

INSPECTION REPORT

SACRED HEART RC PRIMARY

Thornton-Cleveleys

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119632

Associate Headteacher: Mrs M Wright

Lead inspector: Mrs D Bell

Dates of inspection: 29 November – 1 December 2004

Inspection number: 267616

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:	156
School address:	Heys Street Thornton Thornton-Cleveleys Lancashire
Postcode:	FY5 4HL
Telephone number:	01253 821392
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Deacon A. Edwards
Date of previous inspection:	July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 156 pupils on roll (72 boys and 84 girls), Sacred Heart Roman Catholic primary school is smaller than most schools. Pupils come from a wide area and overall, the school serves an area with average socio-economic characteristics. All pupils are of white British origin. The proportion in receipt of free school meals is around the national average. In most years, children start school with levels of attainment broadly in line with those expected for their age. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average but the proportion with statements of special need is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is much higher than that found nationally. The school has come through a period of great turmoil since its last inspection and only appointed permanent teachers to all but one class at Easter 2004. Due to the long term absence and subsequent retirement of the headteacher, the school has not had its own head for nearly two years. It is now in its third period of associate headship during which headteachers have been seconded from other schools in the area, and also had a period when there was an acting headteacher and an associate deputy headteacher. The associate deputy head was appointed to the staff and has been the acting deputy head for just over one year. Governors very recently appointed a permanent headteacher who will take up post in the start of the summer term 2005. As a result, another associate headteacher will lead the school in the spring term of 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16413	Mrs D Bell	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
19365	Mr G Stockley	Lay inspector	
11371	Mr F Ravey	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Music
33225	Mrs E Greensides	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Geography History Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good and rapidly improving school. Very good temporary leadership has very successfully re-focused the school on helping all pupils to do as well as they can whatever their age or stage of learning, background or circumstance. The very effective teamwork amongst the staff has, in a relatively short time, resulted in good teaching and learning, and all pupils achieve at least well. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership has brought the school safely through a period of great difficulty.
- Very good provision in the Foundation Stage (the reception class) gives the pupils a very good start in their education.
- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is good. However, occasionally higher attaining pupils do not always learn as well as they could in lessons.
- Standards are above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science and pupils achieve very well in English.
- Teachers are working together as a very effective team, successfully improving pupils' achievement and the quality of the curriculum offered to them.
- The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, and their above average attendance, contribute in great measure to their good achievement.
- Assessment procedures, though satisfactory, are not yet used to the full in planning, and marking does not always support learning as well as it could.
- Governance is satisfactory overall but some important statutory requirements are not being met because of the recent turmoil the school has experienced.

All of the key issues from the previous inspection in 1999 have been tackled very well despite the ups and downs the school has faced, and overall improvement is very good. Teaching is now good; planning effectively supports learning, and assessment procedures are greatly improved. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to take some responsibility for their own learning, and provision is very good in the Foundation Stage. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and the subject is well resourced. Standards rose considerably in 2004 and the school is very proud to find itself the most improved school in the local area.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall achievement is good. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in the rest of the school although pupils' progress accelerates considerably in Years 5 and 6 as a result of some very good teaching. Almost all children in the reception class are well on the way to exceeding the goals expected for the end of reception (the early learning goals) in all six areas of learning. In 2004, the national test results improved considerably in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 reached above average standards in reading and mathematics and well above average standards in writing. The results were above those of similar schools in reading and mathematics, and well above them in writing. The school exceeded its targets for pupils in Year 6 in 2004 and has set realistically challenging targets for the next two years.

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

*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.*

Currently, standards are above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science. They match the national expectation in all other subjects inspected, including ICT, and boys, girls and pupils with special educational needs all achieve equally well. **Overall good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and they behave very well in and out of class. Attendance is well above the national average and parents ensure that their children arrive in good time for school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 and pupils in those two age groups are making rapid progress. English and mathematics are taught well and teachers successfully promote literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. Teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn and they mostly plan very effectively to meet the different learning needs of the different groups of pupils in their classes. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, although occasionally the additional challenge needed to move higher attaining pupils on more quickly is missing. Teachers transmit their enthusiasm for learning to the pupils and pupils work hard because they very much want to do as well as they can. The very good relationships throughout the school greatly benefit their learning as they work on their own or in groups of different sizes, and help each other to succeed. Well-briefed, effectively deployed support staff contribute well to the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving as the relatively new staff adapt it to meet the school's needs. Overall good procedures ensure the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety and pupils are provided with good support and guidance. The school has a good partnership with parents and satisfactory links with the community, other schools and colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The temporary leaders have led the school very well and they have placed it in a very good position for future development. The acting deputy headteacher is very effective in her role and subject leaders manage their subjects at least well. Governance is satisfactory and improving, though several statutory requirements are not met, some because of the temporary staffing situation in the recent past. Overall, management is satisfactory and the very effective teamwork among the staff means that the school is very well placed to improve further.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school and the school highly values their views. Relationships between pupils, parents and the staff are very good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Embed the use of assessment in planning and improve teachers' marking so that it always supports pupils' learning.
- Eliminate the occasions on which higher attaining pupils are not given suitably challenging work.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Re-instate performance management procedures and bring all risk assessments up to date
- Ensure that the governors' annual report and the school prospectus contain all statutory information.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **good**. Boys, girls and pupils with special educational needs all achieve equally well but occasionally higher attaining pupils could do better in lessons. Standards are above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage and in English.
- Pupils use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive from teachers and support staff.
- The school is very strongly committed to ensuring that all pupils reach the highest standards of which they are capable but occasionally, higher attaining pupils are not given suitably demanding work to enable this to happen.

