the junior phase with evidence of accelerated learning in Years 5 and 6.
49. Throughout the school, speaking and listening skills are well above average. Teachers provide good opportunities for such skills to develop across all subjects, with role play, discussions and debates being regular features. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explain their work confidently and listen attentively to one another. In Years 3 to 6 these skills are built upon very effectively so that by the end of Year 6 pupils consider the contribution of others carefully in discussions, question further to develop ideas and articulate clearly and confidently. They have a very good command of English, using a wide range of more complex vocabulary with good understanding.
50. Standards in reading are well above average by the end of Year 6. Average and higher attaining pupils read with very good fluency and expression. Reading is accurate. Most pupils show interest in both fiction and non-fiction. They show understanding of a wide range of texts and express preferences for authors and style. Dictionary skills are well developed. Phonic skills are securely developed so that pupils in Year 2 confidently tackle unknown words and read with good independence. Higher attainers and average pupils in Year 2 read with fluency and good expression and can name their favourite authors. Improvements have been made to the library, including book provision, since the last inspection. However, the restricted space prevents the use of the library for personal study and extending library skills. Not enough attention is given to making class library areas exciting areas for reading.
51. Standards in writing are above average in Years 2 and 6 with strengths in spelling and punctuation. In Years 1 and 2 writing is organised imaginatively and engages the reader well, for example, *He was old with fuzzy grey hair and horn-rimmed glasses* began one able writer. Punctuation is accurately applied including speech marks and commas within sentences for higher attainers. Choice of vocabulary is increasingly ambitious with growing use of descriptive language. Pupils write for a good range of purposes. Letters are accurately formed, with higher attainers in Year 2 developing a neat, cursive style. Examples of more extended writing are limited. By Year 6, higher attainers and average pupils present work neatly using a good cursive

style. Pupils build very well on their skills in punctuation. Complex sentences are developed with a range of well chosen connectives. Descriptive language and the use of powerful verbs such as *bellowed* enhance the quality of writing. The range of writing is extensive with instructional text, persuasive writing, letters, autobiographies and poetry featuring well. Writing in the style of the poem, *From a Railway Carriage*, one pupil began, *Glance at the brook which is swirling and twinkling, gambolling around, white, smiling and winking* while another wrote *There in the fields are the small country houses with washing lines holding their shirts and their blouses...* Spelling is good for average and higher attainers, with confident use of exciting vocabulary. Pupils have a very good awareness of their intended audience. Writing is not celebrated enough through displays in classrooms and about school.

52. Teaching is consistently good and in the junior classes often very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expectations are high in most classes, challenging pupils well. Teachers provide excellent role models for pupils and value the contributions made by pupils in lessons. Behaviour management is very good throughout the school. The very good attention to inclusion results in pupils' specific needs being well provided for through setting and well marked work and helps them to learn confidently. Additional literacy strategies that are provided in every stage of the pupils' education to help those catch up to the level expected for their age, are highly effective. Excellent monitoring of the individual education plans moves the learning of pupils with special educational needs forward very well. Support assistants are very effective in their role and contribute very well to pupils' learning. Very good relationships contribute very positively to pupils' extremely positive attitudes and their desire to learn and succeed. ICT is used effectively to support learning in English. Whilst marking is positive in all classes it is not linked to pupils' targets and does not guide pupils sufficiently to know what to do to improve their work. The use of pupils' self-review as a tool for learning is not rigorous enough.
53. The subject is very well led and managed and this contributes to the sustained high standards. Unfortunately the subject leader was absent from school during the inspection but the impact of her very effective leadership of English is reflected in the consistency of results and pupils' very good achievement. There is first-rate capacity for English to continue to improve.

### Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Overall, pupils use their literacy skills very well to support work in other subjects. Skills in speaking and listening are very well promoted in all subjects through discussions, questioning and group work. Pupils' reading skills are used effectively in science, history and geography topics when sharing information, although the small library restricts opportunities for better personal research and private study, particularly for older pupils. The pupils' good writing skills are used effectively in most subjects, although opportunities for extended writing are more limited in subjects such as geography and history. Writing in all subjects does not have a high enough profile through displays about school in order to celebrate success.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good and standards are well above average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall which enables pupils to gain very good skills, knowledge and understanding in mathematics.
- The assessment of learning, the tracking of achievement including pupils' self-review, and targeting of their next steps in learning are better developed in mathematics than in other subjects.

