

INSPECTION REPORT

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Maldon, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115198

Headteacher: Mrs S Breen

Lead inspector: Martin Cole

Dates of inspection: 23rd to 26th May 2005

Inspection number: 267775

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 219

School address: London Road
Maldon
Essex
Postcode: CM9 6HN

Telephone number: 01621 856698
Fax number: 01621 859225

Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs C Cecil

Date of previous inspection: 8th February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This voluntary aided Catholic primary school is of broadly average size by national standards. It educates 219 boys and girls aged four to eleven drawn from a wider geographical area than usual for a primary school.

The social and economic circumstances of parents are above average overall. Almost all pupils are White British.

Pupils start at the school with overall attainment which is above average. About one pupil in twelve is identified as having special educational needs in learning or behaviour; the proportion is below the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs.

The school received national awards for 'Healthy Schools' in 2001 and for 'Investor in People' in 2001 and was reviewed successfully in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3369	Martin Cole	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music
11072	Shirley Elomari	Lay inspector	
10228	Susan Russam	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage Special educational needs
17543	Bob Coupe	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Inspections Limited
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well within a very good ethos of attitudes, relationships and behaviour. The headteacher gives good leadership and the school is good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- pupils' high levels of interest, enthusiasm and confidence;
- very good promotion of pupils' understanding of right and wrong and respect for others;
- the headteacher's clear vision of the school's aims and values and her high expectations;
- good teaching that both challenges and supports pupils so that they achieve well in lessons;
- the very good range of events and of activities outside lessons that enrich pupils' opportunities for learning;
- very good provision for pupils' care and welfare which are supported by good links with parents and community;
- checks on teaching, learning and pupils' performance that are not a precise enough basis for planning further improvement;
- standards in information and communication technology (ICT) which are not as good as in English, mathematics or science, although they meet national expectations.

There has been satisfactory improvement in the school since its previous inspection in 1999. Strengths, including standards achieved, have been maintained and weaknesses identified at that time have been put right.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' **achievement is good**. The standards they reach compare favourably with their levels of capability and with their attainment when they started school. This is true regardless of pupils' gender, background, ethnicity and special educational needs. Overall, pupils begin with above average attainment. Good achievement during the reception class means that present class members are on track to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. There is further good achievement and progress up to age seven when standards of reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national average. Both present Year 2 standards of work and previous national test results show this. Pupils make further satisfactory progress through to age eleven when they leave school with well above average attainment in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science. Again, this is evident in both present pupils' standards and previous test results.

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

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

Although the Year 6 test results in 2004 were well above the national average, when compared with those of similar schools they were average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Detailed analysis shows that this reflects the fact that a small number of pupils made less progress than expected since they were tested four years earlier in Year 2. The school acknowledges that the past teaching of this year group was hampered by several changes of teacher during the later stages of their primary schooling. When present Year 6 pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are compared with their earlier Year 2 test results, they are seen to have made satisfactory progress. In ICT standards match national expectations for pupils' ages. Pupils are now achieving satisfactorily in this subject but present standards reflect past problems with both equipment and staff resources for the subject. These are now largely resolved and substantial plans for further development in subject provision are shortly to be implemented. (At this inspection, standards were judged only in English, mathematics, science and ICT.)

Very good standards of attitudes and behaviour and very good relationships reflect the **very good** overall quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The standard of attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching of **good** quality ensures all pupils are included in activities that challenge them and that they receive the necessary support to make good progress. Stimulating activities inspire pupils' interest and the promotion of enthusiasm, self-confidence and good behaviour are especially strong with younger pupils up to age seven. Within an overall satisfactory curriculum there is some variation between classes and topics in the quality of work undertaken in the humanities and in the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects. This reflects insufficient checks by subject leaders on the provision. The use of ICT to support the teaching and learning across the curriculum is satisfactory and the school has good plans to extend this. Educational visits, visitors, special events, community links and optional activities after school enrich the curriculum very well. Very thorough provisions for pupils' care include very good procedures for involving pupils by seeking and acting upon their views.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall. The main strength is the good leadership provided by the headteacher, who has a clear vision and ensures that firmly held school aims and values are shared and put into practice. She is committed to school improvement and has a good strategic approach to making it happen. Some recent changes in management roles mean that, except in English and mathematics, checks on the provision and achievement in subjects are not sufficiently wide-ranging or rigorous. Governors, many of whom are quite new to the role, give sound support to school leadership and ensure statutory requirements are met. They are developing their ability to hold the school to account and to support the drive for improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents are pleased with almost all aspects of the school. No substantial concerns are expressed by a significant number. However, inspectors agree with some parents that the school should report more informatively to them on pupils'

progress. Pupils say emphatically that they like the school, as their enthusiastic and happy engagement in school activities shows.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are to press ahead with its plans to

- develop the role of subject leaders in checks on teaching and learning, including analysis of assessment data, in order to improve provision;
- raise standards in ICT to the level of other main subjects and extend the use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum;

and to

- report to parents in more detail on pupils' progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The oldest pupils' overall standards are above national expectations. They achieve well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainments.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high standards of English, mathematics and science reported at the previous inspection are being maintained.
- Seven-year-olds' results in the 2004 national tests were well above the average for similar schools in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.
- Pupils' determined response to challenging teaching means they achieve well and make good progress as they pass through the school.
- Progress is good regardless of pupils' background, gender or level of capability.
- Pupils with special educational needs progress well toward their individual targets.

Commentary

1. Children starting school in the reception year have an overall profile of capabilities which is above average. They respond with a very lively interest and full engagement in the well-designed activities planned for them. As a result they achieve well. Their good progress means that they comfortably exceed the early learning goals children are expected nationally to reach by the end of reception.
2. In Years 1 and 2, further challenging teaching and pupils' very keen response mean that pupils continue to achieve well. In the 2004 national tests, previous Year 2 pupils' results were well above the national average and the average for similar schools in both reading and writing. In mathematics they were well above the national average and above the similar school average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.2 (17.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.6 (16.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.7 (17.9)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year
The average point scores for over 90 per cent of schools are in the range 11-19 points*

3. Present Year 2 pupils' work paints a similar picture of well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and also in science. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils also achieve well, but less time is devoted to these subjects and consequently standards of work are in line with national expectations.¹

¹ As this is a denominational church school religious education was inspected by a separate inspection team and is reported elsewhere. In other subjects the inspection sampled work but no overall judgements of standards are made.