Commentary

1. Children start school in the reception class with the levels of attainment expected for their age. The very good progress they make means that, in all six areas of learning, almost all children are well on the way to exceeding the goals expected for the end of reception.
2. In 2004, the test results for pupils in Year 2 were above the national average, and better than those of similar schools in reading and mathematics. They were well above the national average and well above those of similar schools in writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (14.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.5 (15.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.1 (16.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. For pupils in Year 6 in 2004, the test results were well above the national average in English and science, and above the national average in mathematics. They were well above those of similar schools in all three subjects. Compared with all schools, the school added very good value to the pupils' education between Year 3 and Year 6 despite the considerable disruption caused by temporary staffing and the considerably high pupil movement in and out of the school. Compared with similar schools, the value added measure was good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (25.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.6 (27.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.1 (27.4)	28.5 (28.6)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The trend in the school's results has been below the national trend in recent years but the results took a sharp upward turn in 2004. This earned the school the accolade of being the most improved school in Wyre, the Fylde and Blackpool, an honour it has been very proud to achieve. It has come through a period of great turmoil with temporary staffing, including headteachers, in the past two years, during which overall standards declined. However, the sheer enthusiasm and commitment of the permanent staff now in school, and the direction given by the temporary leadership have successfully turned it round and there are clear signs that the improvement is set to continue. Standards are currently above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, and the very good teaching the oldest pupils in the school receive is rapidly improving their progress and overall achievement. Pupils use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well in most other subjects. Their achievement is getting better because staff are beginning to link learning between different subjects as they adapt it to suit pupils' different learning needs. By Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations in ICT, geography, history and physical education, the other four subjects for which there was sufficient evidence during the inspection.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the clear, measurable targets set their individual education plans. In most classes, teaching assistants support them effectively. Occasionally, however, learning is not explained or broken down into manageable steps as well as it could be when pupils are working away from class. A good number of pupils have made such good progress that they have been taken off the register of special educational needs, having caught up with their class mates. The range of special educational needs currently covers a variety of academic, behavioural and physical difficulties. There were some differences between the attainment of boys and girls in the national tests but the school has worked hard to improve boys' achievement and no significant differences were noted during the inspection. Higher attaining pupils achieve well. However, the school has not yet identified any gifted or talented pupils and, occasionally, higher attaining pupils do not have sufficiently demanding work to do.
6. The school greatly exceeded the targets it set for 2004. However, these were set some time previously when the school had a number of temporary staff and the pupils' rates of progress were not as well known. The targets for 2005 are much more realistic but the targets for 2006 are the ones that are very clearly based on the rigorous assessment of pupils' progress. All test and assessment results are now carefully analysed and effectively used to set targets for the whole school, for different year groups, and ultimately for individual pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **very good** and punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show great interest in school life because the school stimulates in them a desire to learn and to enjoy school.
- Pupils behave very well in all settings because of the high expectations of the staff and the effectiveness of the school's strong moral code.
- Very good relationships throughout the school and good attention to developing a sense of spirituality help to make it a happy place to work.
- Pupils develop good social skills because of the good quality opportunities they are given to work and play together in a caring and responsible way.
- Attendance is very good because pupils like coming to school and the partnership between the school and parents is an effective one.

Commentary

7. Attendance is very good because pupils enjoy school and are provided with largely very challenging work that often results in an almost audible 'buzz' of learning during lessons. Parents report overwhelmingly that their children like school. The school works hard with parents to ensure that effective systems are in place for monitoring attendance. These systems work well and the large majority of pupils arrive at school on time. Lessons begin promptly and pleasant, orderly registrations setting a positive tone for the day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	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.

8. All of these factors contribute in great measure to the pupils' very positive attitudes to school and to learning. From reception to Year 6, pupils are keen learners. They relate very well to each other and also to adults. In this, they are given a very good example by the way in which adults relate to each other. These very good relationships form a strong foundation for learning, leading to pupils being eager to work. Pupils work well together when required to do so, sharing ideas and offering support to each other in groups, or individually, depending on the task they are undertaking.
9. Pupils are eager to answer questions and to offer suggestions as to how a particular problem might be solved. They take great pride in the presentation of their work and get through a good amount of work during a lesson and over longer periods of time. Pupils with special educational needs are as willing workers as other groups of pupils because staff make sure that they are fully integrated into all lessons and are given the same good opportunities to succeed as their class mates.
10. The pupils are polite, cheerful and mature. This is due in good part to the high expectations all staff have about behaviour and how well they teach pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to think about the right way to respond in different situations. Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils show very good levels of respect for each other throughout the school. At no time during the inspection was there even a hint of aggressive behaviour or harassment. No exclusions have taken place in recent years.
11. The school's ethos for learning is further enhanced by the effective way in which spirituality is recognised as a force for good. Pupils are given many opportunities in lessons and in assemblies to reflect on the world around them and to explore their feelings. The school provides a climate in which tolerance and respect can grow, and this also has a very positive effect upon achievement. The very good provision for moral and social development is rooted in a strong moral code built up by example as well as through the rules that each class composes to guide their behaviour and relationships. From an early age, pupils are taught the skills of working together and are given regular and frequent opportunities to practise these skills. They are encouraged to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and to take responsibility for looking after any pupils who might be feeling unhappy. Pupils new to the school are given a 'buddy' to support them in their early days. Pupils report that this works very well. At present there is no school council although one is planned. However, the school takes great care to seek out pupils' views through discussions and questionnaires, and where possible it acts on these. Provision for cultural development is not yet as strong as for other areas of pupils' development but it is nonetheless satisfactory and improving.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**; assessment procedures are **satisfactory** and the curriculum is suitably **broad and balanced**. Welfare, support and guidance for the pupils and the school's partnership with their parents are **good**. The school has **satisfactory** links with the community, other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently very good in the Foundation Stage. It has a very positive effect on children's learning.
- The very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 accelerates pupils' progress in those two years.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate.
- The use of 'I can' targets in Years 4 to 6 is greatly improving pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to learn through working together as a whole class, in different sized groups, or taking responsibility for finding things out for themselves.

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and it has many excellent features. Very well planned, exciting learning activities are very well matched to the children's different levels of capability. As children move around groups, the teacher and support staff very effectively adapt each activity to make sure it is at the right level for the group with whom they are working. This enables all children to learn very well. The staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how young children learn. As a result, they cater equally well for the learning needs of all children and very successfully ensure that all are as fully included in all activities as they can be, even when they have very specific special educational needs. Support staff assist the teacher very well in this. The children's learning is thoroughly marked and assessed, and their individual progress meticulously recorded. The information is used exceptionally well in planning on a daily basis to move the children's learning on, and good links are made between the early learning goals and the Year 1 National Curriculum.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12	7	4	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

13. English, mathematics, science and ICT are taught well and teachers successfully promote the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in all subjects. In Years 1 to 6, well planned teaching effectively meets the pupils' different learning needs in the vast majority of lessons. Teachers are highly committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they can, regardless of their background, ability or circumstance.
14. The very strong and very effective focus on accelerating pupils' achievement in the oldest classes is having a very positive effect on learning and overall standards. The teachers have high expectation of the pupils and provide challenging work that engages them well, captures their interest and results in their working very productively and at a good pace. Occasionally,

however, higher attaining pupils are not given hard enough work to help them reach the higher standards of which they are capable in lessons. Teachers throughout the school provide pupils with good opportunities to learn as a whole class, in groups of different sizes, and through independent work. Activities are usually demanding and highly practical, and pupils are very eager to participate in them. This helps them to re-focus their learning when, as happens occasionally, a whole class session goes on for too long and they become restless.