- Marking and pupils self-evaluation of learning are inconsistent in promoting improved achievement.
- Mathematics is very well led and managed.

## **Commentary**

55. The 2003 results in mathematics underline the picture of very good achievement and well above average standards in mathematics found by inspectors. In that year standards were similarly well above average in both Years 2 and 6. This is the likely outcome also of the 2004 national tests in Year 6. The evidence of pupils' work this year, as seen in books and observed in lessons, indicates clearly that the school is very successful in maintaining well above average standards from year to year. There are currently a significant proportion of Year 6 pupils who are likely to gain level 5 in mathematics and this is repeated in a number of other year groups, including Years 2 and 5. In general there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls in the current classes and sets, despite the imbalances between the genders in some of them.
56. The consistent level of results in school is a direct result of very good quality provision in mathematics, which, in turn, stems from very good leadership and management. There is much in mathematics that stands as a model for other subjects, such as the emerging strengths in assessment and target setting, sharing and tracking. These are all good in mathematics, though, as in other subjects, marking could be more informative about how pupils can improve their work and there could be more opportunities for pupils to self-evaluate their learning.
57. Teaching quality is good overall in Years 1 and 2 and of similar quality in Years 3 and 4. There is very effective teaching in Years 5 and 6. The pattern is similar in learning. The cumulative effect of consistently good teaching and learning, with a peak in quality in the last two years of school, is the very good overall achievement levels of pupils. The subject leader is focusing his very good direct monitoring and evaluation of mathematics on the regularising of very good provision in all stages in order to maximise achievement and produce top-notch results. The best quality teaching is represented in lessons such as that observed for the top set in Year 6, which focused on the relationship of angle measurement and percentages in the construction of pie charts. The teacher made very effective use of a chess clock to time two teams of pupils as they calculated mentally, for example, what  $216^\circ$  would represent as a percentage. The work was very challenging in its rigour and pace and pupils were enthusiastically and sensibly competitive in their efforts to answer the questions quickly and accurately.
58. The mathematics curriculum offers many exciting learning experiences for the pupils and the focus on mathematical investigation and problem solving is a significant strength. Pupils are very well supported in lessons, especially those with special educational needs. Teaching assistants do a very effective job of helping pupils build skills and knowledge with high levels of confidence.
59. It is clear that mathematics is a very well led and managed subject. The evidence for this comes in two forms. Firstly, the consistency of results and pupils' achievements indicates that provision is very effectively promoted. Secondly, the subject leader shows very good skills of data evaluation, action planning and priority setting. He has very good understanding of subject performance, has developed a very effective team of staff for mathematics and is a very strong role model for pupils and staff alike.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. There is a strong sense of mathematics pervading other work in school. Pupils' basic counting and number skills are promoted very effectively as they tally registers, use the calendar and calculate time. There is good use of mathematics in science and design and technology, for example in Year 1 work about fireworks that involved pupils threading fruits and vegetables in sequence onto a kebab stick and in just the right order and of an exact size to replicate a



rocket! Most lessons include effective use of computers to practise and extend mathematical skills and knowledge. The mathematics subject leader identifies the further development of links to ICT as a priority, though the school has made a promising start to this work.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils is very good.
- By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are well above average.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good and this enables very good learning.
- Pupils' attitudes towards science are very good.
- The subject leader provides very good leadership and has a strong focus upon raising standards and achievement.

