

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ashton-under-Lyne

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106256

Headteacher: Mrs S Taylor

Lead inspector: Mrs J M Barnes  
Dates of inspection: 03-05 May 2005

Inspection number: 267762  
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	239
School address:	St Christopher's Road Ashton-under-Lyne Lancashire
Postcode:	OL6 6DP
Telephone number:	0161 3305880
Fax number:	0161 3437296
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Sheahan
Date of previous	December 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Christopher's Catholic Primary school is situated about two miles from the centre of the town of Ashton-under-Lyne in Tameside. There are 239 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11 years, including 45 pupils who attend the nursery part-time. Not all the nursery pupils continue into the Reception class. The school is popular and often over-subscribed. Most pupils live in the parish but a small number travel some distance to attend. Most come from white British backgrounds but the school has an increasing proportion of pupils from a range of other cultures and countries, including Irish, Indian, Pakistani and African heritage. The locality includes private and local authority housing, and covers a wide range of social and economic circumstances. Although there is some movement of pupils in and out of the school, most pupils tend to settle at the school, with over three-quarters of the oldest having been there from their early years. Most families have at least one parent in employment,

and free school meals are a little below the national average. Pupils enter nursery with a wide range of competence, but most make rapid progress and by the end of the Reception year many are achieving above the expectations for their age. About one in ten pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is about average. These are mainly moderate learning difficulties but also include physical disability, social and behavioural issues, and autism. A small number of pupils work in English as their additional language; most are fluent speakers but a few are at the early stages of learning English. Attendance is above average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
32073	J Barnes	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Art Design technology
9520	J Leigh	Lay inspector	PHSE
27292	J Calvert	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Geography History Physical education
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an improving school which provides a satisfactory education for its pupils,** with good standards and a positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils are well cared for, well behaved and enjoy learning. **Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection** although there remains capacity for further improvement in pupils' standards and achievement, and in the overall quality of teaching. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, with good leadership by the recently appointed headteacher. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils' good progress and attainment in the Foundation Stage provides a very good start to their education.
- The headteacher's effective leadership of necessary innovations and the teaching team's commitment to improvement, have been positive influences on the school's progress.
- The quality of teaching, although often good in individual lessons, is inconsistent and does not focus sufficiently on planning pupils' learning using information from assessment.
- The standards pupils attain and their achievements are too variable across year groups and subjects. Staff with subject and curriculum management responsibilities are not yet having sufficient influence to reduce this variability.
- The pupils' skills, especially in literacy and numeracy, not yet fully developed and used in other subjects of the curriculum.
- The school's welcoming approach to all pupils creates a positive atmosphere for their learning and personal development.
- Pupils' willingness to learn and their good behaviour contribute well to the smooth running of the school, although most pupils are not involved enough in improving their own learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Standards of attainment are good overall and pupils' achievement is satisfactory** with capacity for further improvement in most subjects. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal and social development, and by the end of the Reception year most attain above the expectations for their age in all areas of learning. By Year 2, most pupils have made steady progress and are competent readers, with standards in writing and mathematics above those expected for the age group. By Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are above average, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, with brisk progress made in Year 6. The attainment of pupils in Years 1 to 6 in other subjects is generally as expected for their age, with recent improvements in information and communication technology (ICT). Overall, standards should be higher. The school recognises this and has already begun to implement suitable improvements in teaching and assessment. The table below shows that although the school's results in English in 2004 were not as good as in 2003, there was significant improvement from the results when the pupils were in Year 2.

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

**Pupils' personal development is good.** Their spiritual and moral development is well supported by their faith community, and socially they gain maturity as they move through the school. Most are confident individuals who are sensitive to the needs of others, are polite and interested in the world around them. Their cultural development is satisfactory, with a reasonable knowledge of the world's main faiths but little practical experience of the cultural diversity British society. **Attitudes and behaviour are good, and attendance is above average.**

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall.** The quality of **teaching is satisfactory** with recent improvements and many good lessons. Teaching is consistently good in English and mathematics and this is reflected in the good standards. Not enough use is made of assessment when planning pupils' work and promoting their progress, so not all pupils achieve as well as they should. **Pupils' learning is satisfactory** overall and good in some lessons. Teachers motivate pupils well with interesting resources and clear introductions to lessons, but the level of challenge does not always provide individual pupils with the best opportunities to succeed. Not enough attention is given to planning learning. The **curriculum is satisfactory** but English and mathematics have received the most attention, leaving other subjects with little innovation which has inhibited the standards achieved. The school now has a development plan in action which involves a wider range of subjects. However, the planning for pupils of pupils' learning across the full range of subjects is not yet in place, so opportunities to consolidate learning are often lost.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall.** The school is in the early stages of major innovations which are well targeted at improving pupils' standards and achievement. These innovations include extensive professional development for staff and improving systems for planning and assessing pupils' progress. The **headteacher has provided good leadership** of these changes in the two terms since her appointment and has a clear vision for the future. **Governance is satisfactory** and improving rapidly as the many new governors become accustomed to their roles. Statutory requirements are met. The staff with key responsibilities are not having a sufficient impact on their areas of responsibility at present. Many are new to their roles.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school's partnership with parents is **good**. Almost all parents expressed positive view on their questionnaires and pupils are very proud of their school. Parents have easy relationships staff and freely discuss any issues about their children. The school is already responding to requests for improved involvement of parents in their children's learning at



home, especially reading. Occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with promptly, although they cannot always be resolved immediately.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve pupils' achievement further, especially the development and use of a wide range of skills across the subjects of the curriculum.
- Ensure the information from assessment systems and pupils' targets for improvement are accurate, suitably ambitious, and lead to brisk progress for pupils in all subjects.
- Develop effective means to ensure that the assessment of what individual pupils need to achieve, is linked clearly to the planning of the teaching and learning in lessons.
- Ensure that all subject managers have the skills and opportunity to influence the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are **good** and achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Standards are variable across subjects and year groups but overall in the Foundation Stage, Year 2 and Year 6 they are **good**. Pupils' achievement is **good** in the Foundation stage and **satisfactory** at Year 2 and Year 6 with examples of good achievement in some subjects and year groups. The school has the capacity to improve achievement and standards further.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are good at Year 2 and Year 6.
- Achievement in information and communication technology has accelerated in Years 3 to 6 linked to improved teaching and resources.
- Pupils do not achieve well enough in several subjects, and this limits their attainment.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is good in all areas of learning except personal and social development where it is very good. Although they enter the nursery at very different stages of competence, most are close to the expectations for their age and some are above. Most children are keen to learn and grasp new ideas and information quickly. Good provision in a caring and supportive environment, together with a concern for individual children's progress, results in the majority of pupils attaining above the expectations for their age in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year and well above in their social development. Most children in the reception year are keen writers, have the confidence to express their ideas and some use well constructed sentences. They make good progress in work with numbers, and with the help of skilful questioning by teachers make good use of their investigations into the world around them. The opportunities for physical development are wide ranging, including movement with music, although outdoor space is limited,. The children also develop good manipulative skills and drawing is often of high quality. The progress and attainment of children currently in the Foundation Stage provide a firm basis for good achievement in Years 1 and 2.
2. The school's results in the 2004 national tests and assessments for seven year olds were well above average overall, and continued the school's above average trend over time. Results in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national average, which was a significant improvement over the previous year's results in writing and mathematics. The results also compared very well with schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals. Almost all pupils attained the expected Level 2 for the age group in all the subjects tested, and over half attained the higher Level 3 in reading which was well above average. Results for the higher attainers in mathematics were also very good. Fewer pupils attained Level 3 in writing, but this still compared well with the national picture and that of similar schools. Science results were based on teachers' assessment and all pupils attained Level 2 with over half attaining Level 3. Overall, the test results were the best the school has had for several years, and reflected the additional teaching support provided for the year group.