15. Pupils' behaviour is very well managed. This contributes in great measure to the pupils' very good attitudes to learning. During lessons, teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing and offer well-founded advice and guidance to help them improve. Teachers almost always share learning objectives with the pupils, explain them clearly, and check that the pupils know what they are expected to learn. In one lesson, however, the activities did not match the learning objectives well enough and this led to some less than satisfactory teaching because pupils did not learn what they were supposed to learn. Sharp, well-focused questioning is a strong feature of most lessons. It is used very effectively to draw all pupils into whole class discussions, probe their prior knowledge and understanding, and demonstrate how they link to what the pupils are going to do next.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early through effective assessment and screening procedures. Teachers plan very well in lessons for the learning activities and support of these pupils. Steps for improvement are very clearly identified, and work is adapted and modified to ensure that all pupils participate in all activities and make the progress of which they are capable. The pupils' progress is tracked effectively and the information is used to set targets for further improvement and to address the needs with specific resources, grouping, and individual support. Support staff are very well briefed, and together with the special educational needs teacher, most of them play a significant role in meeting the individual needs of the pupils. They work very well with pupils in class and, where appropriate, in small withdrawal groups, and have a good and detailed knowledge of how to provide for the pupils' needs.
17. Overall assessment procedures are satisfactory, although they are good in English. The use of 'I can' targets has been trialled in the older age groups. This system is successfully involving pupils in assessing their own learning and is having a positive effect on their overall achievement. The school plans to extend this to all classes in the near future. Teachers have a good understanding of how to use assessment in planning and do so well in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Understandably, they are at the early stages of gathering the information they need to set up an effective, manageable whole school system in all subjects since the majority of permanent staff have been at the school less than one year. Nevertheless, teachers have worked extremely hard to gather useful portfolios of pupils' work in all subjects and are now at the stage of moderating that work to ensure that all staff have a secure understanding of levels in all subjects.
18. The day-to-day marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. It varies from encouraging comments with or without clear guidance as to what they need to do next, to not being sharply enough focused on the weaknesses in the pupils' work to show them how to improve. A good amount and range of homework consolidates and extends pupils' learning in school. Parents are satisfied with the amount of homework their children receive and most support the school well by helping their children with it.
19. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Parents are pleased with the quality of teaching now seen in the school. They particularly praised the improvements they have noticed in the past eighteen months as permanent staff appointments have been made.

The curriculum

The school provides a suitable curriculum for all pupils. Statutory requirements are met and there is a satisfactory range of enrichment opportunities. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leaders have worked effectively as a team to identify and address areas of weakness in the curriculum
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well planned.
- The improvements in curriculum resources have had a positive effect on pupils' achievement in all subjects
- The school does not make full use of the extensive grounds and the local environment to enrich the curriculum
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is not integrated into teachers' planning

Commentary

20. Over the past year, subject leaders have worked hard as a team to improve the curriculum. They accurately identified and quickly dealt with areas of weakness in it, and successfully adapted it to meet the needs of mixed age classes. It is now cohesive, appropriately balanced and based on local and national guidance. A good start has been made on linking subjects to give pupils increasing opportunities to apply the skills and learning acquired in one subject as they study others. This commitment to change is marked by the growth of theme days and weeks such as Harry Potter week, the art week, book fairs, mathematics trails and dance and drama days. Older pupils have the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well planned. It takes very good account of the national guidance for that age group alongside the requirements of the Year 1 programmes of study, thus catering very successfully for the needs of all its children. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is satisfactory. However, several policies cover this aspect of the school's work and the teaching of it is scattered between other subjects. This means there is no cohesive policy drawing the different parts together to guide staff.
21. After a difficult period characterised by a large number of temporary staff, the school is now benefiting from stable staffing. This is supporting development in all areas of the curriculum and has led to much improved learning resources. The quantity and quality of learning resources are now good. Subject leaders have invested a significant amount of time in ensuring that all resources are well organised. Storage boxes link specific resources to planned work and are centrally stored for accessibility. The provision of interactive whiteboards supports all subjects. These and the good number of computers available in school are used effectively by all staff and have a significant effect on the quality of lessons and on pupils' learning. Throughout the school, well-briefed teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement.
22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school pays particular attention to ensuring that they are offered the same opportunities as other pupils throughout the curriculum and they are fully included in all aspects of school life. There is a high and well met expectation that the work they are given in lessons will be tailored specifically to their individual needs.
23. The school makes best use of its indoor accommodation, but classroom space is cramped, particularly for junior pupils. This sometimes inhibits practical activities and was one of the few complaints heard from the older pupils. The library and computer suite are both well equipped, but a lack of ventilation in the computer suite sometimes causes it to become stuffy in whole class lessons. The school is well resourced with a large playing field, separate playgrounds for infant and junior pupils, and substantial garden areas. However, teachers do not yet make best use of these good resources to provide curricular enrichment except in the Foundation

Stage. A reasonable range of visitors, for example, dance and drama groups, drumming and pantomime workshops enhance the curriculum. Activities outside of the normal school day are currently limited to sporting activities although there are plans to extend these as teachers complete work on the more pressing issues they have faced in the past year. There have been few educational visits because until very recently the school did not have a trained educational visits co-ordinator.

Care, guidance and support

Overall **good** procedures ensure the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The school provides pupils with **good** support and guidance. It seeks, values and where possible, acts on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention to health and safety ensures that pupils are happy and safe in school
- Very good induction procedures ensure that new pupils settle quickly into school life
- Pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school
- Risk assessments are not all fully up to date.