### Commentary

61. There has been a good level of improvement since the time of the previous inspection. The science curriculum is stimulating, rich and varied. Experimental and investigational work is extremely strong. It is fully integrated into the delivery of the science programme and is making a very good impact on achievement and standards. There are good procedures to measure standards and progress. This information is used very effectively to promote individual progress and to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. The next step for improvement is to set and use pupil targets to support even better achievement in science.
62. Standards as shown in National Curriculum tests have been sustained at well above average levels for some years. Pupils' achievement is good in the infants and builds to a very good level by the end of Year 6. The consistently good, and often very good teaching, the very positive attitudes of the pupils and the high quality of the science programme of study are all instrumental in developing this very good provision. Higher achievers are stimulated to explore the topics in greater range and depth and this is reflected in their very high levels of attainment. Tasks which are well matched to their capabilities, successfully help lower achieving pupils to develop their scientific understanding.
63. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are able to think rationally and creatively as they seek to answer scientific questions and can identify the key factors to be considered. When testing and recording evidence most perceive the importance of isolating each variable with even the lower achieving pupils requiring only minimum guidance. They plan appropriate experiments, record their observations systematically and draw conclusions which are firmly based upon the evidence. Average and higher achieving pupils make perceptive observations on how each experiment could be improved. All pupils use the investigative process extremely well to support their very good levels of scientific knowledge.
64. Teaching is very good overall. It is good in the infants and very good in the junior years. Teachers have extremely positive relationships with their pupils and demonstrate good subject knowledge. They employ imaginative techniques and strategies which help to ensure that lessons are stimulating and that pupils are well motivated. Teachers focus sharply on the essential key elements and there is little loss of productive time. Skills and knowledge are built systematically. Teachers have high but realistic expectations of their pupils who are challenged to achieve well but are not frustrated by work that is beyond their grasp. The consistently good teaching in the infant years lays important foundations which allows the teaching of the older pupils, especially that in Years 5 and 6, to gather considerable pace and challenge in their skills development. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to think with creativity, reason and wonder as they explored the possibilities that would explain how substances dissolve in liquids.

65. The science curriculum is varied and stimulating. Good use is made of ICT to promote learning in science. Presenting data relating to an experiment on magnetism in graphical form and recording external temperature readings on a computer exemplify this approach. The curriculum is further advanced by the use of the 'Woodland Walk' area in the school grounds, by very well-chosen visits such as those to a van manufacturing plant and by the study of wildlife in natural environments.
66. It is clear that science is a very well led and managed subject. The subject leader for science provides very good strategic direction. She has initiated a number of initiatives to improve the quality of the programme and these have impacted directly upon the standards pupils are achieving. Despite the very good results in recent years there is no sense of complacency as the subject leader constantly seeks ways to refine and improve provision.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are average and achievement is good.
- Assessment systems are not yet fully implemented and pupils' self-evaluation of their learning is not consistent.
- Teaching and learning are good in both key stages and supports pupils' good achievement.
- Leadership is good and is well-focused on improving quality and raising standards.

### **Commentary**

67. The school has made a very good response to the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection report and is poised to make further improvements. A significant investment in resources and teacher training are making a good impact upon standards. The availability of a first-rate computer suite is already making an important contribution to the effectiveness of learning. Although these initiatives are very appropriate some, including the expansion of the computer suite, are relatively recent and have yet to impact fully on standards. The school has very good capacity to make significant improvements in standards and achievement.
68. Standards in ICT at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average. Pupils in Year 2 have satisfactory levels of proficiency in word processing and basic keyboard skills. The ability to save and retrieve information, with support, is sound and pupils can use 'painting' programs with appropriate skill. Pupils know how to give sequential instructions; for example in order to control programmable devices, can enter and present data satisfactorily and they have adequate understanding of how information technology is used in the home and their environment.
69. Year 6 pupils' overall competence in the skills required by the National Curriculum is also average. Word processing skills are appropriately extended and most pupils reach satisfactory levels of competence. They can save and retrieve stored information independently. Almost all are able to combine text and pictures to the expected level and can print the finished product. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of how to establish, test, modify and store sequences of instructions to control on-screen events. They have the expected knowledge when entering, sorting and classifying data and in presenting the findings by means of a range of graphical representations. Pupils have some experience of monitoring external events such as temperature. Their awareness of the application of information and communication technology outside the school is good. The school has installed Internet access and most pupils can confidently log on and use the search facility. Achievement is currently good throughout the school.

70. Teaching and learning are good. In recent years the limited number of computers made it difficult for teachers to combine the direct teaching of skills with immediate 'hands-on' experience for their pupils. The major investment in a spacious computer suite with enough machines for every pupil in the class makes an important contribution to the effectiveness of learning since it allows direct teaching of skills to be followed by immediate, practical experience for all pupils in the class. Staff have enhanced expertise, good resources and are able to work in a suitably designed computer suite. Lessons contain material which interests and challenges pupils. The pace of lessons is purposeful and consistently stimulates the pupils. In every observed lesson there was very good balance between the direct, whole-class teaching of skills and opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their knowledge by working on computers. Skills and knowledge are built methodically and incrementally, however, the full impact is not fully reflected in standards because recent improvements have yet to work through a full cycle. Teachers maintain good records for charting individual experience and for ensuring that every pupil receives his or her entitlement. Assessment is one area for still more development.
71. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The thoughtful plan for further improvements is sharply focused upon improving provision. There is very good capacity to make significant improvements in the future.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