4. In Years 3 to 6 pupils consolidate the progress they have previously made with further satisfactory achievement. The oldest pupils taking the 2004 national tests in Year 6 achieved results in English, mathematics and science which were well above the national average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.5 (28.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.1 (27.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.1 (29.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

The average point scores for over 90 per cent of schools are in the range 23 – 31 points.

5. Although well above the national average, results compare less favourably with those of other schools where the pupils had achieved similar Year 2 test results in the 2000 tests. Against this yardstick, results were average in English but well below average in mathematics and science. Although virtually all pupils reached the levels of attainment expected nationally for Year 6, the proportion exceeding this level was lower than in similar schools. Detailed analysis shows that in practice a small number of pupils had made less progress than expected in relation to their earliest test performance as Year 2 pupils in 2001. The school recognises that the teaching of pupils in Years 3 to 6 has been hampered by many staff changes, including some temporary arrangements, in recent years. These matters are now largely resolved and almost all present Year 6 pupils are attaining the standards to be expected from their earlier performance, while several are doing better than expected. Overall, present Year 6 pupils' work continues to be well above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. In ICT pupils achieve satisfactorily and their work is in line with the national standard. Pupils' progress in ICT has been hindered in recent years by staffing issues, outdated equipment and teething troubles with replacement computers.
6. Pupils progress well regardless of their levels of capability, their gender or their social or ethnic background. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress in lessons to their classmates. In relation to their prior attainment they achieve well. Where a pupil has a statement of special educational need good and sometimes very good progress is made in relation to individual education plan targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. The level of attendance is **good** and punctuality is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show high levels of interest, enjoyment and application in their learning.
- Pupils behave very sensibly and make very good relationships with one another and with the adults in school.
- Staff give pupils strong guidance on understanding right and wrong, respecting others and behaving accordingly.
- Attendance levels are above average and pupils are rarely late.

Commentary

7. The previous inspection report noted the very high standards of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. The school has maintained these qualities very successfully.
8. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. The wide range of interesting activities ensures that children in the reception class develop positive attitudes to learning as soon as they start school. Throughout the school pupils concentrate very well, listen attentively to others and consistently work hard. Pupils appreciate the very good opportunities they have to go on trips, including residential experiences, and enjoy the extra dimension these activities bring to their learning. They also enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' positive attitudes contribute significantly to the standards they achieve. Those with special educational needs share the positive attitudes because they are well supported by teachers and included by their fellow pupils in all activities.
9. The school sets very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and the system of rewards and sanctions helps to motivate pupils to behave very well. Pupils show a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They understand what is expected of them because they were involved in writing the school, classroom and playground rules. Most take a pride in keeping them. Behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school, with pupils working and playing very well together and helping one another most readily. The school is a very orderly community where pupils of all ages are very polite to one another, staff and visitors. The quality of relationships between pupils and their peers is very good and characterised by increasing respect and thoughtfulness as pupils move through the school. Pupils form very good, respectful relationships with teachers and other staff. Year 6 pupils take care of the younger ones in a number of ways and this establishes trust between the different age groups. There have been no exclusions in the last year and there is no significant incidence of bullying or harassment. Parents and pupils have confidence that any such occurrences would be dealt with effectively.
10. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Staff share a very sure sense of the aims and values they wish to encourage and through their daily actions present pupils with clear role models. All the children in the reception class exceed the expected goals for personal, social and emotional development. Throughout the school pupils listen thoughtfully to others' ideas and are tolerant of different opinions. Teachers often encourage pupils to reflect quietly and to relate what they are learning to their own personal experiences. They respect the views and feelings of others in a very mature way. They care for one another, enjoy helping others and like to contribute to the smooth running of the school community. Every pupil is encouraged to take responsibility for his or her own actions. Pupils take responsibility very well. Good opportunities are given for pupils to develop a very good appreciation of their own cultural traditions and those of others. They learn about the musical and artistic traditions of a range of cultures and about others' faiths.

Attendance

11. Attendance is consistently above the level typically found in primary schools nationally and the level of unauthorised absence is low. Pupils enjoy lessons and other activities and so are keen to attend. The school's procedures to monitor attendance are very

good and the educational welfare officer is involved appropriately on the rare occasions when concerns arise. Parents support the school very well by reporting absences promptly. Pupils almost always arrive promptly in the morning and lessons begin on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.8	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. A **satisfactory** curriculum receives **very good** enrichment from activities outside lessons. The care, guidance and support of pupils are **very good** and the school's partnership with parents is **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment of pupils' work is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and work are very high.
- Teachers are very effective in encouraging interest, effort and co-operation in pupils.
- Pupils' keen and industrious application to their work is helping them to achieve well in the great majority of lessons.
- Target-setting and feedback to pupils help them have a good understanding of how to improve their work.
- Teaching ensures all pupils are fully included in learning opportunities that both challenge and support them fully.
- Opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning are not fully exploited

Commentary

12. Two lessons in five are of very good, and two of good, quality. Occasional lessons are excellent; none is unsatisfactory. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection in that the proportions of lessons that are good or very good are higher than before. Positive qualities in the teaching are consistently evident in the reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. In Years 3 to 6 the picture is a little less consistent, reflecting the recent history of staff changes and some temporary arrangements in place during the inspection.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	9	11	5	0	0	0

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

13. The school's ethos of very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships is very conducive to learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and are very successful in generating interest and enthusiasm in pupils. They are sensitive to pupils' needs for self-esteem, give much encouragement and show imagination in the stimulating tasks they set for them. Because pupils come to lessons with very positive attitudes, teachers need to do little to manage classroom procedures or pupils' behaviour and lessons proceed smoothly, at a good pace, in a calm, orderly and business-like atmosphere. A strong feature of the learning is the keen and confident way very many pupils contribute to class discussions. They are willing to tackle teachers' challenging, open-ended questions, secure in the knowledge that their teachers, and their peers, will respect their efforts. Set to work independently as

individuals or in groups, pupils show a commendable level of attention to, and concentration on, their tasks.

