

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stoke, Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103709

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Quinn

Lead inspector: Mr David Carrington

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 267613

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	279
School address:	Bray's Lane Stoke Coventry
Postcode:	CV2 4DW
Telephone number:	(024) 7645 3314
Fax number:	(024) 7643 1886
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Patrick Taggart
Date of previous inspection:	7 <sup>th</sup> June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is situated about two miles east of Coventry city centre. The pupils live mainly within the parish, which extends over a considerable area.

It is an above average sized primary school with 152 boys and 127 girls from Reception to Year 6. The attainment of children when they start in Reception is well below average.

About a fifth of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are many different ethnic groups in school, though the number of pupils from each is small. A below average proportion of pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition. There is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which are mainly for moderate learning, social emotional and behavioural, or speech and communication difficulties. Two pupils have statements. There is a very small proportion of traveller pupils in school. Overall, the background of the pupils has changed considerably since the previous inspection in 1999.

The school was granted *Healthy Schools Gold Award* and *Eco School* status in 2004, and earned the *School Achievement Award* in 2002.

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Lead inspector	Mathematics Music
9479	Mrs Chris Field	Lay inspector	Personal, social and health education and citizenship
32466	Mrs Janet O'Neill	Team inspector	English Art and design English as an additional language
21816	Mrs Beryl Thomas	Team inspector	Science Geography History Special educational needs
15015	Mr Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School provides a **good** education for its pupils. The quality of teaching and learning has improved well and is good overall. This is beginning to have a positive impact on standards and pupils' achievement. By the end of Year 6, standards are average and pupils achieve soundly in school. The school is well led, especially by the committed and successful headteacher. Management systems have become much more focused on pupils' achievements since the school became part of the local authority's *Intensifying Support Programme* for literacy and numeracy. There are a number of key issues for the school to tackle, but the potential for continued improvement is good. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Standards are average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Year 6. However, standards could be higher.
- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and infant classes and is sound in the junior classes.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and this is beginning to accelerate the rate of pupils' achievement.
- There is good quality leadership and management, and the school is given purposeful and determined leadership by the new headteacher.
- Rigorous systems to ensure that the evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and involving all subject leaders, are not fully in place or consistent.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall but they are not yet sufficiently focused on pupils' learning and achievement.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is very effective in helping them to build essential skills and knowledge at good rates.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their life in school; they behave well and are pleasant and polite children. Relationships are very good.
- The school has very good systems for promoting the care, welfare, health, support and guidance of the pupils.
- Whilst pupils' achievement in building new knowledge in the non-core subjects of art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education is satisfactory, the development of their skills is not consistent.
- Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to develop independence and creativity in learning.

The school has made **satisfactory** improvement since 1999. The three key issues, and one lesser issue, have been improved well, though standards and achievement declined between the previous and current inspections. There is clear evidence that standards are now rising and that achievement is being improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

In 2004 pupils in Year 6 attained well below average standards in English and science and below average standards in mathematics in their national tests.

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

science	D	E	E	E
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Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Children start school with well below average levels of skills and knowledge. Because the quality of education is good in the Foundation Stage and the infant classes, standards are average overall by the end of Year 2, which indicates good achievement in these years. In the junior classes, achievement is satisfactory and standards this school year are average overall by the end of Year 6. The school recognises that standards are not high enough in the junior years and has successfully introduced a programme of improvement, especially to teaching and learning, which is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement, which is currently **satisfactory** overall. Attendance levels are average. Pupils behave well, they have good attitudes and relationships are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **good** overall. The school is effective in its work to develop the pupils as friendly, polite and considerate children.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are of **good** quality. It is evident that the quality of teaching is better now than it was until quite recently due to the impact of the *Intensifying Support Programme*. This has had a greater effect on the younger pupils than the older ones so far. However, there is evidence that the good quality of teaching and learning is beginning to work through to standards and achievement in the junior years as well. Some lessons observed were of very good quality, especially in Years 2, 3/4 and 6. The work of teaching assistants makes a very good contribution to the progress pupils make in building skills, knowledge and understanding. This is a key factor in the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language. There is a sound system of assessment, though this requires honing to ensure that pupils' learning is measured thoroughly enough in all subjects. The curriculum is satisfactory but work to build skills in non-core subjects and to develop pupils' independence and creativity is in need of improvement. The school has very good systems for the welfare, support and guidance of pupils and its partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are strengths.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is **good**. The new headteacher has a clear vision of the school's future. She has introduced a number of significant changes since she took up post at the start of the current term. These are having a positive effect in raising standards and accelerating achievement. Governors, the leadership team and subject leaders are working well to bring improvement, though management systems require greater rigour and consistency in measuring and evaluating school performance. Not all subject leaders have sufficient opportunities to check and evaluate the strengths and areas for development across the school.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents share positive views of the school, though a small proportion are concerned about behaviour. The inspection team can reassure these parents that behaviour is good. The pupils have very positive views of the school. One was overheard to say *I hope the inspectors are writing good things about our school*. This report indicates that there are many more strengths in provision than there are areas for improvement.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise standards and to improve achievement, especially in writing, mathematics, science and ICT.

- Develop a rigorous set of management systems that enable all staff to undertake rigorous and very focused evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Enhance assessment so that learning is measured consistently in all subjects.
- Intensify the focus on skills development in the non-core subjects.
- Maintain the work to bring excellence and enjoyment to the curriculum by improving pupils' independence in learning and their creativity.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory.

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

- In the junior classes, achievement is satisfactory and standards this school year are average overall by the end of Year 6.
- Standards are average by the end of Year 2, which indicates good achievement in the infant years.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress from their well below average starting point.
- The recent improvements, especially to teaching and learning, are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Skills are not developed as effectively as knowledge in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

#### **Commentary**

1. On paper, standards in the national tests in Year 2 appear to have declined compared to the national picture between 2000 and 2004. There appears to be a pronounced dip in results in 2002 and 2003. In reality, the educational background of the pupils changed substantially over this period. Key amongst this change is the fact that when the school was inspected in 1999, the level of skills and knowledge when children started in Reception was judged to be average. Now, the starting level is well below average. Thus, the children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 have more to learn than their predecessors and so, overall standards in Year 2 are lower than formerly. Standards in Year 2 last year were average in reading, mathematics and science and above average in writing, and were higher than the two previous years.
2. Higher attaining pupils did quite well in their tests in Year 2 last year. Results at the higher Level 3 were above average overall in relation to the national picture. There was significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in this class in 2004. Girls did comparatively well in mathematics, outperforming the boys in school and their counterparts nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (15.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.4 (14.0)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.2 (15.4)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Standards also improved at a below average rate compared with that found nationally between 2000 and 2004 in Year 6. There was a significant dip in results in 2003, which was not recovered enough in 2004. Following these lower outcomes the school was included in the local authority's *Intensifying Support Programme*, which acknowledged the different starting

point of pupils, which seeks to ensure that provision is appropriate to the needs of the current pupils and not tailored to meet the needs of pupils in the past.