72. The use of ICT to support the work in other subjects is good. Word processing in English, data analysis in mathematics and science, creating artistic effects and the use of the Internet to research historical topics such as Ancient Egypt provide examples of how ICT skills can be reinforced whilst also making an important contribution to pupils' effective learning across the curriculum.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

73. This subject was not inspected. It is to be inspected under a separate section 23 inspection.

### **Geography**

74. Because of the lack of timetabled lessons during the inspection, there is insufficient evidence to present a full evaluation of geography. However, it is clear from pupils' past work and the limited evidence from lesson observations that standards are broadly average across the school.
75. A good range of interesting topics is in place to provide worthwhile experiences for pupils in geography. In the infants the pupils are involved in active research about different countries through the travels of *Barnaby Bear* Whilst in the juniors older pupils develop their knowledge and understanding about a diverse range of topics that covers weather conditions, river studies, life in the Indian village of Chembakoli and the Amazon rainforests.
76. As in the case of history, the focus on the development of skills could be sharpened, though the work to increase knowledge is effective. An overuse of worksheets in some years is a constraint to promoting pupils' personal enquiry skills. Opportunities for extended writing are limited in this subject. School timetabling also indicates that the overall profile of geography could be increased. Additionally, there is limited display of geography around the school.
77. Curriculum planning, teachers' records and discussions with staff indicate that the assessment of learning, including marking and pupils' self-review, and the evaluation of teaching, learning and achievement are ripe for improvement. The subject leader is committed to continued

improvement in the provision for geography but has yet to have sufficient monitoring opportunities.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Assessment of learning, including marking, is not fully developed.
- History is well led and managed.

### Commentary

78. History as a subject has a good profile in the school. It is a subject that both pupils and staff enjoy and there are some exciting topics for the pupils to study. Overall standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good. There are, however a number of ways in which the subject can be further improved and standards raised.
79. The curriculum is planned well and there is, in general, an appropriate amount of time for the subject. However, in some lessons, time is not used as effectively as possible. This is sometimes shown in a pace that could be brisker or in the late start or over-running of lessons. The topics studied are motivating for the pupils and they usually work productively. Learning quality is good through the school because knowledge is built well. However, there is now a need to ensure that there is as much emphasis on skills building in history learning as there is on knowledge development. Opportunities for pupils to write at length about what they find out in history are not provided frequently enough in the timetabled time.
80. The good learning is the result of good teaching. Indeed some teaching is of excellent quality. The Year 6 lesson on Aztec human sacrifice was compelling for the pupils as they placed themselves in the role of a child present at a sacrificial ceremony. Relief was universal amongst the pupils when their character was not selected for sacrifice. The teacher made outstanding use of an excellent multi-media presentation that evocatively set the scene and drew the pupils into the proceedings.
81. Whilst the practice of teaching is clearly a strength of history, there are aspects that underpin the craft, which are not as polished. The assessment of learning, including marking, is inconsistent and not firmly rooted enough in the evaluation of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Also, at present, whilst the quality of leadership and management are good, there is insufficient opportunity for the history subject leader to rigorously monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and standards to ensure that the best practice in history is identified and shared.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design and design and technology