Commentary

24. The school is a happy and caring community where pupils trust staff, form very good relationships with them, and enjoy working and playing together in an atmosphere free from bullying and harassment. The staff pay good attention to health and safety and this means that pupils work and play in a safe, healthy and caring environment. However, the governors have only recently begun to monitor health and safety matters and some risk assessments have still to be completed. All members of staff have recently been trained in basic first aid procedures and pupils report that adults take good care of them when they are hurt or unwell. There are effective procedures in place for child protection and all staff are clear about what they need to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. There are appropriate safeguards to control pupils' use of the Internet.
25. The school's very good induction arrangements ensure that children settle into the reception class quickly and easily and soon become familiar with the routines. There are also good procedures to assist older children who join the school part way through their primary education. The children form very good relationships with their teachers and support staff. The staff know the pupils well and support, advise and guide them effectively, although written marking does not always show them how to improve. The good support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs enhances their self esteem and enables them to participate in all parts of lessons and in all school activities. There are good systems in place for the early identification of any kind of special educational need and the progress of identified pupils is regularly assessed and tracked. Pupils' targets are reviewed regularly, and provision is adapted as necessary to give a good blend of support and challenge. Transfer arrangements for pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6 are good. The school has devised and implemented a full six week programme of transition activities to ensure that the new school and the pupils are prepared for the change.
26. Pupils are effectively involved in the running of the school. Their views are sought and, where appropriate, their ideas and suggestions are acted upon. Some of the older pupils operate a recycling scheme which raises money for them to spend on something of their own choice, such as additional playground equipment. The school is planning to extend and develop this aspect of its work by introducing a school council in the near future.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents. Links with the community, other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good information for parents but the pupils' annual reports do not always tell parents clearly enough what their children's strengths and weaknesses are in all subjects.
- There are good procedures to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to the secondary school
- Parents support their children's learning well at home and a number of parents help in school
- The school handles complaints from parents well

Commentary

27. The school welcomes parents as significant partners in their children's education. Teachers and the associate headteacher are always accessible and willing to listen to any concerns or comments that parents might have. A number of parents help regularly in classes and with hearing children read. There is an active parent-teacher association which works hard to raise extra funds for the school. Most parents make a good contribution to their children's education by hearing them read at home and ensuring that they complete their homework. The school involves parents very effectively in promoting their children's spiritual development. For example, during advent, a 'Posada' (small figures of Mary and Joseph) goes home with a child each night and parents are asked to light a candle and say a prayer together with their children. Young children take a small soft toy home and parents complete a diary about what he has done during his stay with the family. It is clear that the children are very pleased when it is their turn to take him home and the diary entries show that parents enthusiastically support this initiative.
28. Parents' views of the school are mostly positive. Parents welcome the recent changes that have resulted in stability among the staff and feel that the school is once again open, friendly and approachable. Their main concern is a lack of effective communication with them. However, inspectors found that the school communicates well with parents. It provides an informative prospectus and other useful guidance for new parents to introduce them to the school and to help them support their children's education. The written annual reports on pupils' progress are informative but do not show parents clearly how well their children are doing or what they need to do to improve in all subjects. The use of computer-generated reports has resulted in some errors that parents rightly find unacceptable but the school has already taken steps to avoid such errors in the future. An attractive and informative fortnightly newsletter keeps parents well briefed about what is going on in school and a curriculum newsletter sent out at the beginning of each term gives details of what is to be studied in each subject during the term.
29. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their children's progress and are fully involved in all reviews of their progress and their targets. Concern was expressed that there is only one formal opportunity each year for parents to discuss their child's performance with the teacher. This is unusual. However, parents acknowledged that they could approach staff at any time if they had concerns, that concerns and complaints are thoroughly investigated and that they are kept fully informed of the outcome. Parents' views are regarded as important by the school and where possible, they are acted upon.
30. The school has close links with the Church and with the partner catholic secondary school, where there is a club for pupils with interest and talent in science. There are close links with the local playgroups and regular staff meetings take place with staff from other schools in the cluster group. Pupils enter local art and poetry competitions and some pupils visited the local Cenotaph for the Armistice ceremony. The school is not used by the local community and other community links have, understandably, not been a priority for the school in recent times.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are **good**. Governance is **satisfactory** and is improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The associate headteacher's highly effective leadership has contributed in very great measure to the school's rapid improvement and its ability to sustain that improvement.
- The acting deputy headteacher's dedication and professionalism is a very good example to the rest of the staff, all of whom work together very effectively as a team.
- Subject leadership and management are good.
- All staff and governors show great commitment to enabling every single pupil to get the most out of their education.
- The school evaluates its performance accurately but the use of the information gained from this is still in the early stages of development.
- The lack of a formal system of performance management means that the governing body fails to fulfil an important statutory requirement.

Commentary

31. The school has undergone a period of turbulence in senior management and in staffing overall in recent years and this coincided with a significant drop in standards in 2003. However, comparisons with national test results for schools in the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre region indicate that the school was the most improved school in the region in 2004. The temporary leaders and the new permanent staff have played a very significant part in this success, forging a very effective team that is confident and well focused on what the school needs to do to improve further. This has been brought about by the present associate headteacher's very clear vision for the school's success, one in which all staff share. She has very high aspirations for the school and is providing very good leadership for the whole school community, including governors and parents. Her strong sense of purpose and ability to get the best out of people results in a great sense of commitment from all staff and from governors and in high expectations of what all can achieve. This is having a very significant impact on pupils' achievement and on the quality of education provided by the school. The outcome is a school that combines a welcoming and caring ethos with a rigorous approach to improving standards.
32. The acting deputy headteacher very ably supports the associate headteacher, providing a very good example to staff by her commitment, managerial skills and teaching ability. Under her direction, the curriculum has been thoroughly reviewed and it is now planned very carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. Subject leaders have produced sharply-focused action plans following detailed analyses in their subjects. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of what needs to be done to continue the momentum of improvement and are taking purposeful, very carefully considered steps to ensure it continues. All staff show a very high degree of commitment to enabling each pupil to gain the most out of their education and they are very largely successful in achieving this.
33. The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs are good. The associate headteacher ensures that provision meets statutory requirements, and acts as the special educational needs co-ordinator. She works closely and monitors the provision with the part time teacher who does much of the practical work. The information from a perceptive audit was quickly turned into a perceptive action plan that has resulted in rapid and effective improvements. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs meets is suitably involved in monitoring provision and pupils' progress. There is now an impressive and very well organised system of pupil records, statutory paperwork and informative literature.
34. The school evaluates its performance closely and with a good degree of accuracy. A good deal of hard and successful work has been done to analyse performance data but the school

is still in the early stages of acting on the information it now has about pupil performance. As yet the quality of teaching and learning is not being checked closely enough. Evaluation of performance is hindered by the lack of a performance management process to enable senior managers to have a close and accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.