3. The 2004 national test results for eleven year olds were above average overall, with a trend over time similar to the national trend. In English the results showed a fall from the previous year, but were about average both at the expected Level 4 for the age group and the higher Level 5, and were above those of similar schools. In mathematics results improved significantly from the previous year, and were about the same as the average nationally and the results of similar schools with a third of the pupils achieving the higher Level 5. The improvement in test results reflected the school's efforts to improve Year 6 standards in mathematics. Results also improved in science to above the national average, with almost all pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and over half achieving Level 5, which compared very well with the results of similar schools.
4. Standards in lessons and work seen in Year 1 and 2 during the inspection did not fully reflect the very high results in the 2004 Year 2 national tests. Nonetheless, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were each above average and pupils' achievement was good. Pupils are keen and proficient readers who have a love of books and stories. Standards were also good by Year 2 in science, history and information and communication technology (ICT), with good achievement in ICT and satisfactory achievement in science. There was not enough evidence to judge achievement in history as no lessons were seen. In art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education standards were in line with the expectations for the age groups, and achievement was satisfactory. Although pupils report that they particularly enjoy these subjects, standards should be higher; the development of skills and independent work are not well promoted or effectively monitored. No lessons were seen in music.
5. In lessons and pupils' work, the pattern of achievement and standards is very variable in Years 3 to 6. The best progress is made in Years 5 and 6 where good teaching has made a major contribution to the above average standards attained in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in the pupils' final year in primary school. Nonetheless, there is scope for some pupils to attain higher standards if they achieve well in each year group and more attention is given to their performance in non-core subjects and to the development of key skills, such as literacy, numeracy and speaking, across all subjects.
6. By Year 6, standards and achievement are also good in geography. In science standards are above average but achievement is satisfactory as, although pupils' knowledge of the subject is good and sometimes very good, their skills are often under-developed and this restricts their capacity to undertake the independent investigations needed for high quality work. In ICT standards are about as expected for Year 6 pupils, but achievement is good as most pupils have made significant progress since the recent improvements in teaching and resources. In art and design, and physical education standards are in line with expectations for the age group by Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. The subject leaders have already identified that standards could be higher in these non-core subjects. No lessons were seen in design and technology but pupils' work indicates that standards are close to expectations overall, with some examples of good standards in specific projects. In history standards are good but there was insufficient evidence to judge achievement. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in class music.
7. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve suitably high standards, with many working at the expected levels for their age

group. Pupils working in English as an additional language, make good progress especially when they first enter school, and some attain good standards in English.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.1 (17.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.6 (14.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.0 (16.8)	16.2 (16.3)

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

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (28.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.6 (24.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.9(29.2)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

**Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good**, personal development is cultivated well and by Year 6 most are mature individuals. **Spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' attendance is good.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has high expectations for conduct to which pupils respond well.
- Pupils' relationships with other pupils and adults are good and support their learning and enjoyment of school.
- Spiritual, social and moral attributes are developed well with the help of the school's faith community.
- Cultural development does not yet benefit from a suitable knowledge of other cultures in Britain.

### Commentary

8. The school does all it can to promote and encourage good attendance. Attendance is above national averages. Parents are well aware of the importance of good attendance and are keen to ensure that pupils attend. Parents give reasons for absences, usually without being prompted. Most pupils arrive promptly and pupils are quickly into their learning.

#### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (95.2%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	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.*

9. Pupils like school very much, feel secure and are enthusiastic. Happy faces are a characteristic of the school and many say learning is fun. They show an interest in their work, involving themselves as much as they can in what the school provides. There are regular examples of positive attitudes to school and to learning. For example, in a very good lesson in a Reception class, in which the chosen activities met the needs of children very well and where children were encouraged to solve problems, they were fully engrossed, stimulated and responded very well to the range of choices given. However, although most pupils are keen to learn, not all have the skills and opportunities necessary to make a good contribution to their own

learning. On occasions this shows in a tendency to rely too heavily on the teacher for constant encouragement and instructions, and in these circumstances attitudes to learning are not as good.

10. Most pupils behave well and demonstrate self-control. Staff have high expectations for behaviour based on a clear policy consistently applied in most lessons. Inappropriate behaviour is challenged with the result that there is little disruption to learning. Any incident involving potential bullying or racial harassment is investigated thoroughly. No such incidents were observed during the inspection. Pupils' relationships with other pupils are good. They take care of their own and others' property and take pride in their school, as was witnessed when two pupils were seen picking up litter in the school grounds.
11. Pupils improve in confidence as they get older. Older pupils are articulate, can express their views and delight to talk about their work. Opportunities are seized for pupils to speak in front of others. In meetings with groups of pupils they were impressive in their ability to put their point of view sensibly. They are self-controlled, become more self-assured and listen to others well. Pupils engage well in the range of responsibilities given to them and carry them out willingly and with pride. There are few opportunities for pupils of all ages to develop their leadership skills and initiative.
12. Spiritual development is good because of the strong Catholic ethos which underpins the work of the school. Prayers are a regular feature together with constant reference to matters of faith. Social and moral development is good. In a very good assembly pupils participated in re-enacting the story of Martin Luther King and gave a clear message of intolerance for any form of discrimination. Pupils understand and discuss school rules, can distinguish right from wrong and understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils become more self-aware and gain an understanding of the world and their own value and worth. Pupils have a good understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely effects on others. They show concern and compassion for others. Cultural development is sound, with regular work on the beliefs and preferences of other religions and cultures, but little direct knowledge of the cultural diversity in Great Britain, or their place within it. The increasing diversity within the school provides an opportunity to broaden the pupils' knowledge. Some pupils have wide experience of their own culture including sport, music and theatre but this is not available to all, so the school makes reasonable efforts to develop these experiences through visits and visitors.
13. There were no exclusions recorded in the 2003-4 school year. In the current school year, one boy with special educational needs and of white British origin has been the subject of two temporary exclusions due to behavioural difficulties.

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

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory** overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with examples of good lessons throughout the school. The curriculum is sound and pupils are well cared for and supported, but not sufficiently well informed about how to improve their learning. Assessment procedures, although satisfactory are not well used to plan learning. Provision for pupils' care, welfare and safety is good as guidance on personal development. Guidance on academic progress is satisfactory. The school's partnership with parents is good.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. Teaching is satisfactory with examples of very good and excellent lessons. Learning is satisfactory with very good learning in a minority of lessons. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in English and mathematics is consistently good.
- The quality of teaching varies considerably across subjects and year groups.
- The introduction to most lessons is good, with clear explanations which capture pupils' attention.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are supportive, and encourage pupils to be positive about their efforts and to behave well.
- There is insufficient use of assessment information to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged.

### Commentary

14. Overall, teaching throughout the school provides a sound basis for pupils to make steady progress. Teaching in over half the lessons is good or better and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Lessons are calm and well organised with high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The careful preparation of the introductions to lessons, with the use of simple resources to illustrate the points being made, maintains pupils' attention well. Pupils are encouraged to work hard and are praised frequently and appropriately. Although most lessons are directed at the whole class, teachers are developing a wider range of teaching strategies such as pairing pupils as "talking partners" to encourage discussion and help understanding. These strategies are often successful in ensuring pupils take a more active role in their learning.
15. The quality of teaching is not consistent across the year groups or subjects, and this inhibits pupils' overall progress. In the best lessons pupils show how keen they are to learn and how quickly and enthusiastically they grasp new ideas and information. The learning of pupils in Year 6 is considerably enhanced by the consistently high quality of teaching which has successfully sustained their enthusiasm for learning and enabled them to increase the rate of their progress towards higher standards. At present, the best teaching is clearly linked to the particular skills of individual teachers, whose subject knowledge is good, who know their class well and who are able to enthuse pupils working at different levels of attainment and consistently ensure they all achieve well.
16. In lessons where teaching was less successful in ensuring all pupils were making the best of their capabilities, there was not enough variation in the level of challenge to match the different attainment within the class, and too few opportunities were provided for pupils to explain, question, and make decisions. On occasions, the introduction to the lesson was too long and the teaching assistants, who mostly provide valuable support, were under-occupied or trying to maintain the attention of those pupils who were unable to sustain their concentration. Particularly in these lessons, or sequence of lessons, the planned learning for different groups of pupils was not identified clearly enough to ensure achievement could be checked.