4. Higher attaining pupils performed at below average levels overall in Year 6 in 2004. Their results at the higher Level 5 were below average in English, mathematics and science in relation to the national situation. They were well below average in science and below average in English and maths in relation to that of similar schools.
5. There was also significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in 2004 in Year 6 mathematics. The boys outperformed the girls both in school and in comparison with to the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (25.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.9 (24.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.3 (26.7)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

6. This year achievement is satisfactory across Years 3 to 6 and standards are average overall by the end of Year 6. Standards are average by the end of Year 2, which indicates good achievement in the infant years, given that the current Year 2 pupils started Reception with below average levels of skills and knowledge. The school has made substantial changes to teaching and the curriculum, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and it is evident that this is beginning to impact well on achievement. Because the oldest pupils have had more, proportionately, of their education under the former systems, they have not benefited as much as the younger pupils have from the *Intensifying Support Programme* and improvements to the quality of provision. Thus, there is a difference in the achievement of pupils in the infant and junior phases, though the quality of teaching and learning is now good in both.
7. Because of the good quality of provision in the Foundation Stage, the children achieve well and build skills and knowledge successfully. However, it is evident that a significant number of children in Reception will not achieve all of their early learning goals by the time they transfer to Year 1.
8. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils benefit from very well focused individual education plans and very effective support, especially from the teaching assistants. There has been a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in school since the previous inspection, which is a reflection of the change in make-up of the school population. However, all pupils with special educational needs achieve well and they are very well included in all the experiences provided in school.
9. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. The provision for them is of very good quality and the few pupils involved are well catered for in an inclusive curriculum.
10. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils, though there is inconsistent provision for them from class to class. The very top attainers in school do not make the same steady and good progress as the pupils with special educational needs, which the school recognises and has plans to address. In general the setting arrangements for English and mathematics do not

always support optimum achievement for pupils from different attainment groups. In some cases, pupils are set or grouped by age rather than attainment, which is something for the school to review.

11. Pupils from the diverse range of ethnic backgrounds found in school achieve at the same rate as pupils from the majority white, British group. Boys and girls also achieve at similar rates overall. The differences in the achievement of boys and girls found in recent national test results are not a factor observed in lessons or in the scrutiny of past work.
12. Standards in the non-core subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, geography and history are average overall. However skills in these subjects are not developed as effectively as knowledge, which is a focus of one of the key issues from this inspection. This is impacting on creativity, which school managers realise.
13. There is good determination to raise standards in school. The headteacher in particular, is very focused on best achievement. The school is very effective in the promotion of inclusivity in education in most spheres and the very good commitment to this indicates that there is good potential for standards to rise and achievement to accelerate.

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

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good** overall. Attendance rates and punctuality are **satisfactory** and very closely monitored.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils very much enjoy coming to school, say they like their teachers and find lessons interesting.
- Pupils are keen to learn and work hard in lessons.
- Behaviour is good both in lessons and at playtimes.
- Relationships with other pupils and with staff are very good and the school is a happy, caring and racially harmonious community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good overall and assists the pupils in building a very good set of principles by which to grow as responsible future citizens.

### **Commentary**

14. The new headteacher places the development of pupils' personal qualities high on her agenda. She firmly believes that *children of today are stars of tomorrow*. Pupils' personal development and behaviour is very well supported by the school's committed and very caring Catholic, Christian ethos. There is a clear sense of pride amongst pupils, parents, staff and governors about the school's achievements in this respect. Pupils get on well together, are polite and have good attitudes to work and one another. Relationships are very good. Parents and pupils have confidence that the school would tackle effectively any instances of bullying or instances of harassment. The school has a zero tolerance level to instances of racism. No incidents were recorded last year. There is positive racial harmony and pupils from a wide variety of social backgrounds work and play well together. The one fixed-period exclusion in the last full school year was fully justified, as was the temporary one made just before the inspection.

***Ethnic background of pupils******Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	220	0	0
White – Irish	15	2	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	8	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	5	0	0

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

15. Pupils with special educational needs are proud of their work. They generally behave well and have formed trusting relationships with staff and other pupils. They are interested in the activities provided and seek help from the support staff with confidence. Thus, in lessons they work effectively and achieve well.
  
16. There is good provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies and morning prayers are times of shared worship and personal reflection and were observed to provide very positive affirmation of the school's aims and mission. Pupils are very well used to seeking guidance from God through the many opportunities they have and this encourages pupils' spiritual; growth and instils in them a very strong set of moral values and principles. These aspects prepare the pupils well for future citizenship. Some pupils choose to take a weekly meditation and relaxation class during lunchtime and this was observed to be a very effective in helping the pupils unwind and build positive self-esteem. The approach has merit for use with specific groups of pupils who show difficulty in managing their own behaviour. From the time they enter the Nursery and Reception classes they make very good progress towards their goals in personal and social development. They learn to make choices

and to organise themselves. Pupils value the reward systems, including the *Golden Child* award, which brings strong privileges. Class and school councils are good vehicles for pupils to take on roles of responsibility and leadership. All Year 5 and 6 pupils undertake *School Ministries* as leaders and servers of others. These include a range of monitorships that are applied for by letter, and allocated on merit. Sound attention is paid to widening pupils' cultural awareness through local studies work and through the study of topics such as the current focus on Mexico in the Infant Stage. Some very good work on combating racism has involved the pupils in looking at people's different lifestyles and beliefs but work on considering the richness of multicultural diversity through subjects, for example art and design, is more limited.

17. Overall, the personal development of pupils is good, and they become more confident and self-assured as they progress through the school. Many have to overcome a background where high aspirations and positive self-worth are not commonplace, but most develop good confidence to take full advantage of the educational opportunities provided.
18. Attendance has been around the national average for a number of years. Punctuality is satisfactory. The school carefully tracks the poor attendance of one or two pupils and provides good support to these families. Close checks are also made on lateness, with records showing that a handful of pupils are regularly late. The school has well-embedded systems in operation that encourage and reward improvement and these are proving positive.

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.5	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

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

The quality of education is **good**.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are of **good** quality. Assessment is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- It is evident that the quality of teaching is better now than it was until quite recently due to the impact of the *Intensifying Support Programme*.
- Improvements to teaching and learning have had a greater effect on the younger pupils than the older ones so far.
- There is considerable evidence that the good quality of teaching and learning is beginning to work through to standards and achievement in the junior years.
- There is some very good teaching in school.
- The work of teaching assistants makes a very good contribution to the progress pupils make in building skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language is very good.
- There is a sound system of assessment, though this requires honing to ensure that pupils' learning is measured thoroughly enough in all subjects.

## Commentary

19. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. It is clear that the *Intensifying Support Programme* is paying dividends in terms of improved quality of provision. Inspectors observed 52 lessons during the two-and-a-half day visit, many of which were of good or very good quality. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, which is a significant improvement on the almost 12 per cent unsatisfactory teaching observed at the previous inspection. The following table summarises the distribution of teaching grades during the inspection.

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	11 (21%)	27 (52%)	14 (27%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

20. The very good teaching was found throughout the school, though it was generally clustered in Year 2, one of the mixed Year 3/4 classes and in Year 6. Strengths of teaching are the support provided by teaching assistants, who are a well-qualified and talented group of staff, and the promotion of equality of opportunity. In a few lessons, resources were not used to maximum advantage, though the use of the interactive whiteboards is showing promise as a resource to enhance pupils' achievement. There were many occasions during the inspection when pupils were observed to learn well as they used these boards themselves, for example, in a Year 6 class where the difficult task of measuring angles with a 180-degree protractor was mastered with confidence.
21. There is ample evidence to suggest that the good quality of teaching in lessons is beginning to impact positively on standards and achievement. Achievement is now good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, due to effective provision. It is increasing well in the junior years. The work completed in books by pupils shows that in the past the quality of teaching and learning was, at best, satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Achievement was less than it is now and standards were not high enough. The *Intensifying Support Programme* and the strong lead given by the new headteacher is driving standards and achievement to better levels.
22. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are very well taught. This is in part due to the very good work done by teaching assistants, but the quality of the individual education plans and general planning of the curriculum and lessons also contributes well to the effectiveness of provision for both groups. Their work is prepared in the necessary small steps to enable them to work and learn well and to make steady progress and show good achievement.
23. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, though there are aspects that are ripe for improvement. The procedures are not yet consistent or thorough enough in all subjects. Assessment for English and mathematics is most thoroughly developed and effective, but in some subjects, for example, art and design, there is little assessment of skills. Not all marking identifies what pupils need to do next to improve and there are inconsistent opportunities for pupils to self assess their work, especially at the end of lessons. The assessment procedures that are in force are used well to respond to pupils' individual learning needs, especially in the case of pupils with special educational needs. However, assessment is one of the key issues of this inspection because there is a need to enhance assessment so that learning is measured consistently and rigorously.