35. Governors are very committed to helping the school achieve success. The governing body is well organised and its members are eager to use their expertise in order to support staff and to monitor the school's performance. The unsettled nature of staffing until recently has made it difficult to implement a performance management process and governors are well aware that this is a serious omission, leaving them less well informed about the quality of teaching and learning than they should be. This omission is clearly identified in the very well constructed school development plan. The plan provides a clear, appropriately detailed structure for further improvement, and the associate head has involved staff, governors and parents appropriately in its development and review. There are good plans to re-start the process under the next associate headteacher in the spring term, prior to the newly appointed headteacher taking up post at the beginning of the summer term 2005. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents do not contain the latest national test results as they are required to do by law. Other statutory omissions from the annual report are: absence rates, professional development information and an update on security measures.
36. The governing body manages school finances prudently. A large budget surplus carried forward from last year has been used wisely to supplement staffing and to buy good quality curricular resources.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	461970	Balance from previous year	44866
Total expenditure	468893	Balance carried forward to the next	37943
Expenditure per pupil	2967		

37. Funds are linked to the educational priorities in the school's well-focused development plan thus ensuring that these are supported well. The cost of educating pupils at the school is broadly average. Setting this against pupils' good achievement, the good quality of education provided and the rapid improvements being made, the school gives good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good** and very much improved since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is very good and a very well planned curriculum caters very effectively for the learning needs of each child. Children start the reception class with the levels of attainment expected for their age. The staff's very good communications with parents and the school's very good induction arrangements help the children to settle quickly into school routines. Their learning is very carefully monitored and their progress is thoroughly checked and recorded on a daily basis. Progressively demanding activities are very successfully adapted so that they are at the right level for each group when it is their turn to work with the teacher or a support assistant. Very good links are made between the different areas of learning. Staff very successfully encourage children to apply learning acquired in one area as they participate in activities in another area. This 'joined up' learning contributes in very great measure to the children's very good achievement and generates enjoyment and enthusiasm in all activities. The children are very well prepared for their work in Year 1.
39. Very good provision is made for children who have learning difficulties. The care and patience with which the designated support staff work with these children contribute in great measure to their progress. All of the staff are very highly committed to ensuring that every child is included in all that the school has to offer and they work very hard to bring this about. Accommodation and resources for learning are good, in and out of doors. Children have ready access to two outdoor areas. One is an attractive, secure, well laid out area that houses a good range of large and small play equipment; the other is part of the playground and the school's extensive outdoor accommodation. Both are used very effectively for well-focused learning activities across all six areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because these skills are very successfully built in to everything that goes on in the Foundation Stage.
- Children readily share and take turns. They behave very well and form very good relationships with each other and with the staff.

Commentary

40. Almost all children have already met the early learning goals in this area of learning having made very good progress from when they started. They are very well behaved, confident youngsters who manage themselves and their learning very well. They know the routines and what is expected of them. They sit quietly during whole class sessions, listening carefully to the teacher and to each other as they share ideas. They confidently talk in front of the whole class, recounting what they have done the night before or sharing what they have learned in their groups. They work very well together as a whole class and show very good levels of concentration when working in groups, and when they are required to work on their own. They are sensitive to the needs of others and are very much aware of the consequences of their actions. Children with specific learning difficulties fit into this situation very well. They receive very good support and become equally valued members of the reception class. All of this happens because the children are taught very well how to distinguish right from wrong, to care for themselves, and to give and receive respect, accepting that everyone is different and has the right to be so. This very good development sets them up very well for their school lives and beyond, and underpins the whole ethos of the school and the very good relationships in all age groups.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to increase the children's knowledge, understanding and use of language.
- The quality of teaching is very good and therefore children achieve very well.
- Most reception children write their own names legibly and have a very good knowledge of letter sounds and patterns.
- The children's language development is enhanced by their developing ability to speak German.

Commentary

41. Almost all children speak clearly, with confidence and control and clarify their thinking through discussion with the staff and with each other. This was especially noticeable as they accurately predicted what verbs the teacher had covered up in their big book story and discussed what might come next. These early skills set the children up very well for looking behind the written word to understand more fully what the author is saying. The children's speaking and listening skills are further enhanced as they learn to speak German. They respond to the register in German, and perform action songs and rhymes very competently, showing a good understanding of the different vocabulary and pronunciation of letter sounds in that language. Children interact very well with each other and with adults. They negotiate and plan activities, take turns in conversation, participate wholeheartedly in the exciting, very well planned activities and explore the meanings and sounds of words. For example, as they focused on the consonants 's', 'm', and 'l', they quickly recognised that 'slinky snake' and 'millions of monkeys' were examples of alliteration. They understood what this meant, and readily suggested that they needed a word beginning with 'l' to describe 'lions' to keep the same structure in place. They read a good range of common words accurately and enjoy reading and listening to stories, rhymes and poems. Higher attaining children are beginning to create their own.
42. Almost all children write their own names using well-formed letters. A number of more able children are already writing in accurately constructed sentences, using capital letters and full stops correctly. They achieve very well because they are presented with a very wide range of creative and imaginative learning activities in all areas of learning. The very well planned support for children who find learning difficult is ensuring that they have every opportunity to catch up with the rest of the class. Children are very effectively encouraged to use their communication, language and literacy skills in all areas of learning. Almost all children are at the early learning goals now and are well on the way to exceeding them by the end of reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement and the quality of teaching are very good.
- Children have a very good understanding of shape, a very well developed mathematical language and a good understanding of number which they use well to solve simple problems.

Commentary

43. Although the mathematical focus was shape during the inspection, the children's books demonstrate clearly their good understanding of number. More able children order numbers to 20 in many different practical activities and solve simple money problems, including word problems, for example, through pricing articles and counting out change. Their work shows a well-developed understanding of addition and subtraction. Children accurately sequence events in their day. This sequencing is aided by pictures for the less able children, while more able children record the events in writing. A very engaging lesson successfully consolidated the children's knowledge and understanding of two and three dimensional shapes. The children responded very well to their teacher's high expectations that they use the correct mathematical language to describe the shapes and their faces, sides and corners accurately. As shapes were passed around a circle, the children answered some sharply focused questions about whether the shape was a 'super roller' or a 'builder'. There was great excitement as they 'discovered' that some shapes were both. In their group activities, they went on to classify the shapes by placing them in two circles. The more able pupils rose well to the additional challenge of overlapping the circles and deciding which shapes belonged in both. Mathematical skills are consolidated very well in all other areas of learning and children are well on the way to exceeding the early learning goals in this one.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good and children achieve very well.
- The language of colour, shape and pattern is used very effectively in this area of learning.
- Children select activities, tools and materials with good levels of independence.