17. The school does not yet have in place all the systems and support for teaching and learning to ensure that high quality teaching is common across year groups and subjects.
18. However, the headteacher and governors have a clear agenda to develop these systems and several are already in the early stages of implementation. For example, a new policy for teaching and learning policy provides clear guidance on the elements of good quality teaching, emphasising the importance of planning pupils' learning. Staff have responded well to this, and report having explored new approaches to teaching in recent months with an increasing emphasis on involving the pupils in practical activities and discussions. There is evidence of this increased focus on learning in many lessons, although it is not yet well supported by the use of assessment information.
19. Assessment procedures are in the process of being revised, including guidance on marking, and the development of a system for identifying pupils' levels of attainment and predicting the progress they should make over time. Targets for groups of pupils and individuals are in place in order to help the pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. However, most of these initiatives in assessment, although valuable, are at a very early stage of implementation and not yet having a significant effect on teaching or on pupils' learning in many lessons. Marking remains unsatisfactory and information from assessment is rarely used effectively to plan pupils' learning. As a result the level of challenge, especially for the most capable pupils, is often sufficient to enable them to make steady progress but not enough to ensure they are achieving as well as they should. In English and mathematics, there is more effective use of assessment information when planning pupils' progress and most achieve well. The good match of teaching and tasks to pupils' needs is most evident in mathematics.
20. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in most lessons where they have the benefit of working with support staff. Although their needs and targets are identified in their individual education plans, these are rarely incorporated into lesson plans. In lessons where support staff are not available, they do not always complete their work. Overall pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes towards their learning and enjoy much of their work when tasks are matched to their needs and interests. Because pupils work within a secure and caring learning environment, they respond well to expectation and challenge.
21. The number of pupils working in English as an additional language is small but increasing, covering and includes a very wide range of home languages. The teaching of those pupils at the early stages of learning English is well supported, and most pupils make rapid progress. Many are reported to be very competent speakers in their home language and benefit from the good English speaking skills of many their classmates. Those who are slower to learn have a little additional help which is useful. However, the provision is not yet set within an overall approach to assessing and monitoring the achievement of all pupils for whom English is an additional language, in order to ensure their particular needs are being met. For example, that they are developing the wider cultural understanding of English literature and written speech patterns.
22. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, and very good in the reception class with examples of excellent practice. The quality of teaching contributes strongly to the pupils above average attainment and good achievement.



The nursery staff work well as a team and the quality of the teaching is improving. Sessions and activities are well planned, with clear learning objectives and a high focus on practical experiences. There are some weaknesses in the organisation and management of children who sometimes lose interest and become distracted when they are working in a large group for a long period of time and the pace of the lesson is slow. A strength of the consistently very good teaching in the reception class is how well the staff organise and manage the children. The high quality of staff support is a key feature in the children's successful learning. The staff are skilled in setting learning in imaginative situations, often highly challenging and very successfully generating enthusiasm and joy in learning. There is a warm, caring and stress free environment in which the children are happy and show very positive attitudes to learning.

23. The staff have implemented the assessment that is the basis of Foundation Stage Profiles for all children, and they are regularly completed. In addition each child has a Foundation Stage Record linked to the Early Learning Goals. These are completed each half term. To support the assessments the staff include details of direct observations. Whilst these are useful the staff do not make sufficient use of the information to plan the next steps in learning.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (7%)	10 (23%)	11 (25 %)	20 (45%)	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.*

**The curriculum**

Overall, the school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum. It meets statutory requirements. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is good, particularly for pupils in Year 3 to 6. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for English and mathematics is good.
- The planning of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, apply their knowledge and consolidate their understanding across the subjects of the curriculum is under-developed.
- The provision for pupils learning English as a second language is satisfactory, although it lacks a clear arrangement for monitoring achievement that recognises their specific needs.
- The accommodation in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory presently, although plans are underway to improve the situation by next term.

**Commentary**

24. The curriculum is sound overall and contributes towards pupils' satisfactory achievement and above average standards attained. For example, the school's approach to the teaching of mathematics, where practical and investigative activities

are important aspects of teaching and learning, provides motivation and stimulation to all pupils particularly in Year 6. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is not yet evident in the planning of teaching and learning. The provision for pupils learning English as an additional language enables most to achieve well, although the arrangements for monitoring their progress are limited.

25. The Foundation Stage curriculum is now securely based on the national guidelines and this is a significant improvement. Practical experience is strongly emphasised and the staff have developed their skills to provide interesting and challenging opportunities which stimulate learning. Staff teamwork is a strength of the planning process. The planned curriculum reflects a good understanding of how best these young children learn. There is a strong emphasis on play to promote particular skills and to develop the children's communication skills. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection when the curriculum in the reception class was deemed to be too formal. Well organised classrooms, easily accessible resources and good wall displays supports the children's learning well.
26. The overall planning of the school's curriculum ensures that all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught regularly, that the national literacy and numeracy strategies are well used to guide teaching in English and mathematics, and that teachers know which topics are to be taught in science and in the other subjects of the curriculum. Subject policies have been reviewed recently and resources, especially in ICT and the Foundation Stage, have been improved. Overall, this approach provides a satisfactory basis for pupils' experiences through the year groups. However, the present management of the curriculum does not make the best of this basic provision as many pupils have the capacity for brisker achievement and higher standards.
27. Although there are examples of good planning in a minority of lessons and topics by individual teachers, these do not ensure consistently good achievement in each subject through the school. This is mainly because the school does not have an overall curriculum plan which clearly shows how pupils' learning is to be developed within and across the subjects of the curriculum. Some positive work has already been undertaken by individual teachers who have recognised that, within the present curriculum plan for their year group, knowledge or skills taught in one subject could be applied and consolidated in another, such as writing about aspects of the second world war in a history project in Year 3, while making sure that the style of writing reflected good use of spelling and punctuation as well as the vocabulary of the era.
28. However, this useful work is usually incidental to a topic or an activity and does not form a sufficiently consistent and robust plan for the development of pupils' learning in the primary years. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment is too variable and relies too frequently on the interests and initiative of individual teachers. The school is aware that further development of curricular planning is needed and intends to seek advice from the local authority which has already successfully supported the school in developments within the Foundation Stage and mathematics.
29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, as it was at the last inspection. Pupils make good progress and most achieve suitably high standards, often with the help of support staff. Teaching assistants are deployed to work alongside class teachers and provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum is suitably modified and learning targets identified within individual education plans. However, the school has accurately identified that

these targets are only rarely reflected in the planning of learning in lessons, so teaching assistants are not always able to become fully familiar with how pupils' individual needs can be met. Pupils are fully included in all aspects of the school's curriculum and the accommodation has been suitably modified to provide access for disabled pupils.

30. Since the last inspection there have been worthwhile improvements have been made to the accommodation which has enhanced provision, particularly for sporting activities. Other aspects of the accommodation are not fully developed to support learning. These include the library which is poorly sited, although the school has suitable plans for improvement that focus on enabling all pupils to access reading and research materials. There are also imminent changes due to provide a more coherent space for the Foundation Stage accommodation, which is currently inadequate. Learning resources adequately support the current curriculum, with the help of teachers' good use of non-commercial resources, such as photographs, postcards and an impressive array of memorabilia for history topics. However, the quantity and quality of resources are insufficient to sustain the planned improvements to the school's curriculum, especially the anticipated increase in practical activities and independent study.
31. The range and variety of extra-curricular opportunities are good and they contribute well to pupils' personal and social development. There is a good choice of activities, particularly within sports and the arts, which is appreciated by older pupils. Physical education has a high profile in the school and links with the local secondary school and specialist coaches have developed, resulting in more sporting opportunities to extend curriculum provision. There are no opportunities for pupils to enjoy residential visits. Although opportunities for have improved for pupils in Years 1 and 2, additional activities remain limited for this age group.

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

The steps taken to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are **good**. Support, advice and guidance are **satisfactory**. The school involves pupils in its work satisfactorily.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good care treats each child as an individual and develops their confidence.
- Pupils are keen to learn but they are not well informed about how they can take the initiative to improve their own work.
- Pupils' relationships with adults are very good and provide positive support for their learning.
- Pupils receive good support for their personal development.

### **Commentary**

32. Child protection has a sufficiently high profile and in line with locally agreed arrangements in line with locally agreed arrangements. This area of the school's work is handled sensitively, effectively and promptly. Staff are vigilant and always work in the best interests of pupils to safeguard their welfare, and in partnership with other agencies to secure the safety of its pupils.

33. The school ensures that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment well. All reasonable steps are taken to keep pupils safe and protect them from injury or ill health. Suitable procedures are in place and regular inspections of school premises are carried out. Risk assessment is effective and practical, with key issues identified for improvement. Incidents are recorded and there are adequate arrangements for first aid and medicines.
34. The school provides a secure, supportive, caring environment where pupils feel safe and happy. Pupils know that they matter and this means that pupils have the greatest trust in adults and relationships are very good. If they have a problem pupils are confident they can go to an adult and get help. Staff listen carefully to pupils' concerns and always provide help or re-assurance.
35. Pupils often receive helpful guidance about their academic work during lessons, and occasionally teachers' marking of their books indicates how they could improve. However, the present arrangements for assessment and the setting of targets are not fully effective in engaging pupils in developing their own learning. Few pupils are well informed enough about what constitutes high quality work or their personal goals for improvement, to be critical of their own performance or know how to improve. There are examples of individual pupils who are competent enough to do this, but this initiative is not commonplace. However, the school is well aware of this and has begun a drive towards developing pupils' skills of independence. It is too early to judge the impact of this development, but the decision to ensure pupils take a more active role in their learning and achievement is sensible.
36. The school has good procedures to monitor personal development that have a clear impact on the development of pupils' personal qualities. Good behaviour and attitudes are recognised and rewarded. For example, they receive praise for being kind, thoughtful and helping others, and pupils' pride in this recognition is very evident. Pupils understand the consequences of anti-social behaviour and develop good relationships. Staff address the individual personal needs of each pupil very well. They are helped to become increasingly self confident and knowledgeable about themselves and healthy and safe living. Pupils give their views about school by responding to questionnaires, and small groups of pupils meet with the head teacher on a termly basis. A suggestion box communicates any worry or concern.