14. Learning is much helped by the teachers' success in encouraging pupils in both self-confidence and a responsible attitude to their learning. These qualities are well promoted through the way teachers set targets for pupils and then give them feedback on their success in meeting them. Targets are both long-term and short-term and may apply generally to groups of pupils or specifically to individuals. Pupils generally have a good understanding of what they have to do to improve their work.
15. Planning of lessons is thorough. It provides tasks based on clear objectives and well matched to pupils' capabilities, prior learning and needs. Teachers use a good range of methods to involve pupils actively in their learning. However, the use of ICT to support teaching and learning, though satisfactory, does not fully exploit the available equipment or pupils' skills with computers.
16. Teachers show a very clear commitment to including all pupils in equal opportunities to learn and prosper. They support pupils with special educational needs well and ensure these pupils have the same opportunities as their classmates to contribute in class. However, teachers do not use these pupils' individual education plans consistently well when planning lessons. In practice, this means that some opportunities to work on the targeted areas are missed. Teachers are helped in supporting pupils with special educational needs when classroom assistants are deployed to work alongside them. These staff work very closely with teachers, are effective in the guidance they give and relate well to pupils. Teachers also take good account of the needs of pupils with high attainment for tasks that challenge them; some valuable special arrangements are made to provide extra challenges for pupils who shine in particular aspects of their work.
17. Most parents think teachers set the right amount and quality of homework, although some report past inconsistency in parts of the school affected by staff changes. Inspection evidence points to good and substantial practice in providing homework which includes a suitable range of tasks with an appropriate emphasis on basic skills.
18. Pupils' long-term progress is assessed systematically across the curriculum. Substantial procedures are applied to progress in basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and to a lesser extent in science. Regular testing is used to track each pupil's progress and to set targets for pupils' future attainment against which both pupils' further progress and the effectiveness of teaching and learning are checked. In most other subjects assessment is satisfactory and much improved since the previous inspection. Class teachers use this assessment information soundly as a basis of their day-to-day planning but subject leaders do not systematically collate information from across the school to inform their understanding of strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning or curriculum. Systematic whole-school assessment is not in place in music.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum with **very good** opportunities for enrichment. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum at the Foundation Stage is of consistently good quality.
- Pupils' learning throughout the school is often made more interesting by educational visits, visitors or special events.
- Many pupils join in a good range of good quality optional activities outside lessons.
- The good arrangements for the pupils' personal, social and health education contribute well to the pupils' personal development.
- There is some inconsistency in quality within the curriculum in humanities and creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects.
- Some opportunities are missed to use ICT to support the curriculum in other subjects.

Commentary

19. The school provides a curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Policies and schemes of work based on national guidance give clear guidance to teachers. Effective use has been made of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to guide teaching of these basic skills. The national Foundation Stage curriculum established in recent years has been adopted well in all areas of learning so that reception pupils experience a comprehensive, challenging and enjoyable programme of work. A good programme of personal, social and health education is an effective part of the whole-school curriculum and sex education and drugs awareness are taught, with parents consulted as to the nature of the provision. Some productive links are made between subjects, as when pupils have opportunities to practise literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, but the use made of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum, though satisfactory, is rightly identified by the school as an area for further development.
20. The planning of the humanities and of creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects is improved since the previous inspection when it was identified as a weakness. However, in practice there is some inconsistency, between classes and between topics, in the depth and quality of work in these subjects. This reflects an insufficiency of checks on the work in these subjects by those responsible for leading them. The school has identified a review of the curriculum and development of quality in breadth as a school improvement priority. Already arrangements have been made to work closely with a local high school with specialist status in the performing arts to develop staff expertise and the programmes of activity in the creative and aesthetic aspects of the curriculum.
21. Some of the better work in the humanities is undertaken when it is linked to special events or educational visits, as when work in history and geography makes good use of practical study of the local environment. There are a good many other examples, too, of the curriculum being enriched well by visits, visitors or community links. Further enrichment takes the form of a good range of optional activities, especially in sport and music, outside the normal timetable of lessons. These activities are well attended and many benefit from the expert support from members of external clubs or agencies. Some opportunities are open even to the very youngest pupils. Pupils have a good number of opportunities to rehearse and perform in musical and dramatic events for parents.
22. The school is conscientious in seeing that all pupils are provided with a curriculum suited to their age, gender, capabilities and needs. The quality of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They benefit from being taught in

class alongside their classmates and teachers work hard to ensure they have full access to all aspects of the National Curriculum.

23. Overall, the school has satisfactory accommodation and resources to support the teaching of the curriculum. The site upon which the school is located has several restrictions which result in there being little room to extend the current accommodation. Many of the classrooms are small and throughout there is insufficient storage space. In spite of this, teachers minimise this potential barrier to learning by making effective use of the good-sized hall, specialist music room and ICT suite. The compact grounds are very well developed and provide separate play areas for infant and junior classes. There are very well designed quiet areas within the well-stocked gardens where pupils can sit and enjoy their peaceful surroundings. There is also a good-sized school field but it is separate from the main site and can be used only when pupils are escorted there by staff.

Care, guidance and support

The school's care of pupils' welfare is **very good**. Guidance and support for pupils are **good**. The involvement of pupils by seeking and acting on their views is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good procedures in place to ensure the health, safety, care and well-being of all its pupils.
- Pupils develop very trusting relationships with teachers and other staff.
- Pupils are involved very well in decision making that improves school life and facilities.
- Very good induction arrangements are in place when children join the school.
- Pupils receive good advice, guidance and support to enable them to learn well.