Commentary

44. The teacher's very effective use of a good range of resources generates curiosity and excitement in the children as they explore camouflage and discuss the different coats animals have and the different parts of the world in which they live. This contributes well to their scientific learning and to their early geographical skills. As they look very closely at the similarities and differences between the patterns, they use a very good range of language describing, for example, the vertical stripes of the zebra's coat and exploring the word 'horizontal' as the opposite of vertical. This learning is further consolidated as they make masks, encouraged by the staff to place the stripes in the right direction. The children explore the environment in and around the school, making very good use of the extensive outdoor accommodation. They also use computers well, demonstrating good mouse control, dragging and dropping articles on screen, filling boxes and using arrow and enter keys and letters on the keyboard. They record changes in the weather accurately and correctly identify what type of clothing they might wear in the different seasons thus enhancing their personal development alongside their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are taught about their own faith and they are introduced to the major stories of other important world faiths. This gives them a good start in developing an understanding of and respect for the values and beliefs of others. Almost all children are well on the way to exceeding the early learning goals in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and are on course to exceed the early learning goals for physical development.
- The quality of teaching is very good and staff support all pupils very well, developing in them very good control of movement and of large and small equipment and tools.
- Children with learning difficulties are very well supported in all activities.

Commentary

45. Children move with confidence, imagination and a good understanding of their own and others' safety. They use space well in the hall, moving in different directions without bumping into each other. Photographic evidence indicates that they also do so when using the large toys in the outdoor area which is clearly marked out to fuel their imagination and engage them in different types of physical activity. Children have a very good understanding of the purpose of warm up sessions prior to physical exercise. This was very effectively demonstrated in a very good lesson where they felt their hearts and tried to make them beat faster through ever more vigorous activity. They also understand the importance of cooling down afterwards. They follow instructions well and confidently demonstrate their skills, learning from each other very well because the teacher helps them to recognise what is good practice and to try to emulate it. The use of balloons to develop the skills of throwing and catching, over and under arm, added considerable challenge to learning ball skills. The children worked very hard and controlled the balloons very well as the teacher increased the distance between them. They also manipulate small tools and equipment very well, for example, pencils, the tools required to make models with modelling dough, paintbrushes, glue and scissors. The staff successfully ensure that they do so with due attention to health and safety. Pupils with learning and/or physical difficulties are very well supported so that they, too, take a full part in all physical activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good and therefore children achieve very well.
- Art and design skills are very well taught and children have a well developed understanding of the work of different artists.

Commentary

46. Creative development is very effectively fostered through a wide range of worthwhile activities covering art and design, music and role play. Children explore colour, texture, shape and pattern as they create imaginative pictures themselves and as they co-operate to produce work on a large scale. As part of their work on animals, for example, they were introduced to the work of Henri Rousseau and as well as making prints of the animals and reproducing the patterns of their coats, they had started to work on a large scale representation of 'The Tiger'. They sing simple songs and rhymes tunefully in English and German, keeping together and adding actions, showing a good sense of rhythm. They respond very well to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel as they select and work with different tools and materials and use their imagination very well when playing in the role play area.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in English and standards are above the national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Leadership and management are very good. This, and good teaching have been significant factors in raising achievement.
- Pupils' literacy skills are promoted and used well in other subjects.
- Work is very well planned and adapted to meet the needs of all pupils
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. It does not often enough identify areas for improvement

Commentary

47. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection brought about particularly in the past two years following the appointment of an advanced skills teacher as the subject leader, and the appointment of some very talented permanent members of staff. The school is on course at least to meet the challenging targets it has set for 2005.
48. Standards are above the national expectation in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Pupils speak with good levels of confidence, using a wide range of carefully selected vocabulary. They listen carefully to what others have to say and readily offer their own ideas and opinions, showing they have considered those of others. In writing, spelling and punctuation are good and pupils use an increasingly wide range of interesting vocabulary to enhance their work. They read well and are very successfully taught a good range of appropriate strategies to help them work out how to read or spell unfamiliar words. Teachers provide good opportunities for extended writing, and pupils are very effectively taught how to write for a range of different purposes. They apply these skills well in most other subjects.
49. Teaching is enthusiastic and exciting, and use of techniques such as brainstorming and paired discussion keeps pupils interested throughout lessons. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' work rate and behaviour. They use their good knowledge of individual pupils to plan different learning opportunities and activities that are well matched to their different capabilities. As a result, all pupils achieve equally well, including those with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are very ably assisted by teachers and support staff because teachers pay good attention to the targets in their individual education plans when planning their work, and they brief the support staff well. Pupils retain their learning well. Teachers help them in this by using questioning techniques very effectively to probe their thinking and to help them apply previous learning in new work. In most lessons, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to share their work with the class and to evaluate their own and others' work and suggest improvements. This helps pupils to identify good aspects of writing and to apply them in their own work.
50. Assessment procedures are good overall and increasingly good use is made of assessment information in planning. All pupils have targets for improvement in their books and they understand these well. Teachers refer to the targets during lessons and some teachers make very good use of notes to keep pupils focused on their targets. This has a good effect on progress. Work is always marked but sometimes the comments in the pupils' books do not represent good practice in writing or set good examples for the pupils. For example, spelling and grammar are sometimes incorrect and handwriting is difficult to read. Marking often praises effort or corrects work but is too often not precise enough to enable pupils to improve.

51. The improvements in standards and achievement are the result of overall good teaching alongside the very good leadership and management of English. The subject leader has high expectations of all staff and pupils, and the expertise to translate these into very effective systems for improvement to all aspects of the subject. She has worked speedily and rigorously to reverse the decline in standards that occurred during the school's period of turmoil by adapting the curriculum to address the weaknesses she found on taking up her post. Teachers are supported in their assessments of writing by collections of pupils' work which are well marked to show why particular levels were awarded. The information gained from the now rigorous analysis of pupils' performance is used effectively to set challenging targets for pupils in Years 2 and 6.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. Teachers make good use of other subjects to consolidate and extend pupils' literacy skills. Pupils respond very well by writing in different ways and for a variety of different purposes in other subjects, for example, in science, history, geography and ICT. Teachers and pupils use ICT effectively as a tool for learning to improve grammar, punctuation and to draft and edit writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good because well planned teaching usually meets their learning needs well.
- There is a strong and effective focus on improving standards.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and very good relationships with pupils form the basis for effective learning.
- High levels of expectation and challenge result in pupils working productively in most lessons, but occasionally, work is not demanding enough for higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent. It is not sharp enough to help pupils improve.