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

The school's partnership with parents is **good**. With the community and other schools it is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with the church are strong and provide a sense of community.
- Information to parents about the school and pupils' progress is good.
- Parents have positive views about the school.
- Induction arrangements are good when pupils enter school and also when they move to secondary education.

### **Commentary**

37. The school encourages a strong partnership with parents based on mutual trust and confidence. The school is an open door environment, welcoming to parents, which results in very good relationships with most parents. If parents are concerned about anything they are confident to approach the school for resolution. They are very appreciative that their children receive the help and support they need. Parents are committed to the school and a number provide help in the school, where they are valued. Regular well-presented general school newsletters keep them well informed.
38. There are good opportunities to receive information on their child's progress. The annual reports to individual parents are sufficiently detailed, enabling parents to understand progress very well. They receive information on the targets their children are expected to achieve. The school provides regular information on what topics are to be covered. There are some events organised for parents, to help parents support their children's learning, through an understanding of how and what their children will be taught and how to help them at home. Information for parents, whose children have special educational needs, is good.
39. The close ties with the church, ensure that school ethos is firmly based on Catholic beliefs. Pupils regularly visit the church to attend services. Pupils meet to attend a weekly club held in the church hall. The priest is a frequent visitor and is well known by all pupils and very supportive of the school. These links contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual development.
40. The school uses the local community to support learning through visits to Tameside Country Park, local shops, canal, sports hall and library. There are visits from people in the local community, which help pupils to understand the work they do and how society operates. For example, a group of volunteers, who have a concern for road safety, come every week to help Year 1 pupils assess the risk of crossing the road and how they can minimise that risk. For this they set up situations on roads adjoining the school and instruct pupils in safer options.
41. Induction arrangements for the youngest children into nursery ensure that all are assured of a caring and sensitive beginning to their school life. This is based on good opportunities for parents and their children to get to know the school, supported by good information. Assessment of each child ensures that potential is identified early. They leave their parents very happily at the start of the day. The relationships that staff have with these parents is friendly and they are at ease discussing their children. At the end of sessions, when parents collect their children, it is clear that safety is paramount.
42. Links with the local Catholic secondary school, to which many transfer, are productive. They include visits over a few days by pupils, supported by good information and good arrangements carefully considered to ensure that pupils are well equipped for the next stage of their education. The social arrangements for the move to secondary school appear to work well, with current Year 6 pupils looking forward to the next stage of their education with confidence. A network of Catholic schools has been formed to improve curriculum links so there is better continuity in learning and achievement from Year 6 to Year 7.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management overall are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership and management of staff with key responsibilities are satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory and statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership by the headteacher in planning the first phase of school improvement and enabling the staff team to begin implementing change with confidence has been a major factor in the school's recent progress.
- Successful teamwork by the staff has significantly assisted the implementation of the first phase of the school's plan for improvement.
- With the exception of the headteacher, there is limited expertise available in the school to lead the next phase of the school's development effectively.
- The link between the priorities in the school development plan and the school's budget are not sufficiently clear.
- Staff with key responsibilities are not yet influencing their areas sufficiently to ensure teaching and learning are consistent.

### **Commentary**

43. There have been significant changes in the leadership and management of the school since the beginning of the current school year, many of which have not yet had time to have a significant impact on the achievement of pupils. Following the retirement of a long serving headteacher, recruitment of a replacement was not successful for about a year, during which time the substantive deputy headteacher was acting headteacher. A new headteacher took up post in September 2004 and quickly identified key areas for improvement, as well as the strengths of the school, and successfully encouraged the staff to work as a team in order to implement essential changes. These included increasing the amount of practical work in lessons, and introducing a system to track pupils' progress and support the setting of targets for future attainment. The pace of school development to date has been well judged and there is a clear vision for the future.
44. The staff have worked hard and successfully on an ambitious programme for both professional and school improvement. Much of the first phase of the development focused accurately on ensuring basic procedures and guidance were based on good practice and provided a sound basis for improving teaching and learning. For example, policies for key aspects such as behaviour management, assessment, anti-bullying strategies, child protection, special educational needs and curriculum subjects have been updated. Staff have undertaken a range of professional development, partly linked to the school's participation in the local authority's primary leadership programme, but also in response to the headteacher's identification of the school's needs, particularly in information and communication technology and the independence of pupils. Parents, teachers and pupils report that activities are more interesting, pupils' behaviour is better and there is more information available about pupils' attainment.
45. Changes in staffing led to new management responsibilities for most staff, and the appointment of an assistant headteacher to increase the senior management team and take responsibility for curriculum development. Time has been allocated to support the requirements for work force reform, using the services of three supply teachers who have frequently worked at the school. These arrangements have

worked well in enabling staff to develop their skills and manage the basic requirements of their subjects. For example, an element of monitoring of teaching and learning is now included in the work of all subject leaders, and is providing some evidence of general strengths and weaknesses, although not yet having a direct impact on pupils' learning. However, the teaching team has limited experience of aspects such as whole school curriculum planning, accurate assessment of pupils' achievement, and establishing effective monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress. As a result, most of the innovative leadership in these areas is still undertaken by the headteacher. The school rightly intends to work towards implementing an enjoyable and stimulating curriculum in line with national guidance, so there is a pressing need for training and support to enable the school's senior and middle management to identify and influence the pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics.

46. With due regard to the school's admission policy, staff and governors have a strong commitment to providing for pupils whatever their culture or background. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is effectively managed. The experienced co-ordinator is now able to work in partnership with the headteacher who also has expertise in managing the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Records are well organised, detailed and up to date, with careful monitoring of pupils' progress and the school has a good reputation amongst parents of pupils with special educational . The small number of pupils who are working in English as their additional language, are well integrated into the school's system, and most make good progress with some being amongst the most competent in their year groups. However, their needs and progress are not always monitored once they become fluent enough to communicate clearly. Pupils who are gifted and talented do not yet have specific provision for their needs, as the identification of these pupils has been a very recent development.
47. The governing body has recently been reorganised and most governors are new to the school and the role. However, there is an experienced chair and deputy chair who ensure that statutory requirements are met, and the new governors are enthusiastic, have undertaken training and are quickly gaining experience in their roles. Suitable committees and systems for communicating are in place. At present the main initiatives are proposed by the headteacher, but the governing body questions and modifies the proposals. The school does not yet have robust systems to check its effectiveness, so governors are not well informed in this area. Nonetheless, they use the information they receive from the school alongside comments from parents and staff from the local authority, to gain a useful independent insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses. Working in co-operation with the headteacher, governance is satisfactory at present with good potential for more active involvement in strategic planning in the near future.
48. Due care is taken to ensure the best value is gained from purchases and the main recommendations in the school's last financial audit have been implemented. With minor exceptions, the budget appears to be able to support the current school development plan. However the plan does not include estimated costings, and as the school's resources for learning are not adequate to support its plans for future improvement, this detail is needed to enable the governing body to plan budget priorities. The exceptionally large balance carried forward to the 2005/6 financial year will be reduced substantially by the plans that are underway for enhancing the nursery environment, improving the library and further enhancing the resources for ICT.

**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	612,599
Total expenditure	628,147
Expenditure per pupil	2,499

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	63,470
Balance carried forward to the next	47,922



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

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

49. The children start their nursery experience following their third birthday. They join the reception class in September following their fourth birthday. The pupils enter the nursery with varied levels of competence, especially in personal and social development, and in communication, language and literacy. However, they make good and sometimes very good progress in the Foundation Stage, and by the end of the Reception year their pattern of achievement is much more consistent. Attainment generally above that expected for their age in all the areas of learning and well above in personal, social and emotional development. Very good teaching, together with a well planned, coherent programme of practical experiences, boosts the learning of the children particularly in the reception year. The good overall provision in the Foundation Stage significantly contributes to the children's good achievement.
50. Very good teaching and an approach to learning through practical activities is now a real strength in the reception class. The nursery and reception classes work well together, for example, in curriculum planning and this has helped to improve continuity and progression in the children's learning. Improvement since the last inspection is good although the accommodation remains unsatisfactory. There is a dedicated outside area, but it is very small, a grassed area on a slope, and is very difficult to use effectively. However, this is to be remedied at the end of this school year when a Foundation Unit is planned through major building alterations and a new outdoor area will be established. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are a part of the responsibility of the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator who is new to the school. This is a challenging task as the co-ordinator has a full time responsibility as a class teacher and is not based in the Foundation Stage classes. The headteacher is aware of this issue which will be taken into account when the next senior management review takes place.