## The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. There is good enhancement to the curriculum and the accommodation has been developed well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is well planned and organised, but the development of a more creative dimension is necessary.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- There is a good range of extra curricular activities.
- The accommodation is good and there are plans to improve the outdoor facilities.
- Resources are satisfactory.

### **Commentary**

24. The curriculum is planned to meet all the necessary statutory requirements. The curriculum is inclusive; it caters very well for the needs of both genders, pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. It gives equality of access and opportunity to all pupils. In Years 1 and 2 the curriculum has now been designed in a topic like approach to cover all curriculum subjects in a themed way. This approach is more lively and interesting for the pupils. Staff are working to ensure the whole school have linked subjects into a more creative, topic type curriculum, in line with the document *Excellence and Enjoyment*. Teacher's planning is thorough and meets the needs of all pupils and gives planned opportunities for assessment. The intervention of the *Intensifying Support Programme* has focussed teaching and learning and is having the desired effect and standards are rising in both literacy and numeracy. Pupils need to be given more opportunities to take on responsibility and show initiative in their own learning.
25. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils make good progress against their targets. The leadership and management in this area is good with thorough tracking of pupils. The support, guidance and interaction that these pupils receive from the support staff is provided sensitively to ensure that the pupils play a full part in their lessons.
26. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. Pupils are confident in their ability to communicate to adults. When talking to the pupils they all stated that there was an adult that they could turn to for help and advice. Pupils receive good pastoral care during their time in school. The school has received a *Healthy Schools Gold Award* and an *ECO Award*.
27. Good use was made of visits and visitors. Teachers had gone to considerable lengths to make portfolios of photographic evidence of each year's activities. Since the beginning of this academic year the pupils had taken part in a good range of additional activities to enhance the curriculum. For example a visit to Massey Ferguson, The Sea Life Centre, *The Big Sing* at St Thomas More School, Alan Higg Sport Centre whilst under construction were all beneficial to the pupils' learning. In Years 5 and 6 they take part in residential visits. The pupils in Year 6 were enthusiastic about their recent visit to Dol-y-Moch and Year 5 were equally looking forward to their residential visit arranged for next term. Themed weeks and days are organised. Example of Arts Week, Multi Cultural week and a musical morning, technology day and cycle training sessions were all part of the pupils' curriculum. Pupils are provided with additional opportunities to develop their enthusiasm for literacy, particularly the spoken word in school performances and assemblies that are also a part of the curriculum.

28. The school is working well to encourage parent and the local community partnerships. An initiative used to encourage parents to work alongside their children in school in the Foundation Stage called *Together Into School* has been so successful that it has now been extended for parents of pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is called *Blossoming Into School*. It is arranged each week and parents work with their children on a given topic. Parents are invited to work in the classrooms too. The pupils enjoyed various projects involving the community and local industry.
29. The accommodation is of good quality. The extension building was only completed just before the inspection. The new entrance, staff room, headteacher's office and administration block are a credit to the school. The older building is bright, and well maintained. Resources around the school are of a high quality and well chosen, however there are shortfalls in some subject resources, which have been identified by subject leaders, in some areas of the curriculum.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils receive **very good** care and support.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are looked after very well during the school day.
- One of the school's key strengths is the care and guidance it provides for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs.
- The monitoring of achievements and setting of personal targets is limited in subjects other than English and mathematics.

### **Commentary**

30. The school provides high levels of care, guidance and welfare for all pupils. All pupils are well known as people in their own right and the school is very responsive to individual needs. Parents told inspectors that this aspect is a strength of the school and they are right! The *open-door* policy is helpful for parents in raising matters of concern about welfare and guidance. Health and safety matters are well attended to. Child protection arrangements are very good. The breakfast club is an added extra provided and run by support staff. The dozen pupils who attend span all year groups and start their day happily and well-fed. A display of work that has been created during breakfast club time shows that in researching family trees the pupils discovered links with 18 different countries around the world.
31. Induction procedures are very supportive with the *Together into School* strategy being a very positive feature in helping the youngest children settle well and make a good start to school. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and happy at school and benefited from a trusting and supportive relationship with staff. Pupils have a strong voice in the running of the school through the class and school council and their contribution is highly valued by staff. The school was granted the *Healthy Schools Gold Award* and the status of *Eco School* in 2004. The well being of pupils is at the heart of everything the school does, and is one of its very best features.
32. One of the school's key strengths is the care and guidance it provides for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs. There are very good links with parents and staff have very good knowledge of the diverse needs of these pupils. They are very supportive and

encouraging in their work and the pupils benefit from the advice, counselling and interest provided by staff. Their self-esteem is raised immensely by this focused support and their confidence is reinforced. This enables them to learn effectively and to achieve well. The supporting paperwork for the management of provision for special educational needs pupils is well organised to enable staff to keep up-to-date with the requirements of individuals and, therefore, to provide an appropriate level of positive support.

33. The school has a comprehensive range of assessment tools that are available to track the academic and social progress of pupils and to enable intervention strategies as required. Whilst the tracking of achievement in English and mathematics is effective, there is limited assessment of achievement in other subjects. In addition, the setting of academic targets has usefully been introduced in these subjects, but has yet to be extended more widely and tied closely into the objectives set for learning. The self-assessment that pupils undertake at the end of the year is valuable in supporting their good personal development. This approach has merit for more regular use, for example to contribute to the half-termly reviews, and to better support their independence in learning.

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

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and has forged well-made links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- Links with local schools and the community have been built that are beneficial to pupils' education and growth towards citizenship.

### **Commentary**

34. The school has built a strong and mutually supportive partnership with parents, the parish and community and its pupils' benefit from this in many ways. Links with the local education authority are also very beneficial, especially the involvement of specialists who are helping the school to raise its standards through the *Intensifying Support Programme*. Parents hold the school in high regard and although most live within five miles of the school, some travel quite a distance so that their children can receive a Catholic Christian education at Sacred Heart.
35. The school has built a positive partnership with parents and continues to work hard and effectively to involve them in their child's education. There are good channels of communication that include lots of one-to-one exchanges between parents and staff but also useful a range of written publications. The home-school agreement is a high quality publication that sets out very clear the expectations of all parties. The latest prospectus is a parent-friendly document. It consists of loose A4 sheets in an attractive folder. There are ample illustrations, many in colour, though there are no photographs of school activities and no inserts about the 2004 national curriculum results or the attendance figures in the past full school year, and this is an omission that requires rectifying. The pupils' annual written reports are informative and clearly identify targets in English and mathematics that parents can help their pupils with. Curriculum evenings, such as the numeracy workshop held last term, are a positive feature, in helping parents know what is going on. However, some parents told inspectors that they would like more information about the *Intensifying Support Programme* targets
36. The school is part of the local *Neighbourhood Watch* and pupils and staff work with local residents to make sure that their locality is a safe place to live and learn. There has been

fruitful shared work in developing a *Travel Plan* to reduce the incidents of traffic accidents and to devise an action plan for making pedestrian and cycle routes barrier free. The school has set very clear targets for at least 50 per cent of pupils to be walking to school in the near future. Links with the community and other schools, for example a science day held with St Mary and St Benedict and mornings of music with pupils from Christ the King Junior School and St Thomas More School, enable the pupils to work alongside others from different schools and in so doing gain by the experience. There are firm links in place with Warwick University to support teachers in training.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and governance is **good** and management is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong and determined leadership from the new headteacher has given the school a clear path to further improvement.
- Teamwork is very strong and the school is working effectively in raising standards.
- The future role of the senior management team and subject leaders in respect of monitoring is not set down clearly enough to support a rigorous evaluation.
- Governors are good critical friends of the school.