Commentary

24. The school places a very high priority on pupils' health, safety and well-being and has very good arrangements in place to safeguard pupils. The very high standards of care, welfare and guidance noted in the previous inspection report have been maintained. Regular health and safety checks are carried out and pupils are well supervised at play and lunch times. In order to improve safety, the headteacher, working with the local authority, has succeeded in getting double yellow lines and zigzag markings on the road outside. However, a number of parents continue to park in the restricted areas and this creates a significant hazard at busy times. Procedures for first aid are very good and clearly recorded. The procedures for child protection fully meet requirements. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award and is working towards a more advanced stage of this accreditation. The school meets the individual needs of all its pupils very well so that they are able to benefit from every aspect of school life. The school expects pupils to care for one another and be aware of others' needs, and the pupils' good response to this makes a significant contribution to the very high standards of care throughout the school.
25. The relationships pupils develop with teachers and other adults are very good and are characterised by high levels of mutual respect. Pupils trust teachers and other staff so they share any problems they have, knowing that they will be given appropriate help. Parents and pupils feel confident that minor bullying is dealt with promptly and effectively when it does occur, although it happens rarely. Whatever their age, pupils feel safe and happy in school.
26. The school takes the views of pupils very seriously. Pupils are involved in reviewing aspects of school life, such as playground life or marking and assessment, through 'pupil perception sessions' when senior staff meet with samples of pupils, with governors present to take notes. This process feeds into school development planning. The school council is run on very democratic lines so that all pupils participate in decisions and are involved in improving school life for everyone. The council is currently showing every class what playground equipment is available within their £300 budget so that pupils can vote for their favourites.
27. Children are very well supported as they join the reception class. The school has very good induction procedures in place to ensure that children settle quickly and happily into school routines. Pupils joining the school at other times are very well supported so

that they make friends and settle well. Parents speak highly of the induction arrangements, which prepare their children very well for school life.

28. Pupils of all ages are well supported in their learning and personal development. Pupils are well known to all staff. Teachers and other staff use this knowledge sensitively when helping pupils to deal with personal issues. This thorough care and guidance helps pupils to deal with changes and difficulties in their lives and enables them to concentrate on learning. Pupils are confident that their teacher or any other adult in the classroom will provide explanations and help when needed. Marking of pupils' work and the individual targets set in Years 3 to 6 give pupils good help to know and understand how to improve in their work. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in the classroom by learning support assistants.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and **good** links with both the community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many parents respond to encouragement to help in school and with their child's work at home and they are very well supported in doing so.
- The school informs parents well about its life but the quality of pupils' reports is too variable, especially in subjects other than mathematics and English.
- Good links with the community provide pupils with a range of experiences that enrich the curriculum and contribute well to their personal development.
- The school works well in partnership with other local schools and colleges to support children as they move to the next stage of their education.

Commentary

29. The school ensures that parents are well informed about its expectations and routines. The prospectus and governors' report for parents both provide the full range of required information and weekly newsletters supplement this very well. In response to parents' requests, an overview of the curriculum is sent home at the start of each year. However, some parents would prefer this to be more frequent and more detailed. The quality of pupils' annual reports is variable. Parents of children in the reception class and Year 6 receive good information that indicates their child's strengths and weaknesses clearly, showing where progress has been made. In other years, the reporting of English and mathematics is good. Targets are set for these subjects but the standard is variable and some are too imprecise to enable parents to help their child improve. In subjects other than English and mathematics the information is limited and rarely indicates what progress has been made; this is unsatisfactory overall, although there are satisfactory examples. Parents have two formal opportunities a year to consult with their child's teacher but teachers are happy to see parents at other times, on request.
30. The school encourages parents to help, in the classroom, on trips, at special events and at home. Training is given so that parent helpers make a very positive contribution. A large number of parents help regularly in school and many others provide support on trips and other special events. The school carries out an audit of parental skills and expertise annually so that these can be used effectively to support

the curriculum. Parents appreciate that homework is set according to a timetable so that they can plan to support their child at home. The school has an open door policy that enables parents to raise any suggestions or concerns as soon as they arise. Questionnaires are used to gain the views of parents but the response has been very disappointing, with only a handful being returned. The school benefits from an active parents association.

31. The school has a wide range of effective links with the local community, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. A particular feature is the use the school makes of the local area when pupils are studying history and geography. Pupils develop a good knowledge of their home town and take a pride in its long history. Local people support the very good range of extra-curricular activities, for example by coaching sport. Visitors enhance lessons across a range of subjects. Pupils take part in local cultural events and raise funds for local charities. The choir and orchestra perform at events in the town.
32. Links with other schools remain good. There is a strong group of local primary schools, which puts on some joint training for staff and enables good practice to be shared between schools. This close working relationship has been recognised and money made available to develop the partnership further. The school works closely with the high schools to manage pupils' transfer to secondary education and ensure that the process is as smooth as possible for pupils. Planning is very well advanced for a performing arts link with one high school to be implemented from September.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The leadership provided by other key staff and the management of the day-to-day work of the school are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads the school with clear vision and a determined approach to school improvement.
- The school's commitment to inclusion is very good.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, checks on teaching, learning and the curriculum are insufficient.
- There are good procedures for the induction and continued training of staff.

Commentary

33. The quality of the leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a strong, clear vision for the school's future and is purposeful in her strategic planning to ensure high standards. With the full encouragement of governors, the headteacher leads the school staff in a strong, shared sense of the school's aims and values. These are very effectively implemented in the daily life of the school as its very good ethos of attitudes, behaviour and relationships shows. The governors and the staff are united and very successful in their commitment to the inclusion and equality of opportunity for all its pupils.

34. Over the last two years the school has been considerably disrupted by staff changes, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The school now expects a period of stability. A new approach to senior management is established, whereby two competent assistant headteachers have taken on the responsibilities of a former deputy headteacher. The school has established good induction procedures, not only for these new post-holders, but also for all staff new to the school. The assistant headteachers, now coming towards the end of their first year, are growing in effectiveness and have begun to make a valuable contribution to the management of the school. They are good role models and successfully lead provision for the two main subjects of English and mathematics.
35. Although there is satisfactory leadership of science, ICT and physical education, the overall leadership and management of subjects other than English and mathematics show weaknesses. There is a lack of rigour in the way the curriculum and the quality of pupils' work is checked. The school is aware of these shortcomings and the assistant heads are delegated to address them by providing systems, training and support for other subject leaders. Leadership and management of special educational needs provision are satisfactory. The school is particularly effective in ensuring that needs outlined in statements of special educational needs are met in full. Currently, the special educational needs co-ordinator does not monitor the use teachers make of individual education plans to inform their planning; this is a weakness.
36. The overall governance of the school is satisfactory. Like the teaching staff, the governing body has experienced recent changes to almost half of its composition. Nevertheless, it is an informed, energetic and vibrant body of people willing and dedicated to their task. New members seek and attend training to provide them with additional knowledge of practice and procedures enabling them to become further involved in substantive action. Governors have shown that they are willing and able to take strong action. They have made important staffing decisions and ensure that all statutory requirements are in place. Governors are appointed to all curriculum areas. However, they have not yet taken enough action to work with senior staff and subject leaders to review and develop the curriculum, particularly in the humanities and in the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects.
37. Financial planning is well judged and firmly linked to school improvement priorities. The principles of best value are firmly embedded. Good financial arrangements are in place enabling the efficient management of the budget. The school is quick to implement all the financial recommendations it receives from LEA officers. Taking its performance and its level of funds into account, the school offers good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	593,666
Total expenditure	594,432
Expenditure per pupil	2,714