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

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

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

- The children achieve very well and most attain well above the expectations for their age.
- The staff in the reception class have very high expectations of the children which helps them to achieve well.
- The children have high levels of confidence and self esteem.

#### **Commentary**

51. By the end of the reception year most children are likely to attain above the expectations for their age: this represents very good achievement. This is the result of the high expectations of the staff and the good teaching. The children in the nursery enjoy coming to school and develop confidence to try new things, such as exploring new materials and constructing large models with their friends. In circle time they learn to follow the rules for sitting quietly and await their turn. In the reception class the staff build on these foundations and through the teacher's very

high expectations the children respond very well so that behaviour is very good, as is the rate of learning.

52. The staff plan a very good range of activities to promote the children's confidence and self esteem, and children come happily to school. In the nursery, role-play and small group activities allow the children to have close contact with other children and staff. Children in the reception class are very confident and keen to learn. They are very interested in the exciting activities each day; they know the routines and work extremely well together. As a result the children concentrate on their tasks for lengthy periods of time and do not waste time. Throughout the day the children are engrossed in their varied activities and this contributes to the very good behaviour, particularly in the reception class.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and attainment is above that expected for their age.
- Teachers successfully generate an interest in books, stories and writing.
- Children are confident communicators through spoken language.
- The planned development of early writing, although satisfactory, is not always given sufficient support.

### **Commentary**

53. Most children achieve well and are likely to exceed the expected attainment for their age by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good overall. The staff systematically plan for the children's language and literacy development and ensure this is an integral part of most of the activities that are provided. There is a well used book area in each classroom with comfortable seating and an adequate range of books. Good use of resources is made to bring stories alive. In a very good lesson in the reception class, the children's enjoyment and interest were totally captivated as the teacher used a wonderful set of story board farmyard animals as the vehicle for children to create their own story. Opportunities for children to use a range of materials for writing are evident from the time the pupils enter the nursery and most make good use of these. The development of early writing is not as well supported as early reading although most pupils make reasonable progress. In the reception class the children are keen writers because there is a genuine purpose for the writing task, such as working together to write a book about farm animals for other children to read.
54. The development of speaking is effectively planned and taught, with a high level of contact between adults and pupils. For example, from the start of the school day, adults talk with children and encourage them to talk with others. In the nursery the children talked animatedly as they observed the cocoons in the magnifier, described what they saw and talked about their knowledge of caterpillars. The children grow in confidence to express their ideas and in the reception year a significant number of children use well constructed sentences.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lively practical activities are well planned and successfully support learning.
- The adult led activities help the children to develop competence and confidence.
- Although activities in groups generally work well, occasionally pupils lose interest when not actively involved in mathematical tasks.

### **Commentary**

55. Most children are likely to attain above the expectations for their age by the end of the reception year. They achieve well in response to the good range of planned practical activities. Teaching is good overall and satisfactory in the nursery. Group activities are well planned and capture the children's interest. The children eagerly used the 'Elephant Roamer' to solve the problem of how many steps to reach the banana, although while their interest was engaged when it was their turn they showed less interest in watching others. Another interesting activity involved the children in finding snakes hidden under the grass when their task was to order the snakes by size.
56. Enjoyment and industrious activity characterised an excellent number lesson in the reception class. The presentation of an addition activity focused on number bonds to 8 was very imaginatively presented through the delightful escapades of Incy Wincy Spider who visited the supermarket and through a series of mishaps lost his eight legs. The children were very eager to ensure they were all replaced, and as they placed the legs on the model of Incy they learnt how different number bonds could make 8. This was a superb learning experience for the children and a joy to share.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children are encouraged to explore, and opportunities for investigational work contribute significantly to their understanding.
- Staff use questioning effectively to enhance children's learning.
- The development of outdoor activities linked to this area of learning is restricted by the lack of readily available space.

### **Commentary**

57. The children attain above the expected levels in knowledge and understanding of the world and they achieve well. Teaching is good overall. A strength in teaching is the way staff support children through skilful questioning which encourages them to observe closely and develop their ideas. Children in the nursery have many worthwhile opportunities to explore materials, observe and to talk about similarities and differences, which helps them to make sense of what they see. For example,

through their building and constructing using various materials, they learn how to fit things together. Children effectively investigated materials as they cut out and glue a range of materials and make simple models, deciding on which materials were most suitable for their task and recognising simple properties such as which materials were hard to cut. Children in the reception class very successfully developed their science knowledge as they explored materials to make a suitable bedding pack for the class 'dog' to have in his wicker basket. Teaching was very good because of the use of simple but effective resources, a stimulating introduction to the problem and the involvement of all pupils. The opportunities for learning about the natural environment are limited by not having suitable outdoor space for daily activities such as planting, creature watching and collecting. However, staff plan specific activities in other areas of the school environment which, although not daily, compensate as well as can be expected.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities for children to use various tools and equipment.
- The staff provide well planned and regular opportunities to develop a good range of physical skills.
- Outdoor facilities specifically for Foundation Stage children are limited.

### **Commentary**

58. The children's attainment is above the levels expected and they achieve well because they have good levels of energy and the staff ensure there are regular opportunities to develop physical skills. Teaching is good. All children have opportunities to use the large indoor physical equipment and this contributes to their skills in climbing and balancing.

59. The children's physical skills are also developed through movement sessions linked to music. Children in the nursery enjoyed lively participation as they moved as animals. However, the staff missed opportunities to practise movements and help the children to make better use of the available space. Although the children make use of the outdoor facilities, the lack of space and the sloping grassed area are constraints on the development of pupils' physical skills outdoors. The children's manipulative skills develop well because they are provided with a wide range of practical opportunities to use tools and equipment in daily activities. They make good progress because they are taught to use equipment and tools safely and correctly. They learn to use equipment with care and confidence. Their dexterity using drawing equipment is evident in the very high quality of children's drawing in the reception year.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Activities are provided to encourage children's artistic and musical development and there is good provision to use language creatively.
- Children have very positive attitudes.

## **Commentary**

60. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Teachers provide a good range of activities which develop children's creativity. There is a good range of materials readily available including malleable materials, and good work on display shows evidence of these materials being used effectively. The good quality of children's drawings and paintings reflect the attention given to observation and detail. Role play activities and play with small toys stimulate children's creative use of language. As a result, by the end of the reception year the children are likely to attain above the expectations for their age. The children are confident and have positive attitudes to creative activities. They enjoy opportunities to explore different textures, for example, through making collages of animals in different materials. In this activity there was a very good balance between teacher input and children's independence.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Literacy skills are taught well.
- Reading is good throughout the school, but not enough attention is paid to the further development of the most competent readers.
- Pupils write confidently in a range of formats and have good attitudes to writing.
- There is no consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting throughout the school.
- Library provision is unsatisfactory, with little to develop the reading competence of the more capable pupils.

## **Commentary**

61. Standards have fluctuated over recent years. However, in the 2004 tests, results in Year 2 were well above both the national figures and the standards in similar schools. In Year 6 results were average compared with national figures and above average compared to similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving above the Level 4 expected for the age group, was similar to national figures. In lessons and pupils' work in the current Year 6, standards were above average overall, both at Year 2 and Year 6. Improved planning, a significant initiative to improve writing and the developing subject knowledge of teachers has resulted in pupils attaining higher standards than at the time of the last inspection. In the 2005 tests, standards are predicted to be above the national averages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is generally good but there are some inconsistencies between year groups.

62. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and many attain the standards expected for their age. In the classes that include pupils working in English as their additional language, the approach to teaching English is successful for most pupils as they gain from the good models of speech used by other pupils, the systematic teaching guided by the national literacy strategy and the early introduction to reading for younger pupils. Older pupils at the early stages of learning English make good progress in both spoken and written language. A few pupils are confidently bi-lingual and fit well into the planning of class lessons. However, the school does not yet have a clear view of the teaching and learning of English as an additional language which relates to all age groups. As a result, the pupils' progress is not regularly checked to be sure their broader development of English, especially literature, is being as successful as their speaking and writing. Gifted and talented pupils do not have special provision at present as the school has only just begun to identify their needs.
63. Overall standards in speaking and listening are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievement is good. When talking to pupils in lessons all teachers are good role models. Most pupils contribute in lessons, clearly express their ideas and answer questions with confidence. There are frequent opportunities to discuss ideas as a group and initiatives such as 'talking partners' have been introduced to develop further speaking and listening skills, especially speaking in formal situations. These short opportunities vary in their effectiveness and some pupils have little to say if they are asked to talk about a subject that is not familiar to them.
64. Standards in reading are above average. Pupils enjoy reading and respond well to text, especially in class groups. Younger pupils are confident at sounding out unfamiliar words, using their good phonic skills. Teachers encourage pupils to read regularly and to take their books home to practise. Parents support their children well and this helps to develop the pupils' positive attitudes to reading. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the pupils demonstrated good analytical skills when discussing aspects of a novel. Pupils were absorbed by the story and the issues it raised. The lesson significantly contributed to promoting pleasure in reading. There are however, too few planned opportunities for extension reading activities for the higher-attaining pupils in Years 2 and 6.
65. Standards in writing are above average. The school has prioritised the improvement and development of pupils' writing and this has resulted in good written work in most classes. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because they are taught the skills required to develop their writing and by the end of Year 2 the content of pupils' writing is often interesting and lively. They use a range of writing styles and know the differences. This good work is developed in the junior classes when pupils are given opportunities to write in an extended range of formats, such as notes, letters, instructions. Older pupils write interesting, descriptive accounts and have a good awareness of the characteristics of different styles of writing. However, their handwriting and presentation of work is not as good as it could be with the exception of Year 6. There is no consistent approach to teaching handwriting through the school and pupils use the style they select.
66. The teaching of English is good overall, although not consistently so. Learning is also good overall with particular strengths in Year 6 pupils' written work is consistently supported by clear guidance on the use of basic skills, such as punctuation and handwriting, and by the interesting tasks which capture pupils' imagination and maintain their motivation. Work in pupils' books clearly shows

progress in the development of techniques and knowledge of ways to use texts. Throughout the school, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and most lessons are well planned and prepared. As a result of good planning and organisation, together with the good relationships they sustain in lessons, pupils are keen to learn and they work hard. They respond well to challenges, including drama performances in assemblies and smaller groups, and have an enthusiasm for research which a few pupils extend to working at home through library books, videos and the use of the internet.

67. In the less successful lessons, the introduction to lessons eroded the time for pupils to discuss their views and ask or answer questions. The match between the teaching and the pupils' needs was not always accurate, and the pupils became inattentive when they were kept inactive for too long. Throughout the school, the quality of teachers' marking is of variable use. In the best examples, teachers give detailed feedback to pupils and give advice on how they can improve. In some classes, work is acknowledged but there are no supporting comments. Occasionally work is not marked for extended periods. This reduces the effectiveness of the assessment of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and limits the pupils' involvement in improving their own learning.
68. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is new to the post and as yet has not had sufficient time to make a significant impact on teaching and learning. However, the recent compiling of a tracking system for pupils' attainment and progress in English is already providing a basis for strategic decisions about the priorities for the subject. There are also practical developments in the management of the subject. For example, the school is aware of the inadequacies of the library and is in the process of making significant improvements to the book and library provision. The library area is too small, badly located and not easily accessible. The range of books is inadequate to develop pupils' research skills. The books are catalogued by authors and colour codes which is suitable for younger pupils but not for older pupils to research topics and learn about standard library access systems. Although there remains work to be done, progress since the last inspection is good.

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

69. The school does not have an effective policy for cross-subject planning or working. Individual teachers have made efforts to help pupils develop their skills of literacy through other subjects. Examples can be found in pupils' workbooks but are mainly evident in history, geography and science. Writing skills are being used across the curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are developed through class discussions and when pupils report back what they have learned at the end of lessons. Although these are useful opportunities, they are not systematically set within an overall plan for developing English skills and knowledge. As a result, they tend to be occasional activities which are not evaluated and may not be repeated for the next year group. The school has taken account of the guidance on this national issue, and is looking to develop a curriculum approach which provides more effectively for the use of English across the curriculum.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' positive attitudes to the subject enhance their achievement.
- Assessment and its use to inform planning have yet to be developed fully.
- Overall pupils are insufficiently involved in their own learning.

## Commentary

70. Pupils attain above average standards by Year 2 and Year 6 and their achievement is good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve as well as can be expected.
71. The school's results in the 2004 national tests for seven year olds showed a significant improvement from the previous year and were well above average compared with all schools national and with schools in similar circumstances. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 for their age, was substantially higher than the national figures. This improvement reflected the focus on improving results for this age group through the use of additional teaching staff, as well as the efforts of staff and pupils. The 2004 test results for eleven year olds were also much better than the previous year and about the same as other schools nationally and similar schools both at the expected Level 4 for the age group and the higher Level 5. Girls achieved slightly better than boys. The school is rightly proud of the improvements and assessment evidence, reflected in inspection evidence, indicates that the Year 6 test results for the current year are likely to at least maintain this improvement with reasonable prospects for better results.
72. The quality of teaching and learning in school has improved since the last inspection and is good overall. It ranges from satisfactory to excellent. In Year 6, where the best practice was seen, tasks are challenging for pupils working at different levels of attainment. This results in pupils' increased motivation and interest. All pupils are engrossed in their work and involved in their own learning. The teaching is stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging, stemming from expert subject knowledge. Activities and demands are matched sensitively to pupils' needs and skills are taught in an inspiring and highly effective way. In less successful lessons, teaching tends to be too closely linked to the pace and content of the national numeracy strategy, without sufficient recognition of the different levels of attainment within the class. In these lessons, the introductions are often very well prepared but overlong, especially for younger junior pupils. Only occasionally do teaching assistants teach a group of pupils from an early in a lesson so the pupils can develop their own ideas at a brisker pace, or have their understanding consolidated through discussion with an adult.
73. Throughout the school, pupils extend their mathematical and reasoning skills because problem solving, set in practical situations, is seen to be central to pupils' growing mathematical understanding. Basic numeracy skills are good and pupils apply their knowledge effectively to solve real life problems. Lessons are generally well prepared across the school and resources effectively used to improve upon teaching and learning. Within a consistently healthy working environment where relationships are very good or better, the teachers provide pupils of all abilities with regular opportunities for independent learning. They have positive attitudes the subject and are keen to improve. Homework is a strong and regular feature of



teaching and learning for older pupils and they respond positively to the teacher's very high expectations, sometimes extending their work beyond the basic requirement. Pupils are not involved in determining their own targets and therefore they often have little for, or understanding of, their own learning. Many do not know what they must do to improve further.

74. Although ICT is in evidence in pupils' work, it tends to be used to illustrate rather than develop the subject. However, there is promising work with data handling in Year 1 and Year 5 including the use of spreadsheets. The school has well targeted plans to develop the planned use of ICT to further improve the quality of teaching and learning.
75. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has worked closely with the local authority to prioritise areas for development and implement changes which have subsequently impacted upon the quality of teaching and learning and improved standards. For example, problem solving is now seen to be an important and prominent feature of pupils' work across the school. A clear and detailed Action Plan is in place to continue to develop the subject and seeks to raise standard further. There has been a positive emphasis upon the effective use of mental skills in mathematics lessons. The subject is given a higher profile across the school by the quality of display.
76. The school does not make a collection of pupils' work at agreed National Curriculum levels of attainment, which limits the consistency of teachers' assessments. Systems have yet to be fully developed to enable teachers to make good use of assessment information in order to plan the next steps of learning and to set individual targets for further improvement consistently across the school.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

77. Currently teachers make satisfactory use of mathematics in other subjects. However, there is no school policy to guide the use of mathematics in the curricular planning for other subjects. As a result, work in other subjects shows that planned opportunities to use the practical skills they have learned in mathematics lessons are limited. The coordinator recognises that cross-curricular links need to be extended. Although not specifically identified in teachers' planning mathematics skills were seen to be put to good use in a selection of examples during the inspection. For example in Year 4 and Year 6, pupils use databases and spreadsheets in ICT lessons, and also in Year 6 pupils in science draw line graphs.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Results of national tests are above average, and overall standards are good with capacity for further improvement.
- Pupils enjoy their science lessons and this sustains their interest.
- Most lessons are based on practical experience which aid pupils' understanding.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is very basic and the data is rarely reflected in the planning of lessons.

- Although pupils' knowledge is often good, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific skills.