### Commentary

37. The new headteacher, formerly the deputy headteacher, has a clear vision of the school's future. She has introduced a number of significant changes since she took up post at the start of the current term. These are having a positive effect in raising standards and accelerating achievement. Parents hold positive views about the leadership and management of the school. The school's ethos is flagged as being pivotal to enabling everyone to work together in pursuit of better effectiveness. The school is judged to have good capacity for building for the future.
38. Teamwork is very strong and the staff are united in their determination to make the school more effective. There is high aspiration and strong motivation evident in their drive for raised standards. Staff have embraced the opportunities to work alongside literacy and numeracy consultants as part of the *Intensifying Support Programme*. The good teaching that is enabling good learning, and improving pupil achievement found by this inspection, are testament to the fruits of their labour. Since the school became part of the *Intensifying Support Programme*, management systems are becoming much more focused on pupils' achievements. However, more work remains to be done to add rigour and accountability to the school's own systems and in readiness for its future exit from the programme.
39. The headteacher works in good partnership with the acting deputy headteacher, formerly the assistant headteacher, as the leadership team. They have complimentary skills and approaches that are successful in gaining good insights into the strengths and weaknesses in provision. The process of school improvement planning usefully involves staff and governors. The plan's main priorities are target setting and tracking, ICT, music, science, history and geography developments. Art and design is added to the list for 2005-6. These priorities do not entirely match those of the *Intensifying Support Programme*. The evaluation for this programme is a much crisper and focused improvement plan. It includes target setting and tracking, monitoring and evaluation and the role of senior managers and subject leaders in raising standards. These aspects are entirely appropriate. So far, the leadership team's monitoring has consisted of extensive audits of planning and pupils' work but with limited direct monitoring and evaluation of subject performance in the classroom and this needs to be addressed. They have been joined in monitoring work by three other senior staff who comprise the senior management team and who each oversee a phase of the school and line

manage staff. This team has many talents amongst them and are very good role models for others. Between them they gather key information in support of school improvement.

40. With three newly qualified teachers on the staff, subject responsibilities are allocated between those who are more experienced and this means a heavy subject leadership weight is placed on some staff. There is no sense of this however, staff are upbeat and ready for the challenges that lie ahead and are keen to extend the opportunities they have to check and evaluate the strengths and areas for development across the school. Performance management is a strong driver of change with all staff working towards common objectives that are agreed as the top priorities to support school improvement. The links between personal and professional development are well made and this is a very positive feature in the school's developing management systems.
41. Governors are effective in role and make a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. They have a secure understanding of the operation of the school and play an active role in monitoring that provides challenge and support for the headteacher and senior team. Governors are well informed and were not afraid to raise and discuss the matter of past underachievement and the need to raise standards with inspectors. They seek best value with increasing rigour, for example, they consult the Panda, use the headteacher's reports and evaluations from the local education authority (including the *Intensifying Support Programme*) as the basis of their work to understand school performance and to act as critical friends. The school manager has her finger firmly on the pulse of the financial systems and the information provided enables the governors to keep good oversight of the budget. All aspects of administration run smoothly and the office staff present a very friendly and efficient positive first impression to all visitors.
42. There is good leadership, teaching and learning with pupils' achievement on the rise. The school is improving and providing a good education and there is no doubt that the value for money provided is satisfactory.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	801,707
Total expenditure	775,634
Expenditure per pupil	2,780

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	7,444
Balance carried forward to the next year	33,517

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

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

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

43. Forty-five children were organised into two classes at the time of this inspection. The nature of the intake has altered since 1999. The initial testing of children is now carried out later in the autumn term. This means the judgement on the exact attainment level of the children as they start Reception is less precise. There is sufficient evidence to show that generally, in all areas of learning, children's attainment is well below that expected for their age. The provision has improved since the previous inspection. Knowledge and understanding of the world, which was sound in 1999 is now very good. Physical development was unsatisfactory and is now good. Because the children are mostly coming from a lower starting point, their achievement is better. Children are making very good progress in personal and social development and in knowledge and understanding of the world, and therefore achieve very well in reaching the expected levels in the early learning goals. Children make good progress in the other four areas of learning. While they do not fully reach the expected levels in all aspects, nonetheless they achieve well.
44. The quality of teaching is good. It is very good in the areas of personal development and knowledge and understanding of the world. A strong feature is the way the two teachers and their support assistants plan and work together to create a distinct feeling of a Foundation Stage unit. The curriculum is very closely linked to the stepping-stones of the early learning goals<sup>1</sup>. In the core areas of language and maths the teachers use their assessments to group children according to their attainment, enabling tasks to be tailored to individual needs. The three children who have English as an additional language are well catered for. There is now one child who has special educational needs, receiving intensive support.
45. The curriculum is imaginative and well planned, so that all children are supported when necessary. The organisation of activities gives a good balance between key focus activities, and free choice areas. All children experience these at some point in the school day, giving them considerable scope for independence. Staff oversee the movement around the room as children visit the very wide range of learning play areas, and are always ready to put in a vital interaction at opportune moments. Resources have been significantly upgraded since 1999, and children view their environment with wonder. The outdoor play facility has been delayed because of building works. However, staff have brought the area into use as a hive of planned activity, with chalk writing, garden planting, sand tray exploration and giant snakes and ladders as well as for physical movement.
46. The very good links with parents have been maintained, enabling the smooth transfer of information and the efficient settling in of the children. An increased level of opportunities is provided for parents to get to know what the Foundation Stage is about and how to help children at home. Assessment of children's progress is thorough and teachers are able to give parents good information about their children.
47. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The phase leader and the teaching staff are quite new to the setting and have yet to carry out the detailed self-evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning and the pace of progress, to inform their action planning.

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<sup>1</sup> These are the small steps in building skills and knowledge that the children have to take in order to reach their targets.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships between children and adults create an atmosphere of effective learning.
- Good planning creates opportunities and routines for children to interact and mature, while maintaining a high level of independence.