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	22,896
Balance carried forward to the next year	22,130

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

38. Since the time of the previous inspection improvements have been made to the quality of the curriculum, which is now good, and also to the standard of teaching. This is now consistently good throughout the day. Much hard work has gone into ensuring that the curriculum is planned in line with the nationally specified six areas of learning and that play and practical work are at the core of children's learning experiences. Good account is taken of the need to provide children with challenging learning opportunities and most are ready to begin a more formal curriculum, especially in literacy and numeracy. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
39. Children begin at the school with above average attainment, having benefited from a good variety of pre-school experiences. With good teaching they achieve well in the reception class. As a consequence, children achieve the early learning goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception, many of them doing so earlier in the year. Parents express positive views about provision and the children's progress.
40. Teaching and learning are good across all areas of the curriculum where sufficient evidence justified a judgement. During the inspection a significant amount of very good teaching was observed in activities that had been carefully structured and planned across the curriculum. Children showed great interest and enthusiasm and made rapid progress. Children apply themselves well to all activities, whether self-selected or provided by the teacher. The level of adult intervention is well judged and effective in taking children's learning forward. The balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities is good. There is a satisfactory range of suitable resources to support learning, including an exceptionally vibrant outdoor learning environment. Its use is very well organised to promote children's independence and stimulate their interest in the world around them. However, the classroom is very small and has inadequate storage space. Its limitations present a potential barrier to children's learning because there is insufficient space for them to move around. It also curtails the range of learning materials which can be made available to children at any one time. Nevertheless, adults minimise restrictions through a determination to find ways around the constraints by using effective teamwork and by making very good use of the outdoor classroom.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social, and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in this area.
- The children develop very good behaviour and relationships.
- Children are very happy working independently or collaborating together in groups.

Commentary

41. Nursery staff work very effectively to encourage good behaviour and relationships, together with self-confidence and independence. They are very successful and children achieve very well. Good progress means most children leave the Foundation Stage having attained and in most cases exceeded the early learning goals. Because of the welcoming atmosphere and very caring ethos children quickly feel at home and confident. Staff offer gently firm guidance and warm encouragement that fosters children's very willing and full engagement in activities which they clearly enjoy greatly. With growing confidence children are quick to develop independence and a willingness and ability to take responsibility for themselves. Children are encouraged very effectively to share, take turns and help one another.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading skills are taught well.
- The classroom is effectively organised to motivate children to read and write.

Commentary

42. Overall, children achieve well. All will reach, and most are on target to exceed, the expected goals by the end of the year. Teaching is good overall, with strengths in the teaching of reading. For instance, when reading, adults emphasise words in bold type, point out punctuation, reinforce the direction in which print is read, use correct vocabulary and get the children to talk about the story, characters and illustrations. In response, the children show a very good interest in books. In library sessions they browse purposefully, chat about the illustrations and pick out some familiar letters and words. The children are good listeners and have good opportunities to develop speaking skills. The potential of activities is always well exploited to this end. The classroom is organised well to stimulate children's interest in books and writing. When children are involved in activities that they have chosen for themselves, such as working in the home corner, outdoors or in the writing area, the quality of adult intervention is good and encourages children to think about what they are doing and why. Children's writing shows that most are beginning to apply what they have learned about letter sounds to produce short sentences and accounts of stories or their own attempts at imaginative writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whole class sessions and planned small group activities are taught well and promote good learning.
- More challenge and structure could be added to promote mathematical development in the activities that children choose for themselves.

Commentary

43. Overall, children are making good progress and achieving the expected goals or, in many cases, likely to exceed them by the end of the year. Teaching is good overall with several strengths. In the short, whole class and small group, sessions that had a specific mathematics focus, teaching and learning were good. Children were counting confidently to ten and being taught good strategies for accurate counting of objects, for instance putting them in a line and touching each one as they counted. They have a good knowledge and understanding of two-dimensional shapes and understand vocabulary such as length, corner and sides. Many recall a six-sided figure being a hexagon. This was then followed up by some good questioning and prompting from the teacher, which required the children to compare the shapes and then say which had more or fewer sides. It is clear from displays and photographs of children's work that mathematical development is addressed across the curriculum, for example in art work that is linked to pattern and shape. The children often have some considerable time to engage in activities of their own choice. During these periods, the quality of adult input is sometimes at a fairly low level and does not capitalise enough upon the opportunities that present themselves to promote mathematical development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children receive a good range of first hand learning experiences and some very good teaching.
- They are encouraged to use their senses to find out about the world.

Commentary

44. Overall, children achieve well and make good progress thanks to good teaching. Children are on track to achieve or exceed the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Learning experiences are thoughtfully planned and there is some very effective teaching. During the inspection, children were learning about life cycles of butterflies and caring for other living creatures. They know some animals live in the wild, whilst others can be kept as pets, giving examples of deer and guinea pigs. Other scientific skills were well developed through discussion about how boats float on the water and whether this is affected by the materials from which they are constructed. Good first hand experiences were provided for children to undertake their own investigations and through these they discovered that the shape of their boats also affected whether or not they were good 'floaters'.
45. Displays of past work show good promotion of multicultural awareness, including Africa, India and Egypt, with opportunities for children to make their own artefacts which replicate those from each of the different cultures. Children also learn about their more immediate environment and bring with them a wide range of personal experience of travel.
46. Children's skills in using ICT are developing appropriately but not at such a rapid pace as in other elements of their learning. This is because the computer is not as

accessible as it could be and children do not automatically use it as a tool for learning. Parent helpers provide some direct teaching of computer skills and children show good skill in controlling the mouse to move objects on the screen or to draw pictures. Opportunities are missed to utilise the ICT suite facilities to extend children's learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children participate enthusiastically in physical activities outdoors.
- A wide range of indoor activities supports children's manipulative skills.