## Commentary

78. Standards of attainment by Year 2 and Year 6 are above average overall, and reflect the school's more systematic approach to teaching the subject since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory, with examples of good achievement in some year groups, notably Year 6. The 2004 national test results for Year 6 pupils showed an improvement from the previous year. They were better than schools nationally and well above schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well above average, and the improvement made by the 2004 Year 6 pupils since they were in Year 2 was very good. The results for Year 2 pupils in 2004, which were based on teachers' assessment, showed all pupils attained the Level 2 expected for their age, and over half attaining the higher Level 3. This was a considerable improvement since the last inspection, and the school anticipates similar results in 2005.
79. Currently, almost all pupils are working at least at the expected level for their age in most aspects of the science curriculum, with a significant minority throughout the school attaining above average standards. Boys and girls make similar progress. The pupils' knowledge of the science topics they have studied is good; most remember the results of the experiments they have undertaken in lessons and a few have developed their interest further through out-of-school reading and activities. There is no doubt about their enjoyment of the practical aspects of their science lessons, or their fascination about what they are learning.
80. Nonetheless, there is capacity for pupils to improve their achievement in science because, although pupils' knowledge is increasing in breadth as they study a range of science topics, their skills are developing at a slower rate and some pupils are not sufficiently challenged. The school does not have clear expectations for what level of skills pupils of different ages and capabilities should achieve, for example, in the rigour with which they observe, collect evidence, measure change, raise questions, check their predictions and present findings. This is mainly because the school's current curriculum for science often focuses on teachers taking the major decisions in planning experiments in class lessons, with too few opportunities for pupils' to use their own ideas and skills to plan independent investigations. Although the pupils learn much from the teachers' demonstration and explanations, this is not balanced adequately with opportunities to apply what they have learned to the investigation of unfamiliar situations in science. As a result, few pupils have the confidence to develop their work beyond the approach demonstrated in the lesson, or the skills to plan their own investigations.
81. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school, with examples of good and very good introductions to lessons, and of the use of simple resources to help the pupils understand the key points. Most teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and ensure that lessons cover the required topics and include ample practical work. Pupils enjoy this active involvement and their attention is well maintained when they are engaged in practical activities. Most pupils maintain this motivation throughout the lesson, but occasionally during written work or when they cannot make progress with their task or have completed it, they tend to lose focus and time is not well used. This is partly because most pupils undertake the same work in the lessons, with little adaptation for the most and least capable pupils.

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour and classroom routines well, taking due care with health and safety issues.

82. The leadership and management of science have very recently been taken over by an experienced teacher who is new to the school. The current provision for the subject is adequate, with the exception of resources which are limited in range and quantity especially for younger pupils, but it is not yet led effectively enough to make the best use of the pupils' obvious interest and capabilities. Lessons have been monitored and pupils' work scrutinised. Assessment procedures are basic and rarely contribute to the planning of learning, and the extent to which pupils are encouraged to work independently is not consistent through the year groups. Although pupils working in English as their additional language manage most tasks well, the older pupils need more help to ensure they understand, for example recording sheets with scientific vocabulary explained, as their grasp of technical language is not yet secure. The headteacher has correctly identified that, although the leadership and management of science have not been neglected, there is a need to revitalise the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 has accelerated as staff's skills and resources have improved.
- The subject is well led, with further improvements set within a useful strategic plan for the subject.
- The school does not have a clear view of the achievement expected of pupils of similar age but with different levels of competence.
- Pupils do not apply the knowledge and skills they gain in ICT class lessons to secure their learning.

### **Commentary**

83. Progress since the last inspection is good. Standards of attainment in ICT are satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2, standards are above the expectations for the age groups and achievement is good. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' standards are broadly as expected for their age, but most pupils achieve well. They gain from the recent improvements in resources, increased access to computers and the more systematic approach to teaching the subject. There is capacity to improve standards further for the older pupils. Individual pupils' skills and knowledge vary widely. This is partly due to the different experiences each brings to school, with a small minority of pupils having good computer facilities at home, an interest in personal research and knowledgeable family members. However, the most significant factors affecting pupils' standards and achievement are the recent enhancement of resources for ICT and the updating of the expertise of the staff team.
84. The school is at a stage where ICT is a priority for development and innovations are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning, although not yet consistently. The focus is on ensuring all pupils have a sound understanding of how

to use a computer for a range of tasks, especially pupils in Years 3 to 6 where standards should be higher. This is working well, with a lively and systematic approach to the subject, although it is mostly taught in class lessons at present which gives limited scope for the most competent pupils to develop their own work. Although there is still some way to go before the school has sufficient resources, especially suitable software for different age groups, the more frequent availability and use of computers and interactive white boards has accelerated pupils' achievement particularly in Years 3 to 6. Not all staff have an extensive knowledge of computer technology as yet, but their careful preparation enabled them to provide suitable introductions to lessons and guidance on the planned tasks. The availability of a technician in many lessons enhances both the pupils' learning and the confidence of the staff, especially when using wireless links to the internet.

85. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory with examples of good class lessons where all pupils are taught a particular skill or technique through carefully planned and sequenced steps, with clear explanations and high expectations. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were expected to create and interpret a computer generated pictogram, including logging on, accessing the appropriate graphics package, and using options icons to match the colour of their actual counters to the virtual counters that formed the pictogram. Most pupils succeeded, and saved their work for future use. The most competent pupils also had the time to print their work. This task was linked to the class's current work in mathematics,, giving the pupils an opportunity to use their ICT skills within a practical context which they are to develop further. Similarly challenging tasks were also introduced to Year 6 pupils to promote their understanding of how to use the internet effectively when researching a specific topic, with systematic guidance and helpful explanation from the staff involved.
86. Assessment systems have recently been introduced. The implementation is too recent to make a judgement on the effectiveness of these in promoting pupils' achievement. However, it is evident that staff and pupils are conscious of individual progress but not yet to the point where this significantly influences the planning of teaching and learning. As a result, there are considerable differences between the knowledge and skills of pupils in the same year group which are not reflected in the planning of their future work. Most staff are aware of this and use organisational strategies, such as using support staff or pairing more and less competent pupils for activities, to respond to individual pupils' needs. This approach is not yet ensuring suitable levels of challenge are set for all pupils.
87. Pupils respond very well in ICT lessons, are keen to learn and behave well. Many have reached the stage where their learning in class lessons could usefully be complemented by more frequent use of individual or groups projects that provide opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills. Although there is already some use of equipment other than computers, such as digital cameras and photocopiers, this is limited. As resources improve this could usefully be extended in order to share information, such as newsletters, within the school, and further afield.
88. The subject is effectively led and managed by the headteacher, building on the initiatives of the previous subject manager. Much has been accomplished in a short time, including improving hardware and staff skills. A strategic plan for managing the subject is in place and sets a sensible agenda for improvement. However, the plan is not sufficiently specific about the improvements intended in pupils' achievement and standards to support effective evaluation of the planned actions. Governors are keen to see improvements in ICT and have charged the headteacher with this task.

A good start has been made, although costs have not yet been identified and the availability of funding is likely to be a significant factor in the pace of future development.

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

89. Pupils' books and teachers' planning indicate that ICT is used regularly in several subjects, including English, mathematics, science and art. This has provided some basic but useful opportunities for pupils to use their word processing, drawing, research and graphical skills. However, the school's overall subject planning is not yet sufficiently co-ordinated to ensure that there is systematic use of ICT across the curriculum for all pupils, in a way that enables them to use and develop their skills and knowledge at the appropriate level. The school's self-evaluation shows an awareness that this area is in need of further development and it is clearly identified in the strategic plan.

### **HUMANITIES**

90. As this is a Catholic school, **religious education** was not inspected. It was not possible to judge the overall provision in **history** as no lessons were observed. Based upon discussions with pupils and analysing work in pupils' books and on display around the school, it is evident that standards have improved since the last inspection. They are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Year 6 pupils recognise the importance of an enquiry approach to their learning in history and by Year 6 have good subject knowledge. Visits enhance the history curriculum and impact upon pupils' interest in, and understanding of their learning in the subject. There are already some good links with other subjects, for example the history curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for independent writing across the school. For example Year 3 pupils write their own experiences as an evacuee, as part of their 'Children in World War II' study. History also actively promotes the skills of reading, speaking and listening. Pupils use and develop their ICT skills as they research in school and at home, such as when finding out about famous Victorian people. They say they like role-play, when for example they act out Tudor, Viking or World War II characters. Year 6 pupils say they enjoy the subject, and overall pupils' across the school present their work well. Although there are examples of good marking, it is variable, as it does not always help the pupil know how to move to the next stage of learning or challenge their thinking. The subject has a reasonably high profile across the school, where the quality of displays seen is good. As yet the recently appointed coordinator, although enthusiastic, has not had regular opportunities to use her knowledge and understanding of the subject to monitor and influence its development fully.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use of resources and interesting activities in lessons effectively support learning.
- Pupils have an enthusiasm for the subject, especially practical aspects.
- Assessment and its use to inform planning and teaching are underdeveloped.
- Planned links with other subjects have not been developed fully.