82. These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. No lessons were observed in design and technology and only one lesson was seen in art and design. From the evidence seen in pupils' past work and in display, it is clear that standards are broadly average in art and design and design and technology in Year 2 and Year 6.
83. Art and design is given satisfactory emphasis within the overall curriculum and the programme is clearly defined. There is suitable balance between the creative elements, the diversity of work and the development of techniques. The subject is enriched by initiatives such as the recent visit by an artist but, given the enthusiastic attitudes of the pupils, greater depth and substance in the programme might confidently be expected to produce higher standards and better achievement.
84. A good art lesson was observed in Year 1 where pupils produced some very colourful wax crayon pictures of fireworks as part of their topic on Bonfire celebrations. There are good links between the work in art and design and that in other subjects. This helps to make the topics more interesting and meaningful. When considering the communication of ideas through art, for example, Year 5 pupils evaluated the reliability of the Bayeaux Tapestry as historical evidence whilst Year 5's study of *The Snail* by Matisse was enhanced by graphical modelling based on his style. Henna patterns drawn by Year 3 exemplified the valuable contribution of art from different cultures. Some outstanding clay sculptures of Grendal's arm from the story of *Beowulf*, studied in English, show very well how much interest and creativity the story sparked in pupils' imagination.
85. Design and technology is given due prominence within the overall curriculum and is taught through a series of well-chosen topics. The guidance to help teachers plan their lessons provides a sound basis for determining the content and the balance of the programmes. There is good emphasis upon the creative elements of the subject as well as upon the design, construction, evaluation and review of the products made. Around the school there are all aspects of the subjects represented in display, for example the winding toys made in Year 2 and the moving monsters in Year 5. Currently, Year 6 pupils are in the early stages of analysing the features of different kinds of shelters, all erected in the woodland area of the school and readily available to support first hand investigations. The project, which is scheduled to last this term, is planned to culminate in pupils' planning, designing and making their own shelter.

### Music

86. This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Carefully taught singing skills were observed in assemblies. Pupils sang tunefully, in unison, with very good pitch, accompanied by piano and flute. Standards in singing are above average. The good number of musicians on the staff makes a positive contribution to the subject, as does the use of a music specialist who teaches all classes. The high level of visiting specialists who teach pupils to play an instrument make a good contribution to the musical experiences of the many pupils involved.
87. A very good lesson in Year 5 enabled pupils to develop their creative musical talents very successfully as they used tuned and untuned instruments and performed singing in rounds. In Year 2 pupils enjoyed a good lesson, focussing on keeping a steady beat and learning an African call and response song. Most pupils demonstrated a good sense of rhythm and the ability to sing tunefully. The use of music from around the world makes a good contribution to pupils' very good cultural development, although there are few multicultural instruments to promote this. In the limited time available for music pupils cover a lot of work. They have good

opportunities to perform in concerts and musical productions which enhances both learning and their personal development as do the extra-curricular activities, including a choir and school orchestra. There is effective management of music and positive leadership that ensures the subject has high status in the school and wider community.

## Physical education

88. This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Very few lessons were observed in physical education. Pupils talk enthusiastically of their work in the subject and especially enjoy the rich and varied programme of extra curricular activities that are organised on their behalf. The evidence available from gymnastics and dance sessions seen indicates that standards in these aspects of the subject are broadly average. School records show that about 85 per cent of pupils achieve the desirable proficiency in swimming by the time they leave Year 6. However, swimming tuition is centred on Year 3 in order to promote early water safety and confidence, and there is no further opportunity for pupils to advance their swimming skills in later years.
89. The assessment of learning, especially pupils' self-evaluation of performance, and the increasing of opportunities for the subject leader to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and achievement are very evident as improvement priorities for the subject. There is effective management of physical education and no complacency in its leadership.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a happy and very caring community in which all pupils are given equal status and show consideration and respect for one another.
- Pupils are making gains in their knowledge about how to keep safe and healthy because of the school's good approaches and they grow as responsible future citizens.

### Commentary

90. Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is very well provided for. The excellent role models provided by staff and governors support positively the high calibre relationships so evident in school. Opportunities to become a member of the school council, to lead on charitable endeavours, or to act as a reading partner to younger children, assist the pupils in developing very good social and leadership skills and support the very positive learning culture so evident in the school's daily life. These positive experiences help pupils to achieve confidently and with success.
91. Specific PSHCE lessons often focus upon a theme that supports pupils' personal, including moral and social development, for example, dealing with bullying and coping with unfair situations. Residential visits take place to Meangwynnedd to enable pupils time for reflection during their post-sacramental retreat. The nurse makes a beneficial input to health and sex education and the community police officer contributes positively to drugs education. Fire safety officers come into school to share their expertise to support pupils in keeping safe in the home as do the cycling proficiency team with a wide remit for supporting road safety. The school pays good attention to health and environmental awareness aspects. Younger pupils benefit from fruit provided daily and are learning about the need for a good diet to keep them healthy and mentally alert.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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

*satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). When judging standards- 1 is very high, 2 - well above average; 3 – above average; 4 – average; 5 – below average; 6 – well below average; 7-very low*