Commentary

53. Standards in Year 2 and 6 are above the national expectation again after a period of decline during the turmoil the school faced in recent years. The improvement made in 2004 is being maintained this year and the school is on course to meet its challenging targets for the 2005 national tests. This is because of good teaching that ensures that pupils' learning needs are met properly. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is very good.
54. Teaching is good overall and for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 it is very good. Here, the tasks set are very demanding and pupils are fully engaged in their work. Because the work interests and challenges them, pupils work very industriously and achieve very well. In these very effective lessons pupils are working so hard and so productively that time slips by almost unnoticed. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of mathematics and this allows them to set tasks that challenge pupils to develop their skills. Sharply focused questions make sure that pupils have a good understanding of the concepts they are learning. Throughout the school, very good relationships between teachers and pupils mean that pupils feel valued. This makes them eager to learn and encourages them to take chances, confident that it is acceptable to make mistakes if they learn from them. Work is planned carefully so that the learning needs of different groups of pupils are met well. However, higher attaining infant pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the work set for them. Teaching assistants work closely with small groups of pupils, providing them with good quality support. The work they do is planned as part of the lesson and contributes effectively to the good working

atmosphere evident throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs benefit especially well from such support.

55. The good range of learning opportunities offered to pupils appropriately emphasise the development of number skills alongside developing other subject knowledge and understanding, for example in space, shape and measurement. Pupils are successfully encouraged to solve practical problems and to explain the methods they have used, to show that they understand what they are doing. As a result, the skills of calculation develop well. The opening sessions of lessons focus well on the development of the skills of mental mathematics. Good analysis of test data means that teachers have a clear idea of pupils' attainment and the progress they are making. As a result, the school has developed useful learning targets for individual pupils. These are apparent in lessons and pupils generally know them well. However, the link between these targets and the marking of pupils work is not yet established. Comments by teachers on pupils' written work tend to be rather general. This prevents pupils from knowing exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
56. The subject is very well led and it is well managed. Very effective team work amongst staff ensures that efforts are focused firmly on improving standards. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable about priorities for improvement and is very successful in getting others to follow her lead. She has produced a clear and workable action plan that is helping staff to raise standards further although procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are in their infancy.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Mathematical skills are consolidated well in other subjects through the teachers' good planning. In science, for example, pupils learn from an early age to use tables and graphs in order to present their findings. In ICT, pupils in Year 1 develop a good understanding of the different ways data can be presented and analysed. In art and design, pupils learn to manipulate shapes and to see patterns in them, and in design and technology they use measurement accurately when making working models.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good. As a result pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The good focus on practical investigation helps pupils to acquire good scientific knowledge and understanding. However, occasionally, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should in lessons.
- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to learn through co-operative and independent work.
- A strong, shared sense of purpose and good planning are the basis for the recent improvement in standards.
- The marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent. It too often fails to provide pupils with the information they need in order to improve.

Commentary

58. Standards in Year 6 have recovered from the decline seen in recent years. Standards in Year 2 have remained consistently above average. The improvement in standards in Year 6 is being sustained and standards in Year 2 and Year 6 continue to be above the national expectation. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

59. The quality of teaching is good, and at the top end of the school it is sometimes very good. Throughout the school there is a strong focus on developing the skills of scientific enquiry by means of practical investigation. Pupils in Year 2, for example, investigated friction, using tailor-made resources that helped them predict how quickly a toy car would stop on different surfaces. Those in Years 4 and 5 developed their understanding of forces by investigating the drop times of parachutes they had made. Scientific thinking is promoted well. Pupils are expected to predict what would happen on the basis of what they already knew, and to evaluate how accurate they have been in their predictions and why. This focus on developing scientific thinking was seen best in the Years 4 and 5 class, where the teacher made timely and telling interventions while pupils were working together, stretching their thinking very effectively. As a result, higher attaining pupils in particular achieved very well. A further good feature of the teaching throughout the school is the good use made of resources. Pupils always have just what they need to conduct their investigations. As a result, they are able to learn well. Occasionally, higher attaining pupils are provided with the same level of work as other groups of pupils and this does not provide the additional challenge they need to develop their skills further. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
60. The school's very good approach to pupils' social development is seen in the way pupils work together very successfully on investigations. Co-operative work and learning together are positive features of lessons, especially amongst older pupils who display great maturity. The majority know when to work together and when to work individually to write up parts of their investigations. Pupils' behaviour is very good, reflecting the school's ethos and the teachers' skills in managing it. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide praise for good effort but they do not often enough point out what pupils need to do to improve still further.
61. Subject leadership is very good and management is good. The co-ordinator provides very high quality inspirational leadership for the staff, and her own work is a good example to others. Management of the subject is good overall but there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum is appropriately planned and all teachers have a strong focus on promoting pupils' achievement through developing the skills of practical investigation and the thought processes that underlie this.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well by Year 6 because the subject is very well led and managed, enabling them quickly to catch up on learning they missed in previous years.
- The quality of teaching was very good in the two sessions observed during the inspection.
- Resources have improved and teachers effectively promote the use of ICT skills in other subjects.
- The good use of interactive whiteboards supports teaching and learning very well.

Commentary

62. Standards are in line with the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6. No ICT teaching was observed in Year 2, but evidence was gleaned from the portfolio of pupils' work and their use of computers in other lessons. In the Year 1 lesson observed, pupils were working at standards above those expected for their age. They confidently switch on the computers, load their programs and follow the links to the work they are required to do. The teacher uses her very good subject knowledge to take them quickly through the work they had done previously. Sharply focused questions extend their thinking skills and further develop their understanding of how to enter, save and retrieve data and present it in different graphs and charts. The teacher called the class together at regular intervals to check their progress and address any problems they might be having, particularly if she picked up common errors as she worked

with different pairs of pupils. This resulted in all pupils learning very effectively and producing good amounts of high quality work.