### **Commentary**

48. This area of learning is central to the foundation ethos. Everything is geared to enabling children to grow in confidence and social skills in an atmosphere of calm routine. Children are not forced but develop at their own pace. They love to explore the wide range of learning areas, developing interests and beginning to make friends. When they start their confidence is low and many of them do not mix together readily with each other. Bit by bit they gain confidence and begin to share, take turns and with patient oversight of the staff, they extend their ideas of right and wrong and become ready to cooperate in pairs. At first their interests come and go rapidly, but as time passes they gradually develop more concentration in activities like play in the clinic area.
49. Later in the year children can sit and listen with attention, move about in orderly fashion, relate to each other and to adults in a mature way. They are even ready to act as good role models for others, and as good helpers for the staff. Because in the morning they are given their jobs for the day, and learn responsibility by deciding when is the best time to do them. This level has been reached by very good, unobtrusive teaching, feeding in particularly high expectations for behaviour. The teachers record children's progress regularly, so that they can give a boost to any children falling behind. Most children are likely to reach the early learning goals for this area by the end of the year. The exceptions are the few children who have special educational needs. These children are particularly well monitored and are making similar gains from their own level.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Reading is taught well and children's listening is developed effectively.
- Role playing is a strength giving children chance to develop their speaking, and is one of many activities that act as a spur to writing.
- Children struggle a little in making the link between letters and the sounds they represent.

### **Commentary**

50. Teachers plan carefully to provide a structured range of activities specifically to develop the children's language skills, which are well below average overall when they start school.

Children achieve well, and make good progress so that they move nearer to the early learning goals as they start Year 1. Children achieve well in most aspects of reading, but some are struggling with some of the letters and the sounds they represent, for instance not yet remembering what the vowels say in the middle of words. Children love stories and learn to relish new words in the exciting or humorous books that teachers read to them. In the regular reading sessions the children handle books, turn the pages and follow the story through pictures. Bit by bit they learn to recognise words and begin to follow the sense of the tale. In discussions about books and other things the teacher encourages children to listen to each other with increasing attention.

51. There is a good focus on the basic skills of speaking. The staff ensure that the children have interesting things to play with and study, for instance the art activities, chick incubator or home corner clinic. Adults join the children in painting or making appointments for babies to be weighed, and model the language the children might use. For instance in the clinic role-play the phone rings. *Won't someone answer that phone!* says the teacher. *Quick, emergency, a baby is dead!* calls out the child; *Do not forget your stethoscope* comes the answer. These skills develop further in the more formal literacy lessons, as children engage in question and answer sessions. Progress in listening goes hand-in-hand with this and by the end of Reception children are considering the suitability of their answers. However, some opportunities are missed to get the full quality of speech and language from the outdoor activities, which have not yet been set up to their full potential.
52. Writing develops well as the children's mark-making gives way to carefully formed letters, words and for some children, short sentences. The early morning *drift into school* session gives children chance to select favourite activities and an unusually large number opt for writing at this time. They do more, and have a more positive attitude to it, having chosen it for themselves.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching enables children to learn well through practical activities.
- Mathematical skills are put to good use across many areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

53. The staff use practical activities well to help children's understanding of number and related mathematical ideas. Consequently children achieve well and are expected to move from a well below average starting point to attain nearer to the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. The teachers use a wide range of mathematical and play equipment to allow children to explore number, pattern and shape. Children count to twenty, and extend their awareness of numbers when looking at the weight of babies or the times of appointments in the class clinic. The teachers create good learning conditions, and guide the children to use an increasingly wide range of mathematical terms. Skilled questioning helps children develop their own thinking, curiosity and confidence. Counting skills are used well as the children measure their growing plants.
54. In numeracy lessons the process becomes more formal (if you can call *Squawk the Toucan* formal). Starting with the children's interest in their own ages, or how many are away that day,

the teacher uses this input to explore the order and size of larger numbers. The tasks that follow are well matched to children's abilities, because the teacher uses precise assessment well. Children are gaining confidence in problem solving with addition, but are not as secure with subtraction or practical problems. They do not sing as many number rhymes and jingles as are often heard, which act as a basis for subtraction.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching provides children with numerous opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- The staff provide a great variety of resources, visits and visitors to enrich the learning.
- The children's computer skills are developing well.

### **Commentary**

55. Very good teaching and learning enables children to make very good progress. This is an area in which children enter school well below average in experience and expression, therefore they achieve particularly well to reach the early learning goals by the end of the year. Many opportunities are provided for children to select their own interests, exploring the classroom and the many displays in it. They are following the topic of new life and growth, and are enthralled by the process of chicks hatching from eggs in their very own hatchery. They follow *Jack and the Beanstalk* by planting their own beans, observing the plants growing, by looking closely through the hand lens, and keeping a diary. Therefore they develop a strong sense of curiosity.
56. This curiosity is harnessed further outside as the children go looking for more signs of spring, with the digital camera ready to capture baby squirrels and other magical things. They talk about families and are filled with wonder at the baby brought to visit them. This creates a good sense of the passage of time. Children do well in computer skills. They start school with little idea of how to use computers and over the year the teachers ensure they get much quicker with the keyboard across a wide range of software, linked to their other work in art or maths. They are excited by the new electronic whiteboards, and often go to practice on these. The teachers' big books help children to learn simple religious ideas about special places and people. The teachers take these ideas a stage further, when they celebrate many of the key festivals of the world, dressing up at Christmas or making special foods and dragons for the Chinese New Year.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching provides children with many opportunities to develop their co-ordination and finger control.
- The children's skills in climbing, running jumping and balancing are developed effectively indoors, but there are limited opportunities for these to be developed outdoors.

### **Commentary**

57. Children start Nursery with physical skills well below the expected level. By handling a wide range of small items and tools their finger control is gradually refined to the point where they can handle tools to express themselves more precisely. In the creative area they make models with a precision that satisfies them, such as the delicate spring flowers made out of clay. They handle brushes well enough to paint a recognisable still life. Good teaching provides more opportunities than during the previous inspection, and resources have improved and are well used. Children make good progress and by the middle of Reception the finger control skills are transferring to clear formation of letters for writing. This is a good achievement.
58. The development of physical skill with large equipment is still inhibited somewhat by the limited facilities of the outdoor play area. However, the teachers make up for this loss by very well organised physical education lessons in the school hall. Here children have opportunities for gaining an awareness of space and learning to develop control in running, jumping and balancing. They receive good tuition while still exploring the equipment and investigating its potential at their own level. There is no sign of the bumping and lack of balance and spatial awareness mentioned in the previous report. During free choice times children can opt to use the bikes and buggies and have fun in the supervised yard. The coordinator's action plan indicates that the outside area for use with the wider curriculum as well as for physical skills will be ready before the end of the year. Teaching is good and children make good progress in this aspect to complete most but not all of the early learning goals for physical development. Children's achievement overall in physical development is good.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good direct teaching of skills is combined with good opportunities to learn through play.
- Children are provided with an exciting range of activities that enriches their learning.

### **Commentary**

59. Most children start Reception with creative skills and confidence to use their imagination well below the expected level. The Nursery is set up to allow them to meet new ideas and experiences and build these into their play, which grows steadily more imaginative. They enjoy stories and like to dress up and act them out in their play. There is a wealth of opportunities for imaginative play in the classroom clinic and other role-play situations. The teaching is good and provides many situations and resources to enable children to make good progress in learning skills, for instance linked to exploration of paint and other media. Children love to try different mixes and observe the effects. Music is frequently experienced throughout the day as children sing songs, dance *the bear hunt* and explore sounds with musical instruments. They achieve well by the end of Reception to meet many of the early learning goals. The staff enjoy planning a wide range of stimulating and fun activities to enable the children to build further on

these talents, at times using the computer as an aid. The children's play extends their creative ideas and enhances their spoken language well. Their response is carefully assessed and recorded to give good information to Year 1 teachers and parents.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good** and is improving well due to the effectiveness of the *Intensifying Support Programme* and the good quality of leadership.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are average and pupils achieve well from their starting point.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Speaking and listening is developing well, good strategies are being implemented.
- Most pupils enjoy reading and develop good reading skills.
- There is good additional support for pupils with lower attainment in writing.
- Writing continues to be an area for development.
- There is need to develop the use of ICT in writing.
- Pupils' self-assessment of their learning is inconsistent.