- Opportunities to produce high quality work are inhibited overall by limited field work.

## Commentary

91. Overall, standards and achievement are good. Standards are in line with expectations for the age group in Year 2 and pupils make steady progress. By Year 6, the standards achieved by many pupils are higher than expected for their age and achievement is good. The overall improvements in the quality of teaching and range of learning opportunities have contributed to the good improvement since the last inspection in standards of work seen in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and fully included in the activities in geography. As a result they achieve well.
92. Teaching and learning overall are good. Lessons are well prepared with interesting resources, especially pictures, maps and artefacts, which capture pupils' attention and help them to understand when discussing aspects which are outside their personal experience. The basic knowledge and skills of the subject are taught systematically, often within practical situations which help the pupils to understand. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils were considering the current purpose and use of the land around the school and how it might be improved, they developed their previous knowledge of symbols in order to identify parts of the plan for the grounds, leading to the use of a key to the plan.
93. Across the school pupils continue to develop an increased knowledge and understanding of geography. For example in Year 5 and 6 pupils use the Internet to develop their research skills. Overall, across the school pupils present their work well. They enjoy geography and Year 6 pupils say "it is definitely popular and a favourite subject" for many. The increase amount of practical work within the subject is appreciated by the pupils, however, field work remains at a basic level. As a result, the limited opportunities for pupils to develop fully the skills of field work, to become familiar with a wide geographical vocabulary, and to have a residential experiences which enables them to study a locality in depth, tend to inhibit their chances of producing geographical work of a high quality. There is room for higher achievement.
94. There is no established formal assessment system in place to enable teachers to monitor pupils' achievement and progress and subsequently link the information to their planning of teaching and learning in lessons. The quality of the marking of pupils' work varies, with some good features which encourage pupils to consider the strengths and weaknesses of their work, but in some classes it does not consistently inform pupils what they have learnt nor extends their thinking so as to move them on to the next stage of learning.
95. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject is led by a knowledgeable, yet recently appointed temporary teacher. As yet she has not had the opportunities to use her skills to influence the development of the subject fully. Within her evolving role as coordinator she has undertaken monitoring of pupils' work and teachers' planning. There are examples of a number of links with other subjects, but as yet these are not consistently identified in teachers' planning. The school depends heavily upon National Guidance and as a result limits flexibility in planning and opportunities to meaningfully link geography skills with other curriculum areas, or to enable the pupils from countries other than Great Britain to share their experiences of geographical issues.

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

96. No lessons were observed in design and technology, although discussions and a review of pupils' books and school documentation indicate that the subject is taught regularly. The work produced varies in quality but most is about the level expected for the age group at Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Although there is a tendency through school to neglect the provision of opportunities for pupils to evaluate and modify their work, where this is undertaken it is of good quality. For example, Year 1 plan and make model houses with clear reasons for using different materials for specific parts of the model. As with art and design, pupils apply their skills and knowledge to illustrate other subjects, particularly history. These opportunities are useful, but the planning of this work is not yet linked to an arrangement for promoting pupils' achievement in design and technology through the school. As a result, standards are not high enough by Year 6. The subject leader has had the responsibility for a little over two terms and is working towards gaining a view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. No immediate innovation to develop design and technology is planned, but a whole school review of the arrangements for planning pupils' progress in all the subjects of the curriculum is to be undertaken.
97. Only one lesson was seen in music so it is not possible to make an overall judgment on provision. The subject is taught by class teachers with some support for instrumental work from the local authority music support services. Pupils who receive instrumental tuition form a school orchestra. Pupils' singing in assembly is tuneful and there is a good focus on performance in the school. In the very good lesson seen, pupils achieved very well because the teacher had a good knowledge of the subject and presented the lesson at a lively pace with much enjoyment and humour. The school has a choir and a singing club which are well attended by pupils.

### **Art and design**

Provision in Art and Design is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is little work of above average quality through the school.
- Specific skills and techniques are often taught well in lessons, but there is too little opportunity for pupils to use these to develop their own ideas.
- The assessment and planning arrangements are not effective enough to ensure pupils make consistently brisk progress in their work.

### **Commentary**

98. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are close to expectations for the age groups and achievement is satisfactory overall. However, there is little evidence of high quality work through the school. The subject is taught regularly and pupils are introduced to a range of techniques and activities based broadly on national guidelines. Attitudes to the subject are positive and pupils respond with enthusiasm in lessons. However, they too rarely have the opportunity to develop their own ideas over time, to work with large items or to make choices about the materials they use. As a consequence, the work in lessons does not lead on to the quantity of high quality

individual work that could be expected given the pupils good experience of techniques and their sound knowledge of the work of other artists.

99. Nonetheless, pupils have occasionally worked successfully on large and small scale projects. For example, the recent work of Year 6, with the support of a visiting artist, which resulted in a striking mural in the hall that involved designing, reviewing and painting large areas and small details. They also use their skills to illustrate their work in other subjects, although these opportunities are often narrow in scope with most pupils producing very similar work. A small minority of pupils have taken part in art and design activities outside school, such as exhibiting work in a local art gallery. There is considerable capacity to build on pupils' enthusiasm and improve both achievement and standards.
100. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teaching in lessons although variable across the school had many good features. For example, the consideration of Mondrian's style of painting to complement a Year 2 ICT lesson about how to select and use straight lines, geometric shapes and flood fill tools. The lesson also effectively enabled pupils to reinforce some basic skills and knowledge, such as the use of colour and texture to create various effects. Year 5 also used good techniques for planning and making Christmas wall hangings using soft fabrics and imaginative appliqué techniques in an activity that was developed over several lessons. However, individual lessons are not yet well set within effective systems for assessing pupils' progress, planning the next stages of their learning and allocating time for them to develop their own ideas, which inhibits the pupils' achievement.
101. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory but development is not currently a high priority for the school. The subject manager has held the role for just over two terms and has undertaken basic monitoring. However, the school does not yet have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject or the pupils' achievement and standards through school. Appropriately, improving the quality of monitoring has been identified as a need in the subject manager's report. The accommodation in most areas of the school is adequate for the subject, although there are limitations of space in Years 1 and 2. The school's plans to improve the accommodation by next term, are set to provide more suitable space for art and design in these year groups.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, particularly for years 3 to 6, enhances the curriculum.
- There is no provision for outdoor adventure activities.

### **Commentary**

102. Standards are broadly in line with expectations at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. There is a good range and variety of sports clubs and activities for pupils to encourage positive attitudes towards physical education and games. In addition to traditional sport older pupils take part for example, in tennis, volleyball and rugby.



Year 6 pupils say most of their class participates in sports clubs. They add “even the girls like football”. There is no opportunity for pupils to experience a residential visit or outdoor adventure activities, but there are several ‘sports linked’ visits such as to the home of Manchester United at Old Trafford. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils swim throughout the school year in physical education lessons to enable approximately 90 per cent of pupils to swim 25 metres unaided, by the end of Year 6. Pupils represent the school in a number of competitive sports.

103. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Resources were very well used, and there were high expectations for behaviour. Teaching assistants provided good support for individuals and groups, encouraging pupils to improve their performance. There was good participation by both boys and girls, and active guidance for pupils who were hesitant. Two of the three lessons observed were taught by specialist coaches from the Tameside Sports Development Team. It was evident how much pupils enjoyed the active and sometimes competitive nature of the subject. Pupils were keen to participate and clearly had fun. All pupils are fully included and the provision for pupils with special educational needs was well adapted to their needs. Year 6 pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude towards physical education when they describe how very popular the subject is amongst pupils in the school.
104. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject is well led and managed by a very enthusiastic coordinator who recognises the need to further extend extra-curricular sporting activities to Years 1 and 2 pupils. Physical education has a higher profile than at the last inspection because there have been significant developments initiated by the subject coordinator. Improvements have been made to create spacious outdoor facilities, which now boast one recently resurfaced large area of hard surface and an extensive grassed area. The quality of learning resources has significantly improved and is now very good. The provision for outdoor adventurous activities remains inadequate.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

105. The personal and social education needs of pupils are met well by the strong Catholic ethos, which is evident in all that the school does. However, the school’s intention to teach other aspects including relationships, sex and drugs awareness through Circle Time discussions is at an early stage. These opportunities are, as yet, not fully effective. They are not sufficiently planned into the curriculum in every year group, there are training needs amongst staff, teacher confidence needs building and resources need developing further. A start has been made, which has led to the establishment of a personal, social and health education policy. Governors have adopted a sex education policy and a draft drugs awareness policy has been produced.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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