Commentary

47. Children achieve well and make good progress; all are expected to achieve and many to exceed the learning goals in this area by the end of the year. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching because no significant, direct teaching of physical skills was seen. However, an appropriate range of indoor and outdoor opportunities is planned to promote children's large and small co-ordination skills. Outdoor provision is much improved since the last inspection. A good range of varied resources stimulates children's interest and promotes their engagement in activities such as climbing, balancing and manoeuvring toys. During the inspection, adults' involvement in these activities was interactive and very purposeful. Outdoor resources, such as the boat, support creative development and children's knowledge and understanding of the world, whilst wall-mounted chalkboards help to promote literacy and numeracy development. Teachers plan the use of the outdoor area carefully to promote learning across the curriculum, for example in mathematics. Indoors, children engage in a wide range of activities, such as threading, cutting, sticking and working with malleable materials, all of which help them make satisfactory progress in gaining dexterity and manipulative skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective links with learning in other areas enhance children's achievement.
- Teaching is imaginative and stimulating.

Commentary

48. Overall, children achieve well. They make good progress and many are expected to exceed, while others at least attain, the expected learning goals. Displays show that children engage in a wide range of art work, including painting, printing, collage, drawing and sculpting in clay and other malleable materials. Good, imaginative teaching makes effective links with other areas of learning, such as the pictures that children create using computer programs. In assemblies, the children enthusiastically sing along with older pupils and accompany their singing with actions. Action songs are also well utilised to help learning in other lessons as when, in mathematics, 'The

'Banana Song' and 'The Pirate Song' help develop vocabulary and knowledge and understanding of number sequences. Provision for pretend play is made indoors and outside. Children enjoy dressing up and playing in the 'home corner', taking on different roles and acting out various scenarios. They are particularly independent and imaginative when playing outside, exploring all sorts of nooks and crannies for hiding places and pretending to be creatures hibernating under the trees.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of and achievement in reading, speaking and listening are especially good.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and very good behaviour contribute positively to their good achievement in lessons.
- Writing tasks for the oldest pupils are not sufficiently inspiring or challenging.
- The co-ordinator's effective leadership has brought about good improvement since the previous inspection.

Commentary

49. Both the 2004 national test results and work seen during the inspection indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 are well above the national average. The high standards seen at the previous inspection have been maintained. The Year 2 test results were also well above those for similar schools while Year 6 results were in line with those for similar schools. Taking account of their previous attainments and their capabilities, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and those in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily. The difference here may be explained by a considerable turnover of teaching staff, including some temporary arrangements, affecting the older pupils in the last two years. Pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with their peers in each year; they are both challenged and supported in ways appropriate to their individual needs.
50. Overall, teaching and learning are of good quality, with the promotion of positive pupil attitudes and encouragement of reading, speaking and listening skills as particular strengths. The teaching of writing is also good overall, but the quality is less consistent, especially in the junior classes. Throughout the school pupils behave very well in lessons and demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. In all aspects of the subject they demonstrate an eagerness to do their best at all times. In the lessons observed this was a common feature and one which has a positive impact upon the rate of their progress. In speaking and listening, for example, pupils' enthusiasm to join in discussions and articulate their thoughts confidently was noted in many lessons across the curriculum. Teachers plan varied opportunities for role-play, drama and poetry. Because of this pupils' listening skills are also good. They listen carefully to staff and to each other and respond appropriately and considerately. Pupils currently in Years 1, 2 and 3 are achieving very high standards in this aspect of their work. In an excellent lesson in Year 1, the teacher provided pupils with very varied and exciting activities which captured their interest and imagination. As a result they thought of vibrant vocabulary to describe the Troll and the Three Billy Goats Gruff. The writing task was a culmination of very good opportunities to work with partners, in small groups, role play and 'hot seating' for discussing and sharing ideas. Pupils made excellent progress and achieved very high standards of written work.
51. Pupils' very positive attitudes to reading are evident in the regular and varied opportunities to read across the curriculum and within time set aside for quiet or guided reading. Because of this pupils confidently use varying strategies to try to read unfamiliar words. In relation to their age pupils read fluently and with good

understanding. The small number of pupils who find reading rather more challenging receive good provision to help them gain confidence and independence by being given time set aside for individual help. In this context parents also play a vital role, both at home and through helping in class. All pupils have a good ability to discuss the work of familiar authors, as well as their personal literary preferences. The school's two suitably stocked libraries support pupils' reading and research skills, but better use could be made of ICT for pupils to be able to access information from more than one source.

52. In Years 1 and 2, writing is well taught and pupils make rapid progress. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, whilst being given experience in writing in a range of forms, do not have enough opportunities to write at length or to develop writing through drafting and editing. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often too low and pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work to do. Writing is an aspect of English which the oldest pupils greet with less enthusiasm than the other areas of learning. In one lesson seen, many pupils' attempts to create imaginative and expressive similes and metaphors for their poetry were half-hearted and did not reflect their true potential or ability to use descriptive and colourful vocabulary, as seen in their earlier written work.
53. The co-ordinator, newly in post, is leading the subject well and has extended the process of bringing about good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Management of the provision is satisfactory. Assessment of pupils' long-term progress is good but other checks on the effectiveness of teaching or learning lack sufficient rigour or regularity. Consequently there is some inconsistency amongst a much changed staff in the precision with which teachers mark work, set targets and show pupils exactly how to improve. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to monitor provision more systematically and keen to tackle this next stage in the development of her role.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. There are planned and incidental opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across the curriculum. Overall, the provision is now good and this represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Opportunities for pupils to practise and develop speaking and listening skills are good, especially with younger pupils. In art, for example, Year 4 pupils have opportunities to discuss and research the work of Mark Chagall. Year 3 pupils annotate plans of stable structures prior to constructing their models. Some good writing is undertaken in history. However, there are also some missed opportunities to give practice in writing through work in science and geography. Also, links with ICT which would support literacy through research tasks are underdeveloped.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school have good skills in mental arithmetic and computation.
- Pupils respond confidently to the very tough challenges teachers sometimes present.
- Good assessment procedures are effectively used to improve the curriculum and pupils' performances.

- In Years 3 to 6 the use of textbooks constrains the development of pupils' skills in problem solving and investigation.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy mathematics.
- The subject leader is effective and is instrumental in raising standards.