#### Commentary

60. The literacy strategy is well established throughout the school. The additional support received from the *Intensifying Support Programme* is already beginning to show an impact on achievement and there are good prospects for continued improvement in the future. The quality of teaching overall is good, which impacts well on achievement. Teacher's planning is thorough and the work set in lessons is well matched to the needs of different attainment groups, both of which help pupils to learn effectively.
61. In Years 1 and 2 good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. Strategies are in place for pupils to have *talk partners* and these are used well. In a very good lesson in Year 2 the teaching and support staff were skilled in providing well judged opportunities for speaking and listening. In general, pupils are encouraged to speak clearly during lessons and to listen attentively to their teachers and to other pupils. Pupils take part in drama, rhyme work and spelling words phonetically, all of which encourage the effective development of speaking skills. In Years 3 and 4 the opportunity to develop speaking and listening skills effectively continues. The pupils are asked to listen to the contributions of others and to ask questions to develop ideas. In Year 5 the emphasis is on listening, rather than speaking, which results in missed opportunities to encourage pupils to speak clearly and audibly.
62. Achievement in reading is good overall. Most pupils throughout the school enjoy reading. At the end of Year 2 the standard of reading is above average. Pupils are enthusiastic about their books and handle them with care. In a guided reading session in Year 5, the teacher sat on the floor amongst the pupils and was very much part of the group, discussing and questioning about the text. By the end of Year 6 the higher attaining pupils read with fluency and expression. Year 6 pupils are able to name a list of authors that they enjoy. The library is adequately stocked; it is well used to encourage good, regular reading habits. Pupils use books effectively for research as well as for enjoyment and personal pleasure.

63. Writing is of average standard at the end of Year 2, and is also average by the end of Year 6. Overall achievement is satisfactory. The school is aware that writing is an area for improvement and is working on skills development and sharper target setting to ensure good achievement by all pupils. By Year 2 the presentation of work and handwriting is good; several pupils are fluent, joined writers. There is a clear structure to the pupils' sentence work and they use punctuation well. Pupils write soundly for a variety of purposes. In a very good lesson in Year 2, using the interactive whiteboard for the text from *Uncle Nacho*, the pupils achieved well in the different activities provided for groups of different attainment. The higher attainers were producing some good quality writing on the feelings of *The Iron Man* in a Year 4 class. In a good Year 6 lesson on suspense writing, the teacher was knowledgeable in modelling writing and used appropriate material to appeal to both genders. Some good examples of cross-curricular links were shown when writing had an historical emphasis on Louis Braille. Staff cater well for the different abilities within their classes.
64. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school are catered for very well, and the support staff are very effective in their work. In a mixed Year 3 and 4 lower attaining set, classroom organisation was good; all adults gave good encouragement to the pupils who were working on focused tasks concerned with the key features of traditional fairy tales.
65. English is well led and managed. The subject leader is positive and enthusiastic. She has worked hard with the local authority to introduce *Intensifying Support Programme* strategies throughout the school. Some helpful monitoring and evaluation of provision and outcomes in English has taken place, and the school recognises that there is a need for this to continue in order to maintain the steady rate of improvement already witnessed in the subject.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

66. Evidence of ICT supporting the curriculum satisfactorily was seen in some year groups. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the program used on the whiteboard stimulated the pupils to work at a very good level. In Years 3 and 4 the *Easiteach* software was used well to examine story structure, it developed the pupils' thoughts and imagination well and pupils commented with confidence in order to make alterations to the grammatical structure and spellings. During the concluding session ICT was used effectively in an exciting guessing game. There is also some useful development of writing skills in other subjects, though the school recognises that this is inconsistent, and is working to improve writing by giving greater opportunities for pupils to perfect their style in subjects such as science, geography and history.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6.
- Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good; this is a recent improvement that has yet to work through to achievement.
- Mathematics is well led and its management is satisfactory.
- The grouping of pupils for mathematics requires review.

### **Commentary**

67. The pattern of standards in mathematics has varied during the last six years. The standards reported at the previous inspection were different to those found today. The make-up of the pupils' educational background has changed substantially in the intervening period and the lower starting levels found now have significant implications for achievement and standards that the school has only recently identified.
68. The school's participation in the *Intensifying Support programme* is proving successful in identifying more promptly than in the past, the aspects of provision that the school has to tackle in order to maximise achievement. There is evidence of unsatisfactory provision in some aspects of mathematics as late as December 2004, but this has been put behind and currently, provision is satisfactory. The new headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and subject leader have evaluated provision in mathematics effectively and important changes have been made to the curriculum, teaching and target setting. These are beginning to impact on achievement, but it is too early to assess their full effect. However, standards are rising and achievement is increasing. This is shown clearly in the evidence from lesson observations during the current inspection and, by contrast, the lesser effectiveness as witnessed in pupils' past work in their mathematics books.
69. Currently, a below average proportion of pupils are likely to reach the expected level of mathematical knowledge and skill by the end of Year 2. This is in fact an improvement on the level of mathematical skills and knowledge that this year group began Reception with. Some of the best teaching in school is in Year 2 and this is very clearly raising standards and improving achievement. Overall, achievement is good in the infant phase. In the junior phase, achievement is satisfactory. Here, more time is needed for the benefit of the new approaches to be felt. The current Year 6 pupils are likely to attain average standards in the forthcoming national tests. This represents satisfactory achievement since their starting point in school, as entry standards were broadly average at that time. In fact, the achievement of Year 6 pupils fluctuated in the past and there is evidence, especially in the local authority's review of standards and provision, that it was unsatisfactory at times. The current very good quality of mathematics lessons in Year 6 have ensured that these pupils have made up ground and has given a good boost to standards.
70. The quality of teaching and learning are good now, though they were less obviously so in the past. The work of teaching assistants, lesson planning and the methods used all contribute well to pupils' achievement. The use of resources is satisfactory, with good use of the interactive whiteboards. However, the more timely use of mathematical equipment, especially for number and arithmetic, to support learning would enable pupils to develop knowledge, skills and understanding even more effectively than at present. Assessment is thorough, though the setting, sharing and tracking of targets for learning is inconsistent.
71. The work to improve provision and achievement in mathematics goes on. The subject is well led and management is satisfactory. There is good determination to improve, which is shared amongst the staff. The new subject leader is hard working and enthusiastic. There are still areas for focus, which the school recognises. Inspectors' evidence suggests that at present the grouping of pupils by age group rather than attainment may not be the most effective way of organising the teaching of mathematics. Thus, a review of the setting arrangements would be timely. There is, however, good potential for the improved provision so far implemented to be consolidated and strengthened.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

72. There is satisfactory use of mathematics in other subjects, especially science, ICT and design and technology. However, the building of mathematics knowledge is generally more effective in other subjects than the development of skills.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- There is good emphasis on the use of specific technical language.
- The quality of teaching is good. It stimulates pupils' interest, developing in them good attitudes to learning.
- The subject is led and managed well. This is reversing the decline in standards seen in the previous two years.
- Formal attention to safety is given when planning lessons.
- There is a lack of consistency in the way the pupils record their work. The older pupils have not recorded enough key points about their science to give good support to them when they look back over their work.