63. Similar very good practice was observed in a very good Years 5 and 6 lesson where pupils searched the Internet to find suitable clips of music to add to their animated multimedia presentations about healthy eating. The teacher's very well targeted questioning in this lesson revealed the pupils' very good understanding of how to use different search engines and follow the links to find the information they wanted. The sharing of 'brilliant ideas' moves pupils' learning on apace by allowing them to learn from each other and maximise the use of learning time. This is also a very efficient way of enabling the teacher to assess how well the pupils are doing, and it involves the pupils very effectively in reviewing and evaluating their own and others' work. They perceptively discuss the effectiveness of their work and compare it with alternative methods, showing a very good awareness of audience, particularly in their previous multimedia presentations for reception children. Pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class spoke with enthusiasm about the emails they have received and sent to a student who is travelling the world in her gap year. They use email very confidently as a communication tool. These older pupils have made very good progress in the last year as they caught up with learning they had missed out on when resources were not as good and the subject was not as well taught, led or managed.
64. There has been very good improvement in ICT since the previous inspection, though this has happened mainly within the past year after the appointment of a new co-ordinator who is now a permanent member of staff. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. She quickly got to grips with what was needed to improve pupils' learning and this has successfully enabled pupils to catch up on learning they had previously missed. Through her own good example and well organised staff training, she has built up the confidence of the staff to use interactive whiteboards effectively in lessons, and to promote the use of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects. Resources have been updated and the computer suite is used very well to teach specific skills which are then consolidated in class. All statutory requirements are met.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. Teachers use ICT well to support and enhance learning in other subjects. During the inspection they were observed consolidating their science work by preparing multimedia presentations on healthy eating. The portfolio of work in ICT confirms that pupils use and consolidate their ICT skills effectively in art and design, religious education, literacy, numeracy and design and technology

HUMANITIES

66. Religious education was not inspected and only one full geography lesson was observed during the inspection. Another geography lesson and one history lesson were sampled. As a result, no overall judgements are made about provision, including teaching and learning, in geography or history. The analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that standards are in line with the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. In its drive to improve achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science, these two subjects have understandably taken a back seat. However, both are now well led and managed. Recent rapid improvements in history have followed the co-ordinator's perceptive audit of the subject and similar work is about to start in geography. Both subjects are well resourced and planning has been suitably adapted to meet the needs of mixed age classes. A clear progression in skills is seen in the planning. Visits to local areas and places of interest have been severely curtailed because until very recently the school did not have an educational visits co-ordinator. Teachers are beginning to include some cross-curricular links to, for example, design and technology, literacy and mathematics when teaching history, but this practice is at an early stage of development.

67. In the sampled history lesson, pupils in Year 2 used a wide range of sources effectively to write letters home as soldiers in World War One. They showed good ability to extract information and use it to extend their understanding of historical issues. Their responses were perceptive and empathetic, showing, for example, their good understanding of the conflict between homesickness and a soldier's duty to the country. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have used maps and diagrams competently to compare different coastlines around Britain, and have a sound understanding of how different features were caused. They are aware of the effect of tourism and industry on settlements and understand how such changes affect the local environment. Their understanding of world geography is being extended through regular communication, often by email, with a student who is travelling round the world on her gap year.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

68. One music lesson and one design and technology lesson were observed during the inspection. No lessons were observed in art and design. No overall judgements are possible therefore, about overall provision or the quality of teaching in these subjects. However, discussions with pupils, analyses of their work and teachers' planning all show clearly that the subjects are covered at least adequately and statutory requirements are met. In all three subjects, the curriculum is at least satisfactorily planned to meet the needs of the mixed age classes and ensure progression in skills. Statutory requirements are met and there has been at least satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
69. **Art and design** is very well led and managed and the curriculum has been adapted well to the needs of the school. The samples of pupils' work show very good coverage of the programmes of study. Standards are at least in line with the national expectation and the pupils achieve well. They have good ability to follow a theme through from observational drawing, exploring different aspects of art and design and completing work in different media. The pupils' good observational skills are evident in their still life work and portraits that show good colour mixing skills, and in their textile work based on the work of William Morris.
70. In the one **design and technology** lesson observed, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated a very good understanding of the process of designing, making and evaluating products. The teachers' very perceptive questioning demonstrated her very good knowledge of each pupil and really pushed their thinking skills to the limit as they explained the very good reasons for having to modify their original designs. The standards seen in this lesson were above the national expectation and pupils' achievement was very good.
71. In the one **music** lesson seen, pupils in the mixed Years 3 and 4 class sang tunefully and achieved well in exploring and developing creative movements to a piece of music. Their co-operative and sensible attitude to this work was an example of the school's success in developing the pupils' social skills. In this lesson, teaching was successful in helping pupils develop their creative skills in response to music. The curriculum is based on a carefully selected commercial music scheme that ensures statutory requirements are met and that there is a clear progression in skills. Staff have had training related to this and have benefited from demonstration lessons by the co-ordinator. Pupils who have talent in playing a brass instrument receive specialist tuition. The school intends to start a choir and a recorder group in the near future.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and good improvement has taken place in the past year.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education and work hard in lessons

72. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with the national expectation. Pupils have good opportunities to practise their skills and are successfully encouraged to do better. They are enthusiastic about physical education and are fully involved in all parts of a lesson. Activities for pupils with special educational needs are specifically planned and the pupils are included in all aspects of physical education. The curriculum is satisfactory but due to staffing problems, there have been few enrichment opportunities for the pupils and the range of extra-curricular sporting activities is underdeveloped. There are few inter-school competitions and after school clubs are mostly restricted to football. Most pupils reach the expected levels in swimming by the time they leave the school.
73. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, in one lively, very well taught aerobics lesson, pupils were very successfully encouraged to challenge themselves and each other to achieve 'better, further, higher, faster'. The class teacher joined in all aspects of the lesson, adding further stimulation and challenge to individuals and groups. Teachers have high expectations of the behaviour and attitudes of pupils and pay good attention to the important health and safety aspects associated with this subject. For example, they make good references to the importance of physical education to health, and underline the need for good warm up and cool down at the beginning and end of each session. All pupils and teachers change into the correct kit for lessons. This improves their ability to move, bend and stretch. Recent developments made possible by the appointment of permanent staff have been good and the subject is well led by the new co-ordinator. Resources are good. They are well organised and easily accessible. The co-ordinator has identified appropriate areas for further development and has prepared a good, strategic action plan to tackle them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

74. This aspect of the school's work is in its infancy. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but teachers' planning shows that specific elements of PSHCE are dealt with satisfactorily in circle time, religious education and science. Pupils are taught specifically about care and respect for themselves, other people and their bodies from an early age..Sex education, and the dangers of drug misuse are taught formally in Years 5 and 6, and
75. The school's success in providing for pupils' moral and social development has a good impact in helping to develop their awareness of citizenship. Pupils successfully learn to work together in groups, negotiating with each other and making decisions. This is a successful feature of many lessons. Pupils develop a good awareness of the responsibilities of living in a community as they compose their class rules and, as they grow older, they assume greater responsibility for participating in school life and decisions. Pupils' views are ascertained by means of questionnaires and discussions and they are valued and acted upon. The school's ethos includes a strong element of reconciliation, helping pupils prepare for the problems they might experience in the wider community. Activities such as Healthy Schools Week encourage a sense of self-responsibility and self-awareness. Year 6 are very mature and have a good understanding of the reasons for rules and their own responsibility in following them.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).