Commentary

55. The national tests of 2004 showed both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' standards were well above the national average. Year 2 results were also well above the average for similar schools but Year 6 results were well below those for similar schools. This was because a few Year 6 pupils who, on the basis of their earlier performance, might have been expected to exceed the usual level of attainment for eleven-year-olds did not do so. Progress in this year group was hindered by a considerable number of staff changes over recent years which particularly affected the previous Year 6 pupils.
56. The inspection findings are more positive. Present standards at the end of Year 2 remain well above average. Similarly, in Year 6, they are also well above average and pupils are attaining the levels of attainment they ought to in view of their earlier test performances. There is now a more settled teaching force and the school has successfully introduced a number of initiatives to raise standards. Achievement for pupils across the school is good and the picture of high standards painted at the previous inspection has been maintained. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support and they also achieve well.
57. Pupils demonstrate good mental arithmetic skills through their quick recall of number facts. They also show good skills when selecting a variety of methods of computation to arrive quickly and efficiently at answers. Pupils throughout school are very secure with shape, in using a variety of measures, and when handling and interpreting data. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 regularly enjoy practical activities. They demonstrate good skills by applying their knowledge and understanding of mathematics as they solve problems and investigate mathematical situations. However, investigation and problem solving skills for pupils in Years 3 to 6, although satisfactory, are not as well developed as with younger pupils because this type of activity is too often constrained by the limitations of the textbook used by the teachers.
58. Teaching is good and some very good lessons are provided. It is particularly good when challenge and teacher expectations are high and learning is supported through 'real-life' activities. When this occurs pupils' responses are manifested in their purposeful attitudes. They are very collaborative, show high levels of concentration and express an eagerness to achieve success. Learning is very effective, pupils' confidence grows and they are not afraid to make mistakes as they explore tough challenges. Classroom assistants are well briefed. Sometimes they take responsibility for small groups but, in particular, they make a valuable contribution to the learning and progress of low attaining pupils and of those with special educational needs.
59. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Although in her first year in the role, the subject leader has successfully taken necessary steps to raise standards in Key Stage 2. By reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and making effective use of assessment information she has established effective measures to address the issue of underachievement, especially that of higher attaining pupils. Although there is still scope for further improvement, the action taken has enabled these pupils to make good progress in their learning. Pupils themselves now share

with teachers the extent of their learning and what they have to do next. Pupils' progress is carefully measured from year to year, targets for future achievement are set and, if necessary, useful appropriate action is taken to provide for their highest possible achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Teachers effectively promote numeracy across the curriculum. Pupils' awareness of the passage of time, chronology, important events and dates is raised by use of timelines and similar numerical displays. Weighing, testing and measuring are extended in food technology and design technology. ICT is well used as a teaching aid, particularly in the computer suite, where pupils produce graphs, pie charts and Venn diagrams to record data obtained in geography and when conducting scientific experiments.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show a lively interest, try hard and achieve well.
- The teaching is both challenging and supportive.
- A good emphasis on investigative work results in good scientific understanding and promotes pupils' interest and enjoyment.
- The use of information and communication technology in science is underdeveloped.
- Checks on the effectiveness of teaching and learning are not sufficiently searching.

Commentary

61. Year 6 pupils' results in the 2004 national tests in science were well above the national average but well below the average for similar schools. Although almost all pupils reached the level of attainment expected nationally at their age, the proportion reaching a higher level was lower than in similar schools. This is explained by a small number of pupils doing less well than their earlier performance suggests they should have done. Several changes of staff towards the end of this year group's primary schooling interrupted their teaching and progress. The work of the present Year 6 pupils is well above average. Their achievement is satisfactory in that almost all reach the attainment to be expected from their earlier performance and a few do better than expected. Younger pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 are also well above average; achievement during Years 1 and 2 is good, reflecting good teaching and provision. Overall, present standards represent a maintenance of the positive picture seen at the previous inspection.
62. Good teaching which encourages a lively interest in the work and a will to succeed is now helping pupils to learn well. Expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are high and well planned, interesting work is provided. Tasks cater well for the range of pupils' abilities and needs, including special educational needs. Teaching is challenging but also encouraging and supportive. This promotes pupils' positive attitudes to the subject, their keen endeavour and a full concentration on tasks. Pupils' enthusiasm is also successfully promoted by the interesting practical investigations which are often included in the work. These also succeed in developing and consolidating pupils'

understanding of scientific ideas and investigative methods, the strength of which is well illustrated when the oldest pupils are asked to design their own investigations and respond very thoughtfully. Practical investigation also provides some good opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills of data handling as they construct and interpret graphs of measurements they have recorded. This is sometimes accompanied by the use of pupils' ICT skills but there are also missed opportunities to incorporate ICT in teaching and learning.

63. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. They ensure an appropriate and soundly resourced curriculum is in place and that substantial checks on pupils' progress are made through regular assessment, including formal tests at the end of each curriculum topic. However, neither the analysis of assessment data, including national test results, nor other kinds of check on the effectiveness of teaching and learning are sufficiently thorough to show exactly how further improvements in provision could be made.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show interest in and enthusiasm for the work.
- Realistic evaluation of provision and achievement has led to production of enterprising plans for future development.

Commentary

64. Throughout the school the standards of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in the subject are in line with national expectations for their ages. Pupils are now achieving satisfactorily. However, the school acknowledges that pupils' progress in recent years has sometimes been slowed by shortcomings in resources for the subject both in terms of equipment and staff confidence and expertise. Following the previous inspection, when ICT resources were reported to be unsatisfactory, the school improved its ICT resources significantly. This included provision of a computer suite able to accommodate a whole class working in pairs. However, the school recognised the need in the last year to implement a further stage of development to keep abreast of rising national expectations and technical developments. A substantial programme of replacing outdated computers was followed, though, by a period of technical difficulties with the new machines and delays in the provision of support from external providers for updating systems.
65. The school's curriculum for the subject provides for occasional lessons in the computer suite devoted to teaching classes new skills. No such lessons were taking place in the week of the inspection. At other times, work in applying and consolidating both new and previously learnt skills is integrated into lessons in other subjects of the curriculum. This often takes the form of small groups of pupils working in the computer suite for part of a lesson under the supervision of a teaching assistant. Several examples of this practice were seen during the inspection and were found to be satisfactorily effective. Overall, though, little direct and reliable evidence of the teaching of the subject was available. However, the indirect evidence from pupils'

achievement and from their interest, enthusiasm and confidence in the subject suggests that teaching is at least satisfactory.