### **Commentary**

73. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. This indicates good achievement since starting school with well below average understanding of the world about them. Pupils enjoy the practical enquiry approach adopted by teachers and the opportunities provided for them to carry out their investigations. As a consequence, pupils are learning the importance of a fair test. Pupils were observed sorting and classifying materials according to a given criteria, such as, identifying materials they would use for a shelter in the Mexican rainforest. Teachers' good questioning ensures that pupils make predictions based on their previous knowledge and understanding and draw clear conclusions from their investigations. This ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well.
74. Achievement is satisfactory and standards this year are average by the end of Year 6. Although standards have declined since the previous inspection there is clear evidence that standards are now rising and that achievement is being improved. The programme of improvement, particularly in the investigative approach to science is only just beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and concepts but as yet are not given enough opportunities to set their own questions, organise their own investigations and the resources they will need to answer a problem posed by their teachers. They enjoy the practical work they are provided with and work co-operatively, such as when finding out what makes a good insulator, or, identifying factors that affect dissolving.
75. Pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language, are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants and the quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching varied from very good to satisfactory. Teaching quality is good overall. In the better quality teaching, lessons were well structured and the pace of pupils' learning was brisk. Introductions were short and focused and pupils set to work with enthusiasm. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning, particularly when their work is practical. A scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that teachers are beginning to provide sufficient opportunities for scientific investigations and this is a current focus of the science subject leader,

however, there is a lack of consistency across the school in the recording of investigations. Good use is now made of pupils' ICT skills in accessing information and recording results in tables and graphs.

76. The leadership of science is good. The committed subject leader has worked hard monitoring teachers' planning, building up a portfolio and sampling pupils' work, organising science days and running a science club. This has led to the current focus on developing pupils' scientific enquiry skills more consistently. Pupils' attainment and progress is closely tracked through regular assessment at the end of modules of work and through detailed analysis of national and other tests. This information is used effectively to plan future work for the pupils. However, pupils do not know clearly how well they are doing or, what they should be aiming for longer term. Resources for the subject, although improved, are still barely adequate. What resources there are, are well organised and easily accessible.
77. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, with evidence of good improvement in the past few months. However, with more structures in place the school has a good capacity to improve further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Satisfactory teaching and learning enable pupils to reach average standards.
- Given the limited resources in the past, pupils achieve well.
- Very good teaching in Year 6 enables pupils to achieve very well.
- The much improved resources are used regularly, and contribute to good progress.
- The range of applications as a teaching aid in other subjects could be wider.
- The use of computers as a classroom learning resource could be extended.

### **Commentary**

78. Pupils reach appropriate standards for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points and taking into account the limited resources in the past. Pupils make particularly good progress in Year 6 lessons, and achievement there is very good. The pupils' particular strengths lie in creating multi-media presentations and linking these with Internet sites. They are not as adept in control equipment or sensing data, but the coordinator wisely uses the facility available at a local college to give pupils an experience package. Year 4 and 5 pupils have begun to use data-sensing equipment in their science experiments. The provision has improved considerably since the previous inspection in the quantity and quality of new hardware, and in the training of all staff. The computer suite, unsatisfactory in 1999, is now a good resource for teaching full classes.
79. Year 2 pupils have strengths in word-processing and art and design applications, making a good link to an interesting visit to a tractor factory. Pupils are not as confident in sorting and classifying information. Staff support pupils who have special educational needs well throughout the school, enabling them to make good progress also. The provision has improved considerably since the previous inspection in the quantity and quality of new hardware.
80. Teaching is satisfactory overall. While confidence and expertise in using the computer suite and interactive whiteboards is often good, and in some classes very good, this is not consistent across the whole school, so the rate of progress in lessons varies from satisfactory to very good. Teachers plan well, however, and provide clear and relevant learning objectives. The planning

scheme itself is well structured to guide the logical progression of skills. Much of the planning involves content that is relevant to learning in other subjects. Not only do pupils get good hands-on experience of keyboard skills and processes, they also absorb content learning for use in other areas. For instance as Years 3 and 4 learn about search engines (at different levels) and use them to access data, they also acquire knowledge about Viking voyages. They use this information well in follow-up lessons.

81. In very good lessons the teachers set a very fast pace, and make the task challenging and the explanations very clear. In such a lesson Year 6 pupils moved from their first introduction to hyperlinks to exploring different buttons for links, exercising a useful amount of independence in learning. The quality of assessment of ICT is satisfactory, though it requires enhancement in order to track achievement rigorously across the school.
82. Subject leadership and management is good, having brought the provision up to a level found in most schools. The leader's action plan is clear and achievable, including the development of assessment into a more rigorous form to track progress closely, and enable pupils to be involved in self-evaluation. The computer suite has become the main focus of teaching, so that the computers as a regular classroom learning aid has fallen away. This inhibits pupils' developing independence, as they do not have the option to quickly check or produce something by computer.

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

83. Teachers use a much wider range of opportunities than in the previous inspection, to enable pupils to apply their ICT skills in other subjects, but these are mostly directed within the computer suite. For instance Year 5 pupils use the Internet to find history facts, and Year 6 presentations contain the geographical aspects of the residential trip. Most teachers support their lesson introductions or plenary sessions well by making points clearer using the interactive whiteboards. Overall curriculum opportunities are not planned systematically into a coherent whole, and could be even wider.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography and History**

Provision in geography and history is **good**.

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

- The good improvement in both subjects that has raised standards and achievement since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum that has been planned to bring excellence and enjoyment, especially for the younger pupils.

- There is a good awareness of the need to link history and geography across the curriculum, with particular emphasis on understanding historical and geographical knowledge and terminology.
- Assessment of historical and geographical skills is not secure; as a result pupils are not aware of how they can improve.

## **Commentary**

84. Standards are at least average in geography and history in Year 2 and in line with expectations in Year 6. Achievement is good in the infant classes and is sound in the junior classes. This is an improved picture from the slow progress and underdeveloped skills reported previously.
85. Pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, have a good start in the infants. Enquiry skills are developed well as pupils learn about the local area, *Time Travellers* and Mexico. They are enjoying learning how to handle artefacts correctly, observe and express similarities and differences and write sentences using relevant geographical and historical terms. They are aware of the lives of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Louis Braille and Helen Keller and how their achievements influenced life today.
86. The infant environment has been transformed into a South American rainforest with Spanish influence. Pupils are successfully learning about everyday life in Tocuaro in Mexico; its features, language and culture from a wide range of sources, including watching videos, studying the paintings of Diego Rivera and enjoying playing Mexican instruments, singing, dancing and tasting Mexican food and experiencing a most enjoyable and successful Fiesta Day. Younger pupils have a good understanding of their local area and are able to use this to identify many similarities and differences with life in Mexico.
87. It is evident that a range of productive visits play an important part in bringing these subjects alive and makes the work interesting and relevant developing pupils historical and geographical skills well, as well as helping pupils to understand their heritage. The residential at Dol-y-Moch and visits from there, especially to the seaside at Criccieth, enables the pupils to compare and contrast land usage, features and changes, giving them a greater understanding about the nature of places.
88. Geography and history are enjoyed. Links with literacy, art and design and music are strong. Literacy skills are developed through note taking; writing persuasive letters to express their own views and opinions about local issues, people and events in Tudor and Victorian times, newspaper reports, similes about the weather, and accounts of what it might have been like to live in past times. In both subjects sound use is made of ICT to find out more about places and events, today and in the past and further develop research skills.
89. There has been good improvement overall since the previous inspection. This is the result of appointing subject leaders who are hard working and committed to raising standards. There is now a policy and scheme of work for each subject, improved time allowed for teaching and resources, including the use of ICT. However, although end of unit tests take place there is no effective system for developing and tracking skill development in either subject, and this is a weakness.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and achievement is satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.
- Pupils enjoy the visits from professional artists.
- Pupils have reasonable knowledge of famous artists.
- No systematic method to record pupils' progress in the key skills is in place.