66. Leadership and management of the subject are presently satisfactory. The headteacher is temporarily leading the subject pending the appointment of a new co-ordinator at the beginning of the next school year. Realistic evaluation of provision for and achievement in the subject has led to identification of ICT provision as a main priority in the school's improvement planning. Enterprising, detailed and well-considered plans for further development, including the securing of additional external funding and support, are at an early stage of implementation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. There is satisfactory use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Links are made with a sound range of subjects. This is best seen when small groups of pupils visit the computer suite to undertake work in another subject through the medium of ICT. This may, for example, involve compiling data and presenting it as graphs, or constructing a poster about a topic under study by combining text and various forms of graphics, or researching information from a database or the Internet. Classroom computers are also sometimes used by pupils individually or in pairs to support learning, including practice in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Some classrooms have recently been equipped with interactive whiteboards² but these are presently under-used as teachers have not yet developed the expertise of exploiting all the possibilities this equipment offers. The plans for development in the subject shortly to take effect provide for further interactive whiteboards together with staff training in their use.

HUMANITIES

68. This inspection did not focus on these subjects and no overall judgements of provision or standards in them are made. Two lessons were seen in history and none in geography. However, in relation to both **geography** and **history**, discussions took place with teachers and pupils, samples of pupils' work were scrutinised and teachers' planning and assessment documents were studied. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory and it is closely aligned with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. A good range of visits and visitors enhances learning. They provide pupils with first hand learning experiences, as in a good Year 4 lesson during the inspection which enabled pupils to observe the historical aspects of the local town. In a very effective Year 2 lesson on finding and interpreting historical evidence pupils showed much excitement and good skills of perception and thinking as they took on the role of 'history detectives' interpreting a picture of a historic scene. Samples of pupils' past work and discussions with them show some unevenness between classes and topics in the quality and depth of study. This reflects inadequate checks within the leadership and management of these subjects.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were not inspected in detail. Few lessons in these subjects were taught during the inspection.

² Large touch-sensitive screens on which images are displayed by a projector linked to a computer, as an alternative to a conventional monitor. Teachers and pupils can control events by touching the screen, instead of using a keyboard or mouse.

One lesson was observed in each of art and design and design and technology, but none was seen in music. Three lessons were seen in physical education. The limited amount of evidence collected means that it is not possible to make overall judgements about provision or standards in these subjects.

70. In the lessons seen in **art and design** and **design and technology** the standard of work pupils produced was at a level expected for their age. Displays of work around the school were examined, along with a sample of pupils' workbooks. Curriculum planning was also examined and discussions were held with both staff and pupils. Where provision is at its best, teachers plan effective links with other subjects so that pupils can develop their skills more meaningfully. For example, Year 3 pupils make Viking longboats and design battle shields as part of their work in history. However, it is evident that in some classes the work lacks depth and quality. This inconsistency reflects the insufficient checks on the curriculum, on teaching and on learning made by subject leaders. The school recognises the need to develop their management role so that checks on quality and the use of assessment information are more effective.
71. In **music**, teaching is undertaken by two specialist part-time teachers but these lessons were not scheduled for the days of the inspection. Planning documents show that an appropriate curriculum is in place. It includes an element when all pupils learn basic instrumental skills on the recorder. This encourages a good number to proceed to opt for instrumental tuition from visiting specialist teachers in a range of instruments. Enrichment of the music curriculum is very good, with optional lunchtime or after-school opportunities in orchestra, choir and recorder. There are also a good number of opportunities to rehearse and perform in musical performances for parents or community. Discussion with pupils shows they are enthusiastic about music. Pupils sang briefly in the context of one literacy lesson and the whole school was heard singing while celebrating Corpus Christi mass. Pupils sing well. Accurate, expressive singing, sometimes in two parts which were well sustained, contributed significantly to the spiritual quality of the mass.
72. During the inspection, **physical education** lessons were observed in both Year 1 and Year 2 classes and there was opportunity for limited observation of Year 6 pupils during athletics. In Years 1 and 2, children develop their athletic skills to reach a level of attainment that is in line with national expectations for their age. Running, jumping, balancing and throwing are satisfactorily developed. Limited observation of Year 6 pupils in athletics showed pupils sprinting, throwing and long jumping with skills that are broadly in line with national standards. The lessons seen were well prepared and teachers' instructions were precise and helpful. All pupils show good attitudes to learning. They work hard, listen to their teachers and show respect for each other's achievements. The school provides a good range of enrichment activities including a residential visit for Year 6 pupils. Skilled outside specialists are regularly brought into school to support learning and there are several club activities, such as the skipping club in which pupils of all ages are encouraged to participate. The pupils compete successfully with those from other schools during inter-school sporting activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

73. The inspection did not focus on this subject. No direct teaching was observed and therefore no judgements can be made about the quality of teaching, learning or standards.

74. Planning documents and discussions with staff and pupils show that the school promotes a good programme of personal, social, health education and citizenship which meets statutory requirements. This aspect of its work has high priority and is closely in line with its ethos and Mission Statement. Regular lessons are timetabled, the content of which follows a clear programme of study that is commensurate with pupils' knowledge, understanding and maturity. The school complements learning through its religious education programme and in assemblies. Very good relationships exist between pupils and teachers. This leads to a high level of trust and understanding enabling open and frank discussion during circle time. The children grow in confidence because they know their views are respected and valued. Day-to-day incidents often promote spontaneous discussion in which teachers show concern and sensitivity and, if necessary, promote reconciliation.
75. Pupils have a good appreciation of how they can be better citizens. Candidates for the school council make presentations to other pupils before elections. Its work has involved organising pupils to produce classroom and playground rules, addressing environmental issues and raising funds to provide improved amenities for the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about 'on-line safety' and the dangers of drugs, alcohol, smoking and other substances. Sometimes expert advice on these issues is provided through visits by outside professionals. Pupils know how to benefit through adopting a healthy lifestyle, which is regularly promoted through school initiatives which have led to a national 'Healthy Schools' award.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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