### **Commentary**

90. Some extremely good photographic evidence was presented of *Arts Week*, when a professional artist had worked with every year group throughout the school. Some older pupils had been involved in the Coventry Festival, joining in a procession after making a replica of the old city walls. This work had been on display around the school. However, during the time of the inspection the displays focused more on adult presentations than on pupils' work. The rainforest display in the infant corridor was enjoyed by the pupils, and was quite inspirational but did not include enough of their work.
91. The sample of work included a portfolio, which was levelled against the National Curriculum expectations for art and design. There is evidence in the work sample of satisfactory quality observational sketches and mixing and shading trials. There is also evidence of some good cross-curricular links to English writing on gothic architecture and some good quality stained glass artwork. The overall standard of work in the sample was average.
92. In discussion with Year 6 pupils they were able to recount many experiences of art and design throughout their school life. They said their art and design lessons are enjoyable and were enthusiastic about the work with professional artists. They are very proud of their design work, and, especially, the *Madonna and Child* statue that was erected in the school grounds recently. All pupils were involved in some way in making this statue. The Year 6 pupils could name a satisfactory range of famous artists, and were appropriately aware of different materials and processes. They talked confidently about their work and how they had developed and improved it.
93. During the inspection, Year 1 and 2 the pupils were making and painting rain sticks as part of the Mexico topic. The work is of a satisfactory standard and good achievement is obvious in the quality of work produced by Year 2 pupils. However, the much of the activity was very teacher directed, thus providing few opportunities for the pupils to explore and develop their own ideas.
94. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, though there is evidence of some good quality provision. For example, in a very good lesson in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class, the pupils were inspired to draw mythical creatures after the well-informed input of the teacher and the effective use of ICT. The teacher showed pictures for discussion from the National Gallery, zooming in on various features of the creatures. The teacher explained the process, that over the next week these designs would be made into three-dimensional models. Pupils created good quality drawings from their experiences of videos, literature and the visual stimulus from the lesson. All pupils were motivated and challenged well by the class teacher as they worked. One pupil called his drawing *the poison spiked fish man extremely electric*. Pupils were changing and modifying their work appropriately during the lesson.

95. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 5 some pupils had difficulty carrying out the task of painting small designs of chess pieces with brushes that were not suitable for the task. However, the pupils showed great perseverance in painting their designs and the pupils were very proud of their work.
96. The art and design subject leader is presently on maternity leave but the acting subject leader is enthusiastic to develop the subject. She is aware that art and design is a subject for development. The staff have recently been involved in training with external artists, which was focused on the development and progression of skills. The climate is now right within the school to implement such improvements. The school needs to continue to work towards the priorities identified in the document *Excellence and Enjoyment* to ensure that art and design is at the heart of a pupil's development.

### **Design and technology**

97. No formal design and technology lessons were seen therefore this subject is sampled. The portfolio of pupils' work from last year shows that the curricular provision is at least satisfactory and standards as expected. The school's timetabling has been adjusted to ensure that the subject receives adequate time and attention. Resources have been substantially upgraded since these were a key issue in the previous report. Long-term planning shows that all required units are completed within the year. Many of the topics form useful links with other subjects, for instance the Year 6 electric vehicles link with forces and motion in science. Planning indicates how these activities and other subject links fit together, but the smooth progression of skills is not tracked through in the same way.
98. The subject leader, who has drawn up a relevant action plan, but has not yet had an opportunity to observe teaching, monitors the provision satisfactorily. This highlights appropriate areas for development such as an increasing use of the interactive whiteboards to enhance visual effects and to extend pupils' awareness of control technology. It also involves the creation of a computer program to enable pupils, such as those who speak English as an additional language, to write their evaluations more easily.

### **Music**

99. Because of the focus of inspection activities there were not many opportunities to gather significant evidence for music. However, it is clear that standards are broadly average. Pupils enjoy singing and they sing harmoniously, as observed in school assembly. There are opportunities for pupils to learn to play flute, violin, guitar and recorder and the choir regularly participate in concerts and other events. The school has a new music room that is well resourced and, judging from the one lesson observed, is used at least soundly. The curriculum is planned appropriately and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.
100. There is some evidence that skills are not promoted as effectively as knowledge in music. For example, in the observed lesson, heavy reliance was placed on the use of a broadcast programme to give shape to the session. The teacher could have intervened more frequently in order to build skills and understanding. The same lesson indicates that creativity in music could be increased. However, the use of the broadcast programme did enable pupils to learn new songs and listen to the music of Sibelius.

## Physical education

101. There were not enough lessons observed across the full range of physical education to enable a judgement on provision or teaching. The lessons observed indicated that the quality of confidence and expertise is not consistent across the school. This shows in lessons where several aspects are good, but where the opportunity for pupils to improve performance by discussing their observations is missing.
102. Leadership and management of physical education is satisfactory. The subject leader is addressing teachers' subject knowledge, for instance in gymnastics and dance by increasing the amount of in-service support and training. Weaknesses found during the previous inspection have also been addressed appropriately. The changing facilities have been improved so that changing for physical education is quicker and less time is lost. The school now has sound provision in place for pupils who cannot take part in the lessons for any reason.
103. Achievement is well supported by the impact of the considerable range of linked out of school activities. Swimming standards are lower than expected, with 72 per cent of Year 6 pupils attaining the desirable 25-metre distance, but the programme of tuition and actual development of swimming skills are outside the school's direct control. The subject action plan includes the upgrading of the assessment system so that it becomes a true tracking tool to lead to pupils' self-evaluation. It proposes the greater use of ICT within lessons, for instance to link with temperature or heart rate, so that the lively discussions heard can be informed by actual measurements.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good.

104. The good ethos and positive climate for learning are tangible measures of the success of the personal, social, health and citizenship programme. A very comprehensive and diverse approach involves assemblies, circle times, class discussions, formal lessons, visits and visitors. It is delivered in such a way that all staff have consistently high expectations, provide very good role models, and promote the positive. As a result pupils are enthusiastic learners who can see the importance of this part of their education and try hard to reach the goals set for them. In the Foundation Stage where personal, social and emotional development receives much attention. The skills gained by younger children are maintained throughout the school. The school is very responsive to pupils' personal needs and supports their growth as responsible future citizens through the very good relationships that instil in pupils a desire to do their best. There is a range of forums that enable pupils to air personal views if they so choose, for example through class or school councils. The school maintains a useful record of pupils' achievement, personal goals, interests and successes and this is a good system for enabling their personal reflection and self-review.
105. The school organises a number of talks and demonstrations that inform and extend pupils' learning about taking care of themselves and others. For example, visitors have been into school to talk to pupils about personal safety in a range of *at risk* situations. Specialist input provided by the local community police officer and school nurse supports the school's work on sex, relationships and drugs education effectively. The school has been accredited with *Eco* status for the work on taking care of the school grounds and has also received The *Healthy Schools Gold Award* for its sterling work in promoting a healthy lifestyle to pupils and parents and supporting their general well being.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

